



Boston Catholic Journal



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Speed-Praying

You have heard it at every Mass.

Indeed, it is *very likely* that you do it yourself.

It is *even more likely* that you do it praying the Holy Rosary.

Let us take one very, very, common example: **The Apostles Creed:**

“I-believe-in-God-the-Father-Almighty-Creator-of-Heaven-and-earth-and-in-Jesus Christ-His-only-Son-Our Lord-Who-was-conceived-by-the-Holy-Spirit-born-of the-Virgin-Mary-suffered-under-Pontius-Pilate-was-crucified-died-and-was-buried-He-descended-into-Hell-the-third-day-He-rose-again-from-the-dead-He-ascended-into-Heaven-and-sitteth-at-the-right-hand-of-God-the-Father-almighty-from-thence-He-shall-come-to-judge-the-living-and-the-dead-I-believe-in-the-Holy-Spirit-the-holy-Catholic-Church-the-Communion-of-Saints-the-forgiveness-of-sins-the-resurrection-of-the-body-and-life-everlasting-Amen.”

All spoken as one sentence *as quickly as possible* — to get through it.

Worse still is the prayer to the very Mother of God, Mary Most Holy, **ESPECIALLY** as it is “**recited**” — rather than “**prayed**” in that beautiful prayer called the **Angelic Salutation**, but better known simply as the **Hail Mary**:

HailMaryFullofGraceTheLordiswiththeeBlessedarthouamongstwomen
andblessedisthefruitofthywombJesusHolyMaryMotherofGodprayforus
sinnersnowandatthehourofourdeathAmen.

Within 14 seconds! ... **and ten times** between each sacred Mystery!

REALLY?

Is that how you approach God in prayer? As fast as humanly possible?

Is **that** how you speak to your wife, your husband, your children — your friends and neighbors? If so, you either have none, and you never will!

“HelloJohnhowareyoulongtimenoseebythewayhowisLydiaIamwellwillyou
beabletocometomyson’sschoolplayOandIamsorrythatyourdogissickI
hopehegetsbetterItwasnicetalkingtoyoubye.”

I am not an expert in Mariology — but I am human, as Mary was and is — and even with so few credentials I cannot imagine that either God or Mary are especially impressed with my piety or devotion when I speak to them, pray to them, much like a broken 33 rpm record played at either 45 rpm or 78 rpm (look up the “rpm” thing and record speeds if you do not understand this).

The point of this short essay is simply this: **GOD IS A PERSON** — and so is Mary. I do not believe that they esteem you more holy or are in the least impressed with the **speed** of your prayers, or the **number** of your prayers-recited-as-in-a marathon. In fact, Crist Himself warned us against this:

“And when you are praying, speak not much, as the heathens. For they think that in their much speaking they may be heard. Be not you therefore like to them, for your Father knoweth what is needful for you, before you ask Him.
(Saint Matthew 6.7-8)

Is this to derogate from formal and structured prayers such as the Holy Rosary or the litanies of the Saints? **By no means!** Nor is it written to diminish the piety of the one praying. **No. No. No!**

This is the point: when you “pray” do not make your prayer a rote “recitation” to be sped through as *quickly* as possible. Repetition *is* meaningful — or it can be useless.

Dwell on the words you pray.

Utter them in the same way as you would when sincerely talking to ANY person before you.

In fact, you ARE! You are speaking to God Most High — from your heart.

One single decade of one single Mystery of the Holy Rosary prayed to Mary, and through Mary, to the PERSON of GOD — *ex corde* (from the heart) in the recognition that you are addressing a **real PERSON** who is listening to you — exceeds all the decades of all the Rosaries recited since Mary brought this devotion to Saint Dominic in the 13th century.

The beautiful complexities latent within the Holy Rosary are many. Meditating upon a holy Mystery while *simultaneously* praying the Hail Mary as more than simply words accompanying our meditation is no small feat. It is — dare I say — grace; the grace of simultaneity that proximates what we glimpse of eternity. Simply because the prayers may be many and identical does not preclude their being uttered in absolute devotion each time... for they extend beyond time to eternity ... and are offered in union with Mary to God Who see the hearts and knows the thoughts of men.

Pray — but only as sincerely as you talk!

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