



Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will



How to pray the most *perfect* Rosary in the Divine Will

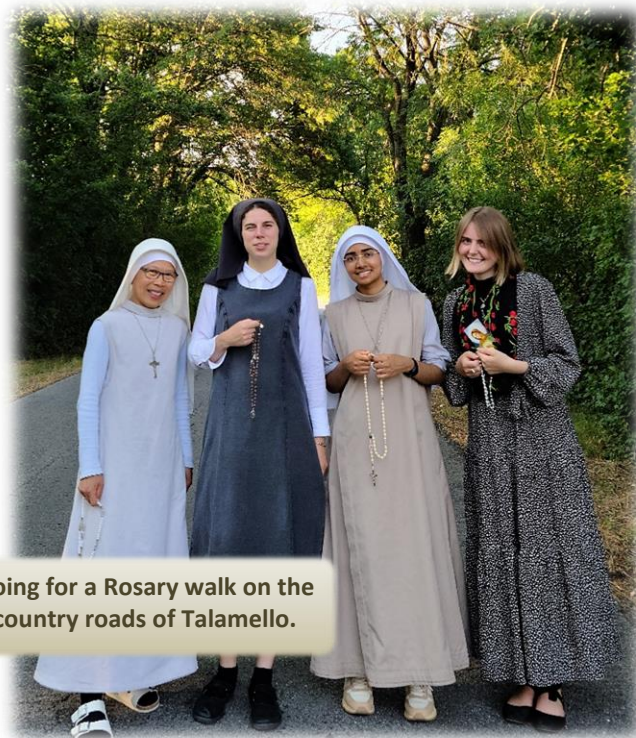
It's not the most creative headline, but we bet it sparked your curiosity! We wanted to dedicate this newsletter to the prayer that St. Pope John Paul II ranked "*among the finest and most praiseworthy traditions of Christian contemplation*," since October is the month of the Most Holy Rosary. There are so many quotes we could cite and things we could talk about: miracles attributed to the Rosary, the history of the Rosary, the many graces Our Lady has promised to those who faithfully pray the Rosary. But all of that can be found with a simple internet search or by picking up one of the many beautiful books written about the late pope's favorite devotion. Instead, we're going to discuss how to pray it in the most perfect way.

A common mistake



We often avoid praying the Rosary, or maybe procrastinate it until we're exhausted at the end of the day, because we're waiting for the moment when we can pray it "perfectly" – without interruptions or distractions, when we're at perfect peace, when we can meditate like the Holy Angels as they gaze upon the face of God. We can tend to scrutinize how well we've said the Rosary and beat ourselves up for our shortcomings, secretly believing that we have to make a good impression on God in order for our prayers to be heard and accepted. But this is not the kind of perfection that the Lord asks of us. This is not what Our Lady of Medjugorje meant when She said to pray from the heart.

Going for a Rosary walk on the country roads of Talamello.



Praying in relationship



Praying from the heart means praying in relationship, having a conversation with or simply basking in the presence of the One you love. Think about the people in your lives who you are closest to, those people with whom you share a mutual love and trust. How do you relate to them? Do you feel afraid or pressured when entering into the conversation? Do you feel like you always have to say the right thing in the right way in order not to be rejected? Do you only approach them when you're "in a good place"? Do you walk away from your time together analyzing if it went well? Hopefully not.

On the contrary, the people you feel the closest to are usually the people you feel the freest with. They are the ones who know the real you, who have seen you at your worst and who love you anyway. Now, if broken human beings can love us in this way (though imperfectly), imagine how our sinless Blessed Mother loves us. Imagine how much our Abba Father loves each one of us, His precious children. Imagine how much the very divine and human Heart of Jesus loves us, the ones for whom He gave up His own life and to whom He poured out His Holy Spirit. Why do we relate to Them so distantly, then, and with such distrust?



Celebrating the 89th birthday of our dear friend and neighbor, Paola, who we like to call the "Saint of Talamello".

Perfection misconception

Our spiritual lives are often guided by a false notion of perfection, rather than by the Divine Will. We read Our Lord's command in the Gospel, *"You, therefore, must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect,"* (Mt 5:48) and set to work creating an image of holiness to present before God and men...because we think that's what we're supposed to do in order to be

loved. It's no coincidence that Jesus immediately follows this teaching with the warning, *"Beware of practicing your piety before men in order to be seen by them"* (Mt 6:1). Many times throughout the Book of Heaven¹, Our Lord also warns Luisa against certain harmful self-reflections...even when they disguise themselves under the aspect of good. He knows the temptation we all fall into: trying to arrive at sanctity by ourselves as we constantly look down to see "Are we there yet? Are we there yet?" Whatever answer we may come up with, it will only lead us to either pride or discouragement.

Perfection of love

We are, indeed, all called to perfection, but a perfection of love. And a perfection of love is grounded in trust – a trust that teaches us how to receive *and* give as beloved sons and daughters rather than earn and slave like hired servants. It's a trust that doesn't excuse us from putting forth our own efforts, but frees us from the pressure of having to make ourselves righteous (hence the term, *self-righteous*).

It allows us to rest in the arms of God, relying on His love, mercy, and might to complete the good work He began in us from the beginning ...making us perfect with *His own* perfection.

Here lies the highest form of sanctity - the best way to describe living in the Divine Will. And it's going to look very different in each soul because we've all been created to express God's image and likeness in a unique and unrepeatable way, with distinct temperaments, talents, languages of love, and



¹ The 36 volume diary of the southern Italian mystic and Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta. If you'd like to start reading her Divine Will writings, drop us an email and we'll get you everything you need: daughtersofdivinewill@gmail.com.

even quirks. Psalm 139 so beautifully reminds us: *"You formed my inmost being, You knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise You because **I am fearfully and wonderfully made.** Wonderful are Your works! **You know me full well.**"* The Lord will work this perfection in us in very different ways, too - often by means of trials and sometimes through our own mistakes and imperfections, but ALWAYS by means of our relationship with Him. That's all we really have to do - enter into relationship with Him, deep personal relationship. In fact, the climax of Jesus' teaching on perfection is the Lord's Prayer where we, first and foremost, learn to call God our Father.

"Perfect" examples

So let's get back to the concrete. Do you want to pray the Rosary perfectly? Call the Divine Will to pray it in you, inviting the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to take the active role in your prayer. Relax and just be with God and your Blessed Mother, letting go of what you think it should look and feel like. The perfect Rosary one day for you may be to spend those fifty Hail Mary's in unwanted distraction, offering the struggle to Our Lady as a gift of love. Another day, God's Will may not leave you enough time to pray a complete Rosary all at once, so you'll have to split up the five decades throughout your day. One sister likes to picture herself sitting on her Heavenly Father's lap, having Him point out what His Son is doing at each mystery. You may spend an entire Rosary focused on only one mystery because that's where the Holy Spirit wants to reveal something to you. Or perhaps you may find peace simply resting in the soothing repetition of the prayers, glorifying God as Jesus speaks the words through your mouth and passes from one bead to the next with your fingers.

Those of you with vivid imaginations might find it easy to picture each scene of Our Lord's life with great clarity, putting your "I love You, God" on everything from the chirping of the birds at the moment of Jesus' baptism to every drop of blood He shed on the cross. Some of us have been gifted with more analytical minds, preferring to ponder certain questions and ideas that the Spirit brings to mind. So talk to Jesus and Our Lady, bringing them these very thoughts. Or you can approach the Rosary as a *lectio divina* and place yourself inside each mystery, uniting with Jesus in His acts or simply remaining by His side as an onlooker. Have you ever tried to meditate on the Rosary, but your mind is distracted by something weighing on your heart? Rather than suppress those struggles, maybe the Holy Spirit and Our Blessed Mother are actually inviting you to talk to Them about it. At times you might need a Rosary app to keep you focused while walking or praying the Rosary in the car. It's ok if you can't keep your mind totally on the prayer at every moment or if it gets interrupted. Remember, our humanity is limited and can only do so much. That's why our desires and purity of intention are so important! God is the perfect One making up for where we inevitably fall short and transforming our prayer into a beautiful and eternal divine act.



Who, not how

Whatever your Rosary devotion might “look” like, don’t worry – don’t make that your focus. Set your heart on the *Who* you are praying to rather than the *how*. So we challenge you (and ourselves!) to pray more with relationship in mind. Relationship with the Trinity is what we were meant for from all eternity and relationship with Them is what will heal and restore our hearts, so that we may truly love *as* God loves, *with* His love, and *in* His Will.

“Nothing that I have told you comes about through man’s effort, but by the power of My Will that can do everything...As the soul lets herself be filled by the power of Its light, the darkness leaves her, her evils die and all are changed into luminous life...We experience the soul’s entry into Our Will as her effort to give Us the chance to work, to give her Our love so that she can love Us with Our own love. Everything must be Ours – and everything that she does must be stamped with the image of her Creator...Everything is possible for My Will – the impossible does not exist for It. Provided that the soul lets herself be guided by It, everything is done.”

(Jesus to the Servant of God, Luisa Piccarreta, Book of Heaven, Vol. 31, 11/6/1932)



Flame of Love Rosary

Most of us try to pray additional Rosaries each day on our own as time (and the Divine Will) permits, but we always pray one Rosary all together every evening after Vespers. A couple of years ago, after Mother Gabrielle Marie and some sisters were introduced to the diary of the Hungarian mystic Elizabeth Kindelmann, we decided to include the Flame of Love prayers at the heart of her writings in our daily community Rosary. If you’re interested in learning more about Elizabeth Kindelmann, her diary, the Flame of Love movement, and/or its full Church approval, visit: flameoflove.us. Or if you simply want to unite with us spiritually in our daily Flame of Love Rosary, it’s very easy. It’s prayed just like the traditional Rosary,

except we begin with the Unity Prayer before the Creed and add a special supplication to each Hail Mary as Our Lady requested. That’s all! Here are the prayers for you below:

*Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with Thee. Blessed art Thou among women and blessed is the fruit of Thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, **spread the effect of grace of Thy Flame of Love over all of humanity, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.***

The Unity Prayer

My Adorable Jesus, may our feet journey together.

May our hands gather in unity.

May our hearts beat in unison.

May our souls be in harmony.

May our thoughts be as one.

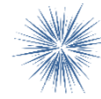
May our ears listen to the silence together.

May our glances profoundly penetrate each other.

May our lips pray together
to gain mercy from the Eternal Father. Amen.



Our BIGGEST news yet!



When Mother Gabrielle Marie and Sister Francesca landed in Italy together twelve years ago on the feast of St. Thérèse of Lisieux, the Little Flower, they thought their roots would be firmly planted here. Neither thought they would ever live in a foreign country, and then neither thought they would ever leave the beautiful land that would become as much their home as Louisiana and New York. The Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will were founded in Italy, we've grown in Italy, and we consider the warm Italian people our extended family. We've studied the language, adapted to the culture, and fallen head over heels in love with the breathtaking scenery that surrounds us. But less than a year ago, the tailwind of the Holy Spirit began to blow west, across the Atlantic and back toward the U.S.

Through various providential opportunities that have recently come our way, the Lord has been making it clear that it's time to expand our community to America – specifically to the “Volunteer” state of Tennessee. Two close friends and benefactors, who also became Benedictine Oblates of Divine Will last November, had purchased land on the top of a mountain in the Diocese of Knoxville, TN. After spending much time in prayer and discernment with Mother Gabrielle Marie, the generous couple felt strongly inspired to give a substantial part of their 124-acre property to the Benedictines of Divine Will with the goal of helping us to build a monastery there. They have already donated a great deal of their own time and money clearing the land and beginning preparations for the project. With their strong financial background, the two have also offered to lend us their expertise in raising funds for construction. Though this would be a significant undertaking for our community, Mother felt the Divine Will moving through it all. In fact, it was a confirmation of what had already been on her heart for quite a while now - though she didn't know the how, when, or exactly where in the U.S. this hope would be realized...or even if it would ever be realized. Little by little, the Lord seems to be answering those questions in His perfect timing.

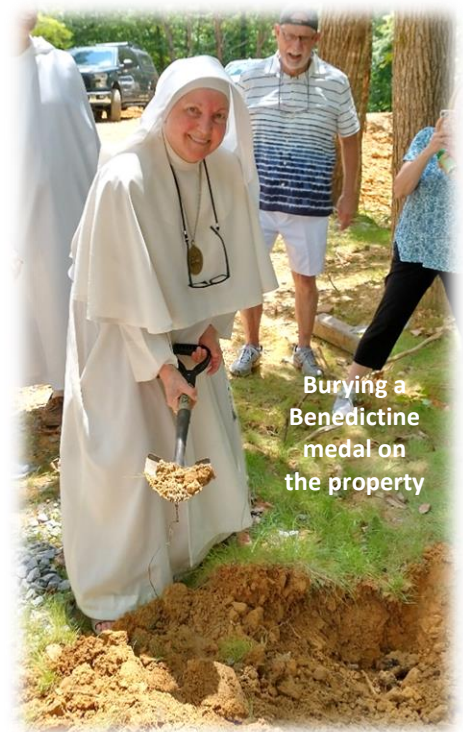
Every journey of a thousand miles (or 5,000 miles) must begin with a single step in the right direction. We first sought the permission and blessing of our beloved bishop, Msgr. Andrea Turazzi, who has shepherded us with such tender paternal love these past several years. We explained that we had no intention of abandoning Italy and hope to always have a stable presence here. Some fully-formed, perpetually professed sisters would maintain our Italian convent(s) while Mother Gabrielle Marie and the rest of the community would move to the U.S. and establish a Motherhouse. With his full support, Bishop Turazzi reached out to His Excellency Msgr. Richard F. Stika, presenting our community and our request to the local



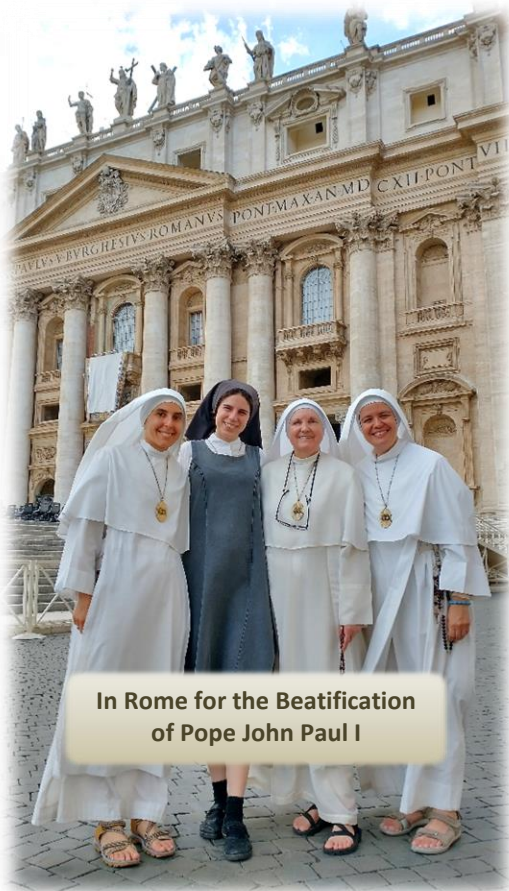
(from left to right): Sr. Francesca, Mother Gabrielle Marie, Cardinal Justin Rigali, Br. Paul, Br. Joseph, Fr. Elijah, and Bishop Richard F. Stika

Ordinary of Knoxville. Last July, Mother Gabrielle Marie and Sister Francesca met in person with Bishop Stika, who whole-heartedly welcomed our community "with open arms."

Since then, Mother has been in regular contact with the Chancery of the Diocese of Knoxville – learning what our next steps need to be and gradually moving forward. We're still at the very beginning stages of this new endeavor, so we would very much appreciate your prayers as things unfold. If you feel called to make a charitable contribution toward the building of our new monastery in Tennessee, information on how to donate can be found below. We don't have many details to offer yet nor an exact timeframe of when we'd be coming to the U.S., but we do know everything is in Our Lord and Our Lady's hands. Mother Angelica used to say, "We don't know what we're doing, but we're getting good at it." Mother Gabrielle Marie has tweaked it a bit, making our motto: *We don't know what we're doing, but God's getting good at it!*



Burying a Benedictine medal on the property



In Rome for the Beatification of Pope John Paul I

Be assured that you and all of our benefactors remain in our daily prayers. We very much appreciate your generosity and never stop thanking the Lord for His instruments of Divine Providence!

If you feel called to help support the Benedictine Daughters of Divine Will this fall or on a regular basis, visit the "Donations" page of our website to make a one-time donation by credit/debit card or to sign up for automatic monthly contributions:

www.benedictinesofdivinewill.org

You can also simply send a check or money order to the address of our U.S. non-profit organization below:
(All donations are tax-deductible)



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