

Fr. Perozich comments —

Questions for assistance in answering fundamentalist objections to Catholics usually come to me from men who are in prison, and who are verbally challenged regarding their Catholic faith.

Prayer to God is an encounter with the Divine. The ultimate object of prayer is unity with God so that His will be done in our lives (Thy Will Be Done).

Prayer takes many forms. In scripture reading God speaks in the minds to inform, in the hearts to love, in the will to guide. In the liturgy of the Hours the psalms, hymns and readings do just that. In Holy Mass, the whole world is united with the Holy and Immortal Trinity in the prayers, the readings, the divine sacrifice where the communicant is one with God.

In private devotions such as the rosary, the mantra that keeps the Christian focused while meditating on the particular mystery is the repetition of the Hail Mary.

In all of these, Christians do not pray as pagans, thinking that repetition can command God's will.

Rather the Christian is uniting with God so that the intellect, the heart, and the will be conformed with God. Often the one praying is asking for a need. God either grants it, defers it, or gives something else which is even better than that which was desired.

David Ross answers objections to our Catholic prayer life in the article below.

On Fundamentalist Objections to “Repetitious” Prayer

GUEST COLUMN

By David Ross | March 2026

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It is unfortunate that rebuttals to fundamentalist arguments must remain at the popular level. The reason, to speak the truth, is because fundamentalist arguments are so shallow. Those who believe such arguments are often unprepared or unwilling to follow reasoning that is based on a more beautiful and profound theological vision. This leads Catholic interlocutors to respond to shallow arguments with a less-deep version of the truth. Some fundamentalists, however, are capable of comprehending a grand theological vision yet espouse simplistic arguments only because they have not previously encountered such a vision. Deep thinkers who hold to popular-level arguments will often not be persuaded by a popular response, as the response may appear to be as equally shallow as the ones they are accustomed to hearing.

One common, shallow fundamentalist argument involves critique of Catholic ways of praying, such as the Jesus Prayer and the Rosary, with the admonition that we ought not to pray repetitious prayers, per Jesus' teaching (cf. Mt. 6:7). This admonition fails to recognize the rhythm of the cosmos. It is true that the Lord teaches us not to pray repetitiously. However, **there is a difference between the manipulative repetition of the pagans and liturgical rhythm, which is foundational to the Catholic notion of the cosmos, of the Church, and of God — all of which proceeds from God and returns to Him in the grand rhythm of being.**

Nature itself, in its crying out to God in waiting for the revealing of the children of God (cf. Rom. 8:19), teaches us to pray rhythmically, repetitively, sincerely, authentically, and attentively. There is the repetition of the seasons: summer, autumn, winter, and spring. There is the cyclical change of the trees: seed, sprout, trunk, and fruit. There is the cycle of human life: childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and old age. In all these there is a rhythm, a back and forth, the united prayer of nature that is formed by God's hand and responds to His call, so that God and

nature, Creator and creature, can call and respond in the prayer of all being, in the liturgy of the cosmos. **This prayer and liturgy is so primordial and foundational to our existence that it finds as its First Principle the eternal liturgy of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit — the Most Holy Trinity, one in being and undivided, in which the Father begets the Son, who responds in the love of the Spirit.**

The repetitious prayers of the Church, then, are not pagan in their manipulation of the gods. They are far more radical than that. When the fundamentalist admonishes the Catholic for praying repetitiously, the fundamentalist has not grasped just how radically the Catholic has doubled down on his faith. **Catholic prayers are not merely repetitious; they are liturgical. These prayers are a participation in the being of God, a participation in the dynamic Trinitarian rhythm.** These prayers are the chants of the Christian mystics who found themselves so enshrouded in the life of God that they could do nothing other than pray and be attentive. It is not a mindless prayer that we pray. Instead, we communicate with God according to His very existence.

The objection of the fundamentalist, then, is so shortsighted that it cannot see the very Being that underlies his ability to see in the first place. To denounce repetitious prayers as ungodly is akin to saying that God is not God. Nature itself teaches us that repetition is the prayer, the liturgy, the calling forth and response, the rhythm of the cosmos. **The Trinitarian vision of God that He revealed to us demonstrates this repetition, the calling forth and response, the rhythm of the dynamic being of the Trinity.** The Church, then, as the community of God, also teaches her people to **pray according to God's dynamic being, according to nature, and according to Scripture** (cf. 1 Tim. 2:1-8). For that reason, we pray repeated prayers, participating in the very life of God when we do so. The

fundamentalist, in his admonition, fails to understand himself in relation to the cosmos, to God, and to the community of believers.

Let us summarize with an analogy. The prayer of the pagan is the purposeless prayer of a man standing on the shore of the sea and commanding the waves to obey him. The prayer of the fundamentalist is the prayer of the sea captain, determinedly obeying the nautical rules in order not to crash his vessel. But **the repetitious prayer, the prayer of the liturgy, is far more radical. It is the prayer of the madman who walks on water.**

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