

ROMAN CATHOLIC DEVOTION TO MARY.

THE month of October is consecrated by the Roman Catholic Church to the devotion of the Rosary, and this year Pope Leo issued an encyclical setting forth anew the importance of this devotion—the most popular devotion in the church. The encyclical appears in a translated form in *The Freeman's Journal* (New York), the editor of which explains that the word Rosary was first used in the thirteenth century, in a nuptial sense, to signify Mary's rose-garden. A further description of the Rosary is given as follows:

"It consists of three chaplets, each chaplet containing five decades, and every decade consisting of the recital of the Our Father once and the Hail Mary ten times, followed by the dōxology, 'Glory be to the Father,' etc. The chaplets are divided into the five joyful mysteries—the Annunciation, the Nativity of our Lord, the Presentation, the finding of the child Jesus in the Temple, the five sorrowful mysteries—the agony in the Garden, the Scourging at the Pillar, the Crowning with Thorns, the Carrying of the Cross, the Crucifixion, and the five glorious mysteries—the Resurrection, the Ascension, the Descent of the Holy Ghost, the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, and her Coronation. During the recital of each decade one of these mysteries is meditated upon."

We quote also a few of the opening paragraphs of the encyclical:

"Venerable Brothers, Health and Apostolic Benediction:

"How important it is both for public and private interests that devotion to the most august Virgin Mary should be maintained assiduously and spread with ever-growing zeal, will be understood by everybody who reflects on the eminent position of honor and glory in which God has placed Mary. From all eternity He chose her to become the mother of the Word who was to clothe Himself in human flesh. He so distinguished her, too, from among all that is most beautiful in the three orders of nature, of grace, and of glory that the church justly attributes to this Virgin the following words: 'I came out of the mouth of the Most High, the first-born before all creatures' (Eccl. xxiv. 5).

"Then, after the ages had begun their course, after the parents of the human race had fallen into sin and all their posterity became marked with the same stain, Mary became the pledge of the reestablishment of peace and salvation.

"The only son of God lavished upon His most holy mother wonderful tokens of honor. During His hidden life He took the Virgin as auxiliary in the first two miracles He performed—one a miracle of grace by which Elizabeth's babe leaped in her womb when Mary saluted her; the other a miracle of nature by which Jesus changed water into wine at the marriage of Cana. And afterward, when Christ, at the end of His public life, established the New Testament, which must be signed with His divine blood, He confided the Blessed Virgin to the beloved apostle with these sweet words, 'Behold Thy mother' (John xix. 27).

"Wherefore we, who, all unworthy as we are, represent here below the Son of God, will never, as long as the light shines for us, cease to celebrate the praises of such a mother. Knowing well that by reason of our advanced age this period will not be long, we can not help repeating to our brothers in Jesus Christ, all and singly, those last words which He Himself, nailed to the cross, left us as His testament, 'Behold your mother.'

"We shall consider all our aspirations crowned if the result of our exhortations be that devotion to Mary becomes nearer and dearer than aught beside to every one of the faithful, and if it be given to all Christians to attribute to themselves the words which John wrote of himself, 'The disciple took her to his own' (John xix. 27)."