

TJP EPISTLE

A weekly letter on seeking God

Dear Reader,

October is a month traditionally dedicated to the rosary. I remember praying early morning rosaries in October at my elementary school named, fittingly enough, Holy Rosary. Like most Catholic kids, I grew up with the rosary as a normal part of my life: it was just there all the time.

Once, in a fit of childish angst, probably around the age of 10, I shook a rosary in front of my parents' faces telling them I was going to pray for them. It is humorous to recall now. Yet, it shows the ubiquity of the rosary. It shows up in moments of pain: reciting the beads before funerals. It fills moments of boredom: elementary school teachers using it to pass time. It comes out in times of protest: praying the rosary outside abortion clinics or at anti-war protests. And it can even pop out in the midst of a silly childish fight with parents.

My relationship to the rosary these days fluctuates between clinging and forgetting. For a few years, I carried a rosary with me at all times and prayed it almost daily. More recently, it has been an off-and-on relationship, where I sometimes find it more consoling than others. But the beauty of the rosary for me has always been its steadiness. Even after months of not praying it, the familiar rhythms and muscle memory put me at ease. I'm reminded that our longing for God is an age-old longing and that this simple recitation has brought comfort to billions of people over the years.

In a beautiful piece from 1978 about reclaiming the rosary and its mysteries, [Dan Berrigan, SJ, wrote](#), "There is not one mystery of the 15 that is not also a clue to who we are, to where we come from, to where we might go. In a night without stars."

Pope Francis has a similar description for our times in his new encyclical *Fratelli Tutti*, which came out last Sunday. Instead of a "night without stars," Francis's first chapter of the document is titled "Dark Clouds Over a Closed World." On Monday, Brendan Gotschall, SJ, published a [chapter by chapter overview](#) of the new document. Chris Williams, SJ, [shared a poem](#) about the temptations to escape reality through social media. And Ian Peoples, SJ [reviewed Netflix's new documentary "The Social Dilemma,"](#) which draws attention to the dangerous attack on human dignity by the tech industry, especially through social media.

Have a great weekend!

In Christ,
Billy Critchley-Menor, SJ
Editor-at-Large

FEATURED THIS WEEK

An Overview of Fratelli Tutti

In this lengthy letter, Francis offers critiques of populism, neoliberalism, and militarized borders. He restates a rejection of the death penalty. He calls on all people to recognize and live out our common fraternity.

[Read more.](#)

Netflix's "The Social Dilemma" and Moral Relativism

Netflix's new documentary "The Social Dilemma" paints a scary picture of how the tech industry, particularly social media, is having severe negative effects on society. And the lack of objective truth is the cause.

[Read more.](#)

Sometimes Social Media Becomes My Escape from the Daily Labors of Work

A recent chance meeting with someone broke through this fog of drudgery to reignite the roots of life within me, reminding me to keep my faith in what God places before me each day, no matter how small or mundane.

[Read more.](#)

TJP REVISITED

Hail Mary

It is often the moments outside of my Hail Marys when I can most feel their impact. I notice a deeper calm, less anxiety, and greater peace. I can more easily see God at work because my Hail Marys so frequently remind me of His existence.

[Read more.](#)

"Do we choose to get reborn? Or do we choose to wither away?"

According to the mystery of the rosary, we choose neither the one nor the other. We can only choose to be chosen."

- Daniel Berrigan, SJ

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