

## Family Formation

Session 12: Method of Intercessory Prayer III: Images & the Spirit-led Rosary

Handout: Chapter 7, *Interceding with Jesus*

### Background for Parents

Read “Images” from *Interceding with Jesus*.

Before you meet as a family to pray, put together a simple 100-piece puzzle. Divide the puzzle into groups of interconnecting pieces, as many different piles as family members. Have each person put their group of pieces together and have them guess what the puzzle is about. It is probably best to use a new puzzle so they will not be able to know what the full picture is about, and when dividing the pieces, it is best to divide them in such a way as they will only know about one small part of the puzzle. For example, maybe one person will have a barn, another will have the bridge in front of the barn, another may have people running down the hill, etc. Part of the point is that they need the other family member’s pieces to know the full picture; alone they only have a portion of the story. This is similar to how it is when we pray the Spirit-led Rosary.

### With the family

Remind the children that when we intercede, our goal is to pray the prayer that the Father would like us to pray. In some situations, it seems obvious how we should pray, but this often does not reflect the prayer that the Lord would like prayed!! So in humility, we come before the Lord and ask Him to reveal the prayer He would like prayed.

Explain what images are and how God can use these “pictures” to show us how to pray. This method of intercessory prayer incorporates images, little pictures that God may give us in our mind when we pray. God may give us a thought, a Scripture passage, a reminder of something that happened before, or a “sense” or feeling about something.

Use the analogy between the Spirit-led Rosary and a puzzle to explain what the Spirit-led Rosary is. When we pray the Spirit-led Rosary, it’s like dumping a puzzle box on the table and slowly turning over the pieces and putting them together—in this case to reveal how the Father would like us to pray. Just as we needed each others section of the puzzle to see the full picture, we need each others images to know and pray the prayer that is on the Father’s heart.

Pray an Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be and have the children try to get an image or Scripture verse. It may be hard at first, but it is amazing how easily children can receive images—they just may be unsure about sharing them. After the children hear you share your images, they may be more willing to try again.

This time pray a decade of the rosary. Explain that the whole point of receiving images is to ask the Father what is on His heart and mind. What is the prayer that He would like prayed? After you pray a decade and the images have been shared, then put the images together and pray the prayer that the images lead you to pray. Explain that the Holy Spirit will guide the leader so that they know how to pray. This gift of discernment is given to the leader so they know how the Holy Spirit wishes them to pray.

### Throughout the week

Pray another decade of the rosary with images. Depending on the ages of your children, you may need to do half a decade at a time, have everyone share their images, then finish the decade, share the images, and then pray the prayer. It may feel uncomfortable at first, but after praying this way a couple times, it will seem to flow more easily.

*Interceding with Jesus,*  
Mother Nadine

*Chapter 7: Images*

When you ask the Lord to show you anything, expect Him to do just that! He often shows us here at Bellwether how He wants us to pray by using simple little images. For a long time we didn't know we could use the imagination in prayer, but we have learned that the imagination is also a gift of God. God can show us many things in simple little images because we're little children. He sees us as we are. Often the Lord has revealed His heart and mind to us through images. As many of the saints received images in prayer and in dreams, God still wants to show us how to pray today through images.

For example, when five of us Intercessors were in Europe a while back, every night before we went to bed, we would always pray, "Lord, is there anything you want us to intercede for?" We would do this all the time; we would intercede constantly. We loved it! We just love to know how God wants us to pray and He does show us. We would sink into our listening posture and allow our minds and imaginations to be open to the Lord. One night an image was given of a bride without a head, a headless bride. So we asked, "Lord, what does that mean?" Nothing came so we didn't worry about it and put it on the back burner. We thought when the Lord is ready to explain it, He will. The burden is His.

The next day we were in Rome at the crypt of St. Peter. We were not dressed in habit, we were in our traveling clothes, and we were scattered throughout the crypt. I was lost in thoughts of St. Peter when this gentleman came and tapped me on the shoulder. He had a beautiful peasant-like face, pure with very piercing eyes. In broken English, he said, "Will you pray for my country?" I thought, "Now isn't that interesting? I wonder how he knows I'm an intercessor." I said, "I'll be happy to pray for your country. What is your country?" He said, "Czechoslovakia." I said, "I'll be happy to pray for Czechoslovakia. Is there any particular area you want prayer for?" He said, "Yes, that she be reunited with Rome; she is cut off from her head." There it was, our image of the headless bride from the night before! Now we understood. The Bride of Christ, Czechoslovakia, was cut off from her head and was totally suppressed. So we prayed for Czechoslovakia to be reunited with Rome, and it happened! She is reunited with her head. Through this simple image we knew how God wanted us to pray so He could move powerfully.

So whenever we receive an image, we take the picture back to God and ask, "How do You want me to pray? What is Your interpretation?" We always let God show us. This is where we need to exercise caution: we do not want to get ahead of the Lord and interpret the symbol ourselves. The Lord will show us what He means. He wants to show us what He wants to do, so the burden of interpretation lies with Him. Remember we are not operating on rational wisdom, but on supernatural wisdom from the Father. Often we won't understand how to pray with only one or two images. We need many more. This is where one part of the beauty of praying in community enters in. We need each other. As a rule, one image won't stand by itself.

We must ask the Father for the gift of faith, to renew my faith so I can continue going forward and remain teachable. We have to let go of our control and let the Lord direct. For example, during the Gulf War in 1991 there were so many ways to pray. There were so many needs that we saw and the natural tendency for us is to go into prayer and pray about all the things we thought needed to be done because we were watching it on the news, and it seemed so obvious. We each had our own particular way we thought we should pray. So we had to lay that aside and ask God, "How should we pray? How would *You* like us to pray now?" Always ask God first.

This time He said, "Pray for Israel." Through images He showed us that Israel was going to be harassed by Saddam Hussein and that Israel would retaliate. The Father showed us that He did not want that to happen. He showed us the great love He has for the Jewish people, and we also saw the great love that Our Lady has for the Jewish people. He continued to show us this in different ways until we understood what

He was trying to say: He wanted us to pray for Israel not to retaliate. So every time a missile landed and they wanted to strike back, we would pray, “Please, Lord, don’t let Israel retaliate” and then something would happen to help smooth things out so that Israel would not retaliate. We saw our intercession being answered and that was our whole part in the war—it was to keep Israel out of it. God had other intercessors praying other prayers; this one small piece was to be our prayer. When God reveals His heart and mind to you, and shows you something in prayer, that means He wants to do it. He’s ready to move. So first of all, we seek to know His mind. We are people of the Holy Spirit and we always need to be taught how to pray by the Spirit, always.

One time I had an image of my kitty cat, Angel, and it was an awful image. Somebody was holding Angel under the water in the kitchen sink drowning her. Well I could have tried to figure out what in the world the Lord was trying to say to me, but instead I prayed, “Lord, wherever there is an angel out there that somebody is trying to kill, please stop it.” While watching the news the next day, I heard that someone was trying to hold a little baby under water and kill him in a town not too far from here, but the baby had remained safe. So we don’t know. We just take the images seriously and move on it. “Lord, You know what’s going on. You’ve given me something here and You just want me to ask You to do it. You know what the image means, You know the symbol. Please do what You want to do.” Sometimes we understand the image and His heart, and sometimes we don’t. Sometimes we miss. There are many times we get things in prayer and we try to figure them out. We don’t always understand so we don’t move on it and pray the prayer, and then maybe later we hear about a plane crash and we had that information. We had it and we didn’t pray the prayer.

Once I was with a group of intercessors who had the whole information on that Jonestown, Africa tragedy before it actually occurred. We didn’t understand the images, so we didn’t pray the prayer, and it was a tremendous lesson for me. This particular group had come together to intercede for our nation. Our nation needs prayer, and we were going to zero in on Washington, D. C. Well that sounds wonderful. I’m all for that, but this particular group had a mindset—“this” was what we were going to pray for, not “What do You want us to pray for, God?” God started giving us images about Jonestown, and we tried to think of what does this have to do with Washington, D.C.? So we ended up not praying for anything. This was a high price to pay. Maybe God was going to let the Jonestown massacre happen anyway. We don’t know but I have never forgotten that. As intercessors, we don’t go into prayer with our own mindset. No matter how evil a situation may look or how much we know personally about that situation, we first seek the Lord’s mind. On that particular day over 20 years ago, God was not leading this particular group of people to pray for the government of America; He wanted us to pray for safety in Jonestown. God was signaling us to pray for a different situation. We must always remain open to how and what the Lord wants us to pray for.

We also use images when we pray the **Spirit-led Rosary**. The Spirit-led Rosary can be thought of as a jigsaw puzzle made up of many different pieces, or images. When you want to put a puzzle together you usually just dump all the pieces on the table, and then proceed to turn them all over so that the colors are showing. Then you put the puzzle together, piece by piece, and by the end a picture emerges. This is similar to what we do when we pray the Spirit-led Rosary. The puzzle pieces, or images, are supplied by God. The pieces are turned over when the Spirit is activated and we receive something—an image, Scripture, or whatever comes to mind. It can be anything. We let God put the pieces together, and by the end of the rosary a “picture” of how God would like us to pray will emerge.

We pray the Spirit-led Rosary the way everybody prays the rosary. We follow the regular format with the Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious, and Luminous Mysteries. The difference in praying the Spirit-led Rosary is that we don’t decide the intentions and how to pray beforehand; rather we seek the mind of the Lord as best as we can. Sometimes we have a specific intention when we begin, such as a particular situation or person. Other times we are open to pray as the Lord leads us for His intentions. The important thing is we always begin with the concept of “Lord, teach us how to pray” (Lk 11:1).

At the end of each decade we allow for time to share what images, Scripture verses, or “senses” that those praying the rosary are getting. We share whatever we are receiving in prayer. If the images that the people praying the rosary get aren’t shared, sometimes that can block the second decade progressing and

other pieces from being turned over. The Holy Spirit not only gives images to us, but He also gives them to us at a specific time. He knows that perfect timing. We find that if we “hold it” or don’t share what we are getting, He may not give us anything else to share. We have to release what we receive, when we receive it, and make room for another image. So if a Scripture, prompting, or inspiration comes, we share it, and it’s just our little contribution, just our little piece, and the Holy Spirit then will put the “puzzle” together. If the images we’re receiving are not of God, they won’t go anywhere, there won’t ever be another piece that will fit with it. So you don’t really have to worry too much if your image is of God; if not, it will kind of die a natural death.

Praying the Spirit-led Rosary this way is just like little children putting a puzzle together. It’s a very simple way to pray. By the time the rosary is almost over, maybe by the fourth decade, the picture of what God wants us to pray about is starting to become clear. It may be a wonderful teaching, sometimes it’s about our own prayer lives, sometimes it’s about spirituality, sometimes it’s about our nation. It may be about situations from God’s point of view, like the abortion issue for example, or a situation where there is a lot of intercession needed. Maybe even a Bill in Congress. There are many things that God wants to show us; He’s very interested in what we’re interested in. Sometimes our prayer is about things that we aren’t even familiar with. It could be about nuclear situations or conspiracies in other countries. We can “go” anywhere in the world in our prayer. Sometimes God shows us things that could happen if there isn’t any intercession prayed to stop it. He’s showing us a lot of prophetic things this way. Sometimes it could be a burden of the Holy Father, and through our Spirit-led Rosary we begin to see what the Holy Father is interceding for, and sometimes God uses us to pray along with him.

It’s amazing what God can be interested in! He’s interested in us. His delight is to be with us, and so He loves to share His mind and His heart with us, and He will if we ask Him, if we seek it. We have about 70 Intercessor of the Lamb hermits and lay community that pray the Spirit-led Rosary each week in this way as a community. A group of three, six, or twelve people is fine, too. Praying the rosary this way works very well in a smaller group where you can move along a little better.

Sometimes St. Michael shows up in the prayer. We believe in the Communion of Saints, and sometimes different saints show up, because they want to be part of the intercession. We have also learned so much about the hierarchy of angels, some of their missions, and what they do. We never dreamt of some of these things until we started learning through our rosary! We started to get some books on St. Thomas Aquinas to see, “Is this theologically correct?” I couldn’t believe we were reading St. Thomas Aquinas! It was amazing what he wrote about the angels. His writings confirmed what we received in our rosary. God wanted to teach us about the angels.

You can certainly pray this way on your own, and we do. When people ask us to pray for a particular intention, we always ask, “Lord, show us how to pray about this situation.” We don’t pray a certain way about a situation just because people ask us to pray that way. We always seek the way the Lord would like us to pray. It’s not always the obvious way to pray.

For example, someone might ask us to pray for their marriage, it’s in trouble because of a particular reason. We will take that to the Lord and say, “Lord, show us how You want us to pray about this marriage.” Or many times someone will ask us to pray that they get healed in a particular area, and many times God will honor the intercession by healing a relationship instead that the person needed healed. Or maybe the prayer will be to heal some problem with anger that this person was dealing with or something else instead of praying for the particular request of the person. We never know God’s mind. Sometimes the particular prayer request is exactly what God wants to do. The person may already have that burden and God is going to honor that, but we never second guess. We always ask for it to be revealed to us, “Lord, teach us to pray.” This way the prayer will always give God greater honor and glory.

So you never know where the Spirit-led Rosary will lead you! You never know how it’s going to move. It can be on the angelic world, or our world here, or it can even be for one individual person. No two rosaries will ever be the same. Many times we pray for the intentions in the heart of Mary. Once she asked us to pray for the intentions in her heart, and many times they are revealed to us by herself. Occasionally there can be an intention that Our Lady will reveal on the first decade, and then the next decade another,

different intention will be disclosed. You can pray the rosary where one decade is one whole concept in itself and we pray for that, and the next decade is for another concept, but usually the entire rosary gives us one picture of how to pray.

The Lord taught us to pray the Spirit-led Rosary with images probably for a couple of reasons. One never knows all the reasons of God, but praying this way keeps us little; there isn't any one of us that has all the answers. It's only together that we have it, and it's together that we discern God's mind. There's a protection in that togetherness. We get one little piece at a time, a little piece of the puzzle, and this helps keep us humble. We have no idea from rosary to rosary of where God wants to lead, what He wants to show us, or where He wants to direct our prayer. We simply follow.

The tendency sometimes is to see a piece of the puzzle and think, "Oh, this is blue. I bet it's part of somebody's dress." We put the piece on the table where we think it's going to go. In praying the rosary this way, we have to be careful to not put a piece in its place, or of interpreting it by ourselves. We let God put the pieces together. We let Him interpret them and show us His heart and mind so we know how to pray.

As intercessors we don't go into prayer with our own mindset. No matter how evil a situation may look or how much we know personally about that situation, first we seek the Lord's mind. We must always remain open to how and what the Lord wants us to pray for. This way the prayer will always give God greater honor and glory!