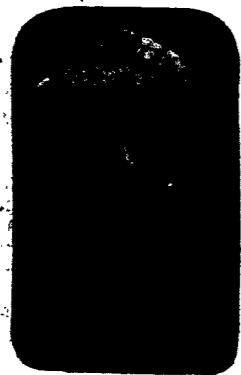


## Where Have All the Rosaries Gone?

In the words of the modern song lamenting the loss of the flower of youth in the destructive power of war, we might add as a response to the question posted in the heading of this article: "Long time — no see."



I dedicate these words to Our Lady, Queen of the Rosary and offer my reflections in the hope that my readers will not succumb to what seems to be a growing temptation to discredit a devotion of proven value. For centuries the Rosary has brought consolation and a renewal of faith to people from all walks of life — from the most humble and simple peasant to the most gifted of intellectuals. Not a word about the Rosary in any official Church document, in any statement of a Pope, in any Conciliar decree for 400 years could be interpreted in any way other than as a wholehearted endorsement of this devotion.

One of the first things we began to hear after the II Vatican Council was "Down with sterile, repetitive prayers! Up with fresh and spontaneous prayers that come from the heart!" This was, is, and will al-

ways be a superb idea. But it should not ipso facto relegate the Rosary to the rank of a relic. I have no doubt that the Rosary could add up to little more than sterile repetition for those who would finger the beads without concentration on the content of the prayers. But I see no reason why the present interest in personal and creative prayer cannot flourish along with an insight into the deeper dimensions of the Rosary. Pope Pius XII once remarked: "Progress is truly such if it knows how to add new conquests to old, to join new benefits to those acquired in the past."

Why not, then, work on a little progress in the restoration of a masterpiece of devotion rather than discard it? It is a classic prayer which our best creativity cannot reproduce. I say this without hesitation because I have worked hard to be creative in prayer and I have enjoyed the sharing of the prayerful outpourings of the hearts of many of the faithful. I have endorsed spontaneous prayer, bidding prayers, prayers of the faithful within the Mass and, with proper cautions, the prayer meetings of the Catholic Pentecostal Movement. But I can never agree with the idea, spoken and unspoken, that the Rosary has no place in the common prayer of Christians, and only a pardonable place in their private devotion.

If the Rosary has ceased to be a classic prayer, it is only because we have allowed it to become a meaningless devotion. I defy anyone to improve on the Lord's prayer. Even the most vain of authors would hesitate to paraphrase it. The doxology ("Glory be, etc.") has a superb simplicity which defies any verbal improvement, and the Hail Mary is a beautiful blending of God's message to Mary, of Elizabeth's words to her and of a humble petition added by the People of God through the centuries.

In thought content (progress is always possible here in our degree of reflection) the Rosary contains the mysteries of the lives of Christ and Mary, concepts which are challenging theologians and Scripture scholars today and are at the same time providing consolation to the many who will never understand the arguments of these sincere students.

I hope that all of us will continue our search for ways to pray more creatively. At the same time, we might profit greatly by peering more deeply and discerningly into the Rosary — the prayer which for centuries has heartened so many who never allowed it to become a monotonous repetition of meaningless words.

### The Slot Man

## More Than One Way to View 2 Plus 2

Anthony Acciari in a letter to the editor (Courier-Journal 10-11-72) very delightfully took the columnists of this paper to task as to how they would skirt answering the simple question: How much is 2 and 2?



His letter was received by numerous readers in the humorous vein it intended. But Dick Dowd of the State Catholic Committee has come up with a rejoinder in kind. As Dick tells it:

Two business partners are interviewing for a secretary's job and decide that they want to go beyond the usual questions in order to fathom the imagination of prospective candidates. They decide answers to a question as simple as "How much is 2 and 2?" might prove valuable.

The first job-seeker answered, "Two and

two is four."

The second thought a bit longer and answered, "Two and two is 22."

The third pondered and answered, "Two and two could be four and it could also be 22, according to how you think of it."

The two partners then went their own ways overnight with the idea they would discuss their choice the next day.

The following morning one asked the other, "Have you decided?"

"Yes," proclaimed the second partner.

"Which one?"

The answer came, "The blonde."

My Weekly Reader, a newspaper for school children put out by Xerox Corp.'s Education Publications unit, polled 283,312 pupils in the third through sixth grades as to their choice in this year's presidential race. The kids preferred Richard Nixon by more than 2-1 over George McGovern. But you voters wanting a McGovernment

(as our Charles Randisi has dubbed it) can take heart for even Archie Bunker did pretty well as a write-in candidate, getting 262 votes.

Some others got the usual ha-ha write-ins, including Vida Blue, Donny Osmond, Redd Foxx and Snoopy. One kid, however, cast a truly singular and praiseworthy vote — for "Dad."

The churches of Naples have taken a truly noteworthy and unified stand in fighting the ravages of the flood in the Southern Tier. They joined to take a full-page ad in the Naples Pennysaver, calling for volunteers for Operation Rebuild.

The ad is the work of the First Baptist Church, the First Presbyterian Church, Naples United Methodist Church, St. Januarius Catholic Church, the Community Action Committee, and Naples Rotary. That's what I call ecumenism with community flavor.

### Editorial

## Abortion Repeal Gaining Support

A significant change is apparent when one compares the results of this year's Courier-Journal survey of legislative candidates on abortion with the first poll taken two years ago.

In 1970, of the 46 legislative candidates from the diocese, 36 responded to the poll and only 9 said they favored repeal of the liberalized law. This year, of the 57 candidates there were 43 responses with 25 candidates indicating they would vote for repeal of the law. That's a jump of from 25 per cent to about 58 per cent of those who would repeal the statute.

The dramatic increase in the percentage of candidates who would vote for repeal reflects the effect of the drive by pro-life groups across the state. Liberalized abortion has moved from the brink of being an accepted reality to being a problem which must be studied carefully by each candidate, not only to clarify

his own convictions but also to gauge the sentiment of his constituency.

The Courier-Journal sees the survey as a public service to its readers in helping them learn how the various candidates stand on this issue which is of paramount moral concern. We must point out, however, that it is the individual's responsibility to find out all he can about his candidates and make up his own mind.

Though we have always campaigned against abortion on demand we remain cognizant of the fact that there are politicians seeking to use the issue for strictly personal advantage. There are other questions to be considered though none with the life-death urgency of liberalized abortion.

We also feel that those candidates who answered frankly, particularly in this medium, that they favor the present

law, deserve credit for the courage of their convictions. As for those who did not comment, they pose a job for each individual voter in their districts to uncover their stand on abortion. The survey allows time for this.

Two years ago, there were politicians who saw liberalized abortion as a forgotten problem but the people have refused to let it lie. There are pro-abortionists who point the finger at the "hierarchy." They are wrong. The state's Catholic bishops' views have always been known by legislators; it was not until lawmakers realized the magnitude of grass-roots opinion on it that the tide began to turn.

The question has gained such prominence that we know of at least one area secular newspaper which also is polling candidates on liberalized abortion. Voters should be alert to publication of its findings.