

# Question Box

**Question:** *You say that the Church by means of indulgences remits temporal punishment due to sin by applying to them the merits of Jesus Christ and the superabundant merits of the Blessed Virgin and the saints. Where do you find any authority for the superabundant merits of the saints; or that the merits of any being than those of Jesus Christ can be put to the credit of another?*

**Answer:** The scriptural authorities that God in His mercy will hearken to one person for another are too numerous to mention. Time and again God spared the people of Israel because of His servant Moses. He did likewise, in after years, because of His David. Christ healed the servant of the centurion without going to the house, because of the faith of the centurion. And in the case of the woman of Canaan, He rewarded her faith, prayers and persistence, by healing her daughter. These are only a few of the many cases that might be quoted. You acknowledge that the merits of Jesus Christ may be applied to our souls. If the merits of Christ, why not the merits of anybody else, and that effectively, if there is a right understanding of this doctrine? The Catholic Church does not teach that the merits of any one are meritorious for eternal salvation by themselves. Take, for example, the ever Blessed Virgin, whom the angel declared to be "full of grace." St.

John the Baptist was sanctified in the womb at the sound of her voice. She was pure and sinless, and had therefore no satisfaction to make for her own sins. Still she suffered intensely in this world, and by her extraordinary union with God, her prayers and her penances merited all her life long; if she did not have superabundant merits, that is, merits that were more than were necessary to save her, God help the rest of us! But how comes it that most merits were meritorious for eternal salvation? No creature, however exalted, could satisfy God. It is by a union of the good works of the creature with the merits of Jesus Christ that they become meritorious for eternal salvation. And, since their works are washed in the blood of the Lamb, they take on a value which would otherwise be impossible for them to attain. But, since they in this manner often have more merit than is necessary for their salvation, their merits cannot be wasted; and they themselves, since they have supernatural charity, must wish that their merits be applied as the Divine Economy may see fit. But their works are all like unto the works of Our Lord; and Our Lord's work is the salvation of souls. Hence likewise, their desires and aspirations must be of the same nature. And since God has made His Church the dispensary of His mysteries, it is through her these merits must be utilized for the salvation of souls.

**Question:** *How do you get the idea of worship in the use of beads? And why do you count beads?*

**Answer:** I wish this party had defined what he meant by worship. For very generally when I give a definition of a word or a doctrine I am told that is not what they believe or what they mean. Worship as is understood outside of the Catholic Church may mean very little or nothing. As we understand the word worship, the devotion of the beads or the rosary is not a worship but a form of prayer. Just as if you were to repeat the psalms of David or any other form of prayer. Prayer, as we understand it, is the raising up of our minds, our thoughts, our souls to God. Now in this form of prayer called the rosary, there are first of all fifteen meditations on the Incarnation, birth, life, death and resurrection of Our Lord; besides a profession of faith which is made by the recitation of the Apostles Creed. These are 150 prayers which are called the prayers of the Incarnation because they recall that event to our mind, the Lord's prayer and the doxology; and because these prayers include every petition that man may offer to the Lord as well as giving praise, and honor and glory, they resemble the psalms of David, to which they correspond in number. So that between the meditations and the prayers that are said, there is not only a good deal of Christianity to be learned but a good deal of spirituality practiced.