

7.10.68
6.10.69 (P33)
7.10.74 ✓

(74) Hk pp 7 to 10

TAPE:

Alain-Litvanis. The angel of the Lord brought word to Mary; & she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord: let it be done to me according to thy word.

And the word was made flesh: and dwelt among us. Hail Mary full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women, & blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now & at the hour of our death. Amen. Pray for us, holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. Power forth thy grace into our hearts, we pray thee Lord, so that we too when the incarnation of Christ thy Son was made known by the message of an angel, may by his Passion and cross be brought to the glory of his resurrection: thro' the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Music up
Fade.

Today, Oct 7th, in the Church calendar is a feast-day of Our Lady, under the title of Our Lady of the Rosary. The date commemorates the sea-battle of Lepanto in 1571 and the Turkish defeat; but it was only 250 years ago that this feast-day became extended to the universal church. If you're puzzled why a battle should be remembered by a festival of the Church (and the idea ^{is} rather foreign to our present-day way of thinking), remember the history and developments of that time, and the paralyzing fear aroused in Europe by the Turkish advance. That naval battle was decisive — and it was seen that it would be so. Hence the special invocation of Our Lady's help and protection on the Christian forces — and so the Rosary was, at just that time very popular and had been developing into the now-familiar form we have today. What more understandable than to use their prayer to Our Lady in asking her intercession? But of course it doesn't matter what particular form of prayer you use — (today it) a feast-day of Our Lady, and her special interest is to have us all united with her Son, for which purpose she uses her intercession, whatever title we may honour her with. So let us pray ^{this} midday, remembering

Mary's interest, and her concern for us. PRAYERS. The best-known prayer to our Lady is of course 'Hail Mary', the Ave Maria, the joyful salutation of the Angel of the Annunciation. Let's enter its spirit as we listen to a (classical setting of that prayer by Anton Bruckner ^{20th century})

Ave Maria (Victoria)

Those of us who were brought up as Catholics can't but be aware of the great stress and emphasis that has been placed on the saying of the Rosary. Many of us also find it not such a congenial or easy way of praying, and yet feel we ought somehow to keep it up despite our difficulties with it. (October 10, ^{has been} in recent Catholic tradition, the month of the Rosary) ^{this month} (then) we try to say it a bit more often, ^{with} a bit more attention. Yet, all the time, especially in recent years, there's a nagging query about whether the Rosary is so all-important after all, whether it's not an out-of-date form of prayer. Certainly, like a lot of other things, it has at times been proved to succeed — so that ^{not too long ago} (recently) a serious theologian was felt to be somewhat out of line when he remarked ^{on} the oddity of the inspired Psalms being regarded as forms of prayer one could use or not, at will: but not the Rosary. It may help you to realise that the Rosary as we have it now (15 decades of one 'Our Father', 10 'Hail Mary's', & one 'Gloria', each of them linked with meditation ^{on} a 'mystery' of the life of Christ and of Our Lady), took quite a long time to reach its present form, a number of centuries. And it was always an expression of popular devotion. Although its form has been as it were 'frozen' for some time now, there's no reason why you shouldn't for yourself adapt it, develop it, change it somehow to suit your own needs and desires in praying and meditating and honouring Mary. In this sense there's nothing 'sacrosanct' about the present shape of the Rosary. Interestingly, especially in view of the more recent return to the

Bible in popular devotion, all the elements which have gone into the making of the Rosary we know arose from the use of the Psalms as the mainstay of the Church's official prayer, recited daily by all monks and priests. So if you find you can pray the psalms more meaningfully than the Rosary, you are in fact going back to the source of everything that's included in the Rosary, which developed as an easier, more understandable version of the ~~office~~^{litanies} for people who couldn't read or understand the Psalms. That's why there are 150 'Hail Mary's', 3 sections of 50 each, and so on — paralleling the 150 ps. and the way they're broken up in the litanies into various groupings. The 'mysteries' associated with each decade arose from a practice of adding on at the end of each psalm a meditation verse, usually taken from the N.T., pointing up the fulfillment of that psalm, in some way, in the events of our Lord's life on earth, his passion & death and his life of glory. Actually, of course, the 15 mysteries we meditate on in saying the Rosary are really the core of the whole celebration of the Church's liturgical cycle each year, from Christmas, through Easter, Pentecost and round to the final glory of the Last Judgment. So this aspect of the Rosary is very much in keeping with the modern return to the fulcrum of liturgical celebration of our redemption, and the individual mysteries of it. Let's try, then, to pray the Rosary, in honour of Our Lady, in the spirit of the Liturgy we celebrate week by week throughout the year in union with the saving events of Our Lord's life.