

The Garden of the Church
Life

**Of Saint Catherine of
Sweden,**

Married, Widow, Religious and always
Virgin,

First Abbess

Of the Order of the Savior,
Founded by her Ecstatic Mother, and Great
Princess of Nericia,

Saint Bridget

Of Sweden, Widow.

Written

By order and in the name of the Most
Respectful Convent of Saint Mary
Magdalene of Vitoria, of the Observant
Religious Nuns of the said Order.

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Confessor Major of the said Convent.

With due permission.

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Dedicatory Letter

To the Most Reverend Mother Abbess and to the Holy Community of the illustrious Monastery of Our Lady of the Snows of the Observant Religious Nuns of our Ecstatic Mother Saint Bridget of the City of Mexico.

Great is certainly, oh dear Sisters, the joy spread in our hearts when we received the very prudent and eloquent sermon which on the 22 of April 1766 preached in the Church of this Holy Monastery the Lord Doctor and Master Don Francisco Fernandez Vallejo, most worthy Confessor Major of yours, in the solemn funerals with which Your Very Reverend Motherhood so justly and tenderly lamented the death of your spiritual Founder, our very Reverend Mother Sister Teresa Brigida de Jesus, of blessed memory, whose sublime virtues made possible without any doubt the vivid descriptions of her piety, and the no lesser persuasive motivation to imitate her now in the grief of her absence from this earth, even if we do not hesitate to believe that Her Reverend Motherhood has all of us present in Heaven.

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**Fourth Era:
Catherine, Religious and Prelate. ...**

Chapter 34.

*Indulgencies of the Crown or Rosary of Saint
Bridget. Its origin, form, progresses and way
of reciting it.*

395. By the fact that in the preceding chapter we dealt with the Indulgencies that we know (without looking into many others that we may ignore) this Holy Order enjoys, it follows now to speak in this chapter regarding the indulgencies of her Rosary or Crown, that they call of Saint Bridget, and that some in Spain because of ignorance of the things that happen in Italy, have tried to deny, or doubt, as if a way of praying the Rosary could discredit or lessen other ways of doing it or the veneration of the Heavenly Queen.

On the contrary, the variety of ways seems to serve to more veneration, at least in the extension; because in some spirits devotion is more motivated by some prayers, or ways, and circumstances, than by other ones.

In addition, very wisely the Catholic Church uses different prayers and ceremonies to greet this Lady and to implore her protection.

With this fact, the Rosaries will not damage one another, by having different benedictions or some accidental variation in the distribution of their parts.

Just like by the Rosary of Saint Bridget and other ones, the Rosary of Saint (p. 273) Dominic of Guzman and his Order do not suffer any demerit.

On the contrary, it seems it will get more honor and the title of Proto-Rosary, or first and principal, founded, preached, and taught to the world by the Saint Patriarch himself, directed to do it particularly by the same Heavenly Empress, and it will appear to be the origin and guideline of all others.

In addition, the Rosary of Saint Bridget is the same in the distribution and Mysteries of that of Saint Dominic, with the sole difference of having different Benedictions and Indulgencies, as we will see in the following pages.

396. *A woman healed from gout by the Rosary of Saint Bridget.* It is known among the devout people that the glorious Mother Saint Bridget still alive applied the Rosary with which she used to pray to the throat of a woman who suffered much of gout of the heart and she was immediately healed. This alone is enough to promote in the souls the devotion of her Crown or Rosary. However, there are more and greater grounds for it.

The prayers of this Order and her Rosary quench a heresy. At the end of the thirteen century, when the Catholic Faith was still kept and flourished in England, some people, suggested by Hell, started to divulgate and persuade the simpleton and ill-disposed souls with some disguised heresies and treacherous beliefs.

When the most pious King Henry VII (so catholic as disgraced a Father of the perverted Henry VIII) knew of it, was so Christianly irritated against that intolerable wickedness, that decided to execute immediately all

those who were spreading that evil in his Kingdom. But meditating more calmly a different counsel, he turned first with prayers to the help of Heaven.

397. With this aim he went personally to the Monastery of Saint Mary of Zion of the Order of Saint (p. 274) Bridget in London, that was shining with the fame of holiness in its members to whom he entrusted with his Royal will to pray to God for the remedy of that pestilential evil, and that they do it by means of the Most Holy Rosary, imploring the sponsorship of the Queen of Angels.

Those Religious men and women did it punctually and obediently with such fervor and efficacy that in a few days it was seen with admiration of the Kingdom a general change and conversion of all such heretics by disposition of Heaven, that they reduced themselves and subjected consciously and humbly to the obedience of the King and of the Holy Catholic Roman Church, leaving and abjuring their errors.

398. *Faculty to the Fathers of the Order to bless the Rosaries and apply the Indulgencies.* Full of joy the Catholic Prince with this marvelous conversion, and seeing that this triumph was reached peacefully by means of the Heavenly Queen, invoked with the prayers of her Most Holy Rosary by the Monks and Nuns of Saint Bridget, implored from the Supreme Pontiff Alexander VI, that for the greater veneration of the most pure Virgin He may grant to the Fathers of the said Monastery of Zion His Apostolic faculty to bless their Holy Rosaries with some Indulgencies, that may excite more their devotion.

To this reverent plea of that pious King His Holiness condescended joyfully, moved by the favor of the Virgin, granting said faculty to the Fathers and five hundred years of Indulgency to each bead or grain of their Rosaries, blessed by them.

399. The Bull of this concession and privilege arrived at London to the hands of the King on the 27th of March 1500. Nevertheless, it is believed that the Document perished with all the other things, jewelry and papers in the Lutheran persecution (p. 275), or in the great fire, which in the year 1651 burned the Monastery of Saint Mary of Zion of Lisbon, to where the Nuns of the one in London moved, or by the Divine Providence were taken by the sea, fleeing from the mentioned persecution. We know about the fire of the Monastery of Lisbon by a letter that its Nuns wrote later to the General Chapter that the Order celebrated in Köln. Moreover, it is natural that the said Nuns would have taken with them to Lisbon the mentioned Bull and every important paper and jewelry that they could carry.

400. The Most Reverend Father Dom Robert of Loelen, Abbot of Celvarden, near Groningen, of the Order of Saint Benedict, in his book *Precious Treasury*, printed in Zutphen in 1518, certifies as an eye witness the existence of an authentic copy of the said Alexandrian Bull with this words here translated: "Be it known to all ... that the King of England obtained from our Most Holy Father Alexander the singular grace that the Rosaries that men are used to pray, may be consecrated or blessed by the Superior of the Order of Saint Bridget, for a greater incitement to the devotion

to the Blessed Virgin Mary and greater exaltation of said Order (whose singular Patroness and Head She is) with ample Indulgencies: namely at each Our Father five hundred years of Indulgencies and the same at each Hail Mary, and at each Credo ... The Bull of these Indulgencies is in England in the mentioned Convent of Saint Bridget, called of Zion in the Bishopric of London; whose authentic copy I have seen, me, Robert of Loelen, Abbot and Servant of the (p. 276) Monastery of Celvarden of the Order of Saint Benedict, near Groningen”.

Until here the quote of the Author, whose asseveration with other ones that he makes to persuade everyone of this truth, is an irrefragable argument, either by the respectable seriousness of the Author, or by having written it in the time or very little after, in which all above said happened. Besides the fact that the same Pontifical Bull is found in its original and can be seen still in the Vatican Register in Rome, even if not in its entirety, bus only in its beginning, due to the injury of time, as the said Father Eschech says.

401. *The old Indulgencies are annulled and new ones are granted to the Crown.* Likewise, Pope Leo X makes specific mention of such Alexandrine Bull in one of his own dated in Saint Peter of Rome the 10th of July 1515, that begins: *Ex clementi*. In which for greater assuredness and complete peace of mind, because some people either put in doubt or wanted to deny the truth of said Indulgencies, he revoked them and annulled all of them: and he granted anew perpetually, to avoid disputation, other ones so certain that no one could doubt or ignore them: namely, a hundred days of Indulgency at each Our Father and at each Hail Mary

and for each Credo that is prayed with the Rosary of Saint Bridget, which is blessed by the Religious of the Order.

Some spirits of contradiction, who seem not to live, but to contradict or make difficult everything with their anxiety and presumptuous fantasies, still wanted to dispute these Indulgencies, which afterwards were declared certain and assured by the Holy General Inquisition of Rome on the 18th of July 1703.

402. *The said Indulgencies are confirmed.* Seeing the increase of the devotion to the Crown (p. 277) or Rosary of Saint Bridget all over Rome and Italy among Princes, Prelates and Religious Orders, from the middle of the last century or 1600's (and since then until now it is the one commonly used in these Countries, and in those of Germany), the Pope Clement XI confirmed and ratified those Indulgencies of Leo X on the 22 of September of 1724 on consultation and petition of the Sacred Congregation of Indulgencies.

Which on the 27th of November of the same year ordered them to be printed, and they were printed in the press of the Apostolic Camera, for their better certification and appreciation and honor of this Religious Order, reduced or compiled in a separate Summary, that later the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XIV extended on the 15th of January 1743, giving his permission on the 9th of the following month, so that such Summary may be printed in any language, Country and Catholic press.

See what has been said in this chapter and in the previous one, in the mentioned Synopsis or compendium of Father Jacob Eschech to the chapter 9 of his second part.

403. *Appreciation that the Popes and everyone have to this Rosary in Italy and other Reigns.* To the special esteem of these Crowns or Rosaries that the Supreme Pontiffs, Cardinals and other Prelates, Religious and Catholic Lay people of those countries of Italy, Germany and Poland, that normally make use of them, we have the pleasure of adding the name of our Most Holy Father Clement XIV.

Particular esteem of Clement XIV to these Crowns. He, speaking about matters of Indulgencies with a certain Most Reverend Prelate, the present Secretary of the Congregation of Indulgencies (who by way of mouth referred it to the Father Procurator General Ludwig, who writes it to me in his letter of 5th February 1772), pronounced in praise of said Brigidine Crowns (p. 278) these memorable words: "Myself, either as Religious, or as Cardinal, and now Pope, I never have used any other Rosary but the Crown that they call of Saint Bridget, blessed by the Father of the same Order".

This is a favor by the way very special and honorable for these Crowns: and at the same time, it is a not so tacit approval of them, and confirmation of its Indulgencies.

And in force of gratitude (to make a stronger proof of what has being said) I cannot but say something here, that for me, or for my successors for the span of seven years He (the Supreme Pontiff) has given the faculty and license to bless said Crowns and Rosaries and Medals, two hundred by year, as stated in his Decree of 11th August 1770.

We need to reflect more upon that Pontifical expression in favor of these Crowns, that His Holiness

was a most worthy son of the Order of Saint Francis: by this reason it seems that His devotion were more to be inclined towards the Rosary, that they call of Jerusalem, which is the one disposed, published and extended by the Father of said His Religious Order.

404. *Way of reciting these Crowns.* The format or material disposition of this Crown is six sets of ten beads each, whose two extremes join each other, ending with three lesser beads and then another of the greater ones and at the end with a Cross.

And the way of reciting is to say a Credo at the Cross, to make in the first place the protestation of the Catholic Faith; then an Our Father in the greater bead, to raise the heart, as faithful children to Our Father and Creator; and the three first Hail Marias, to implore the help of the Blessed Virgin to pray devoutly Her Angelical Salutations, in honor and veneration of Her and for the good of our souls.

After this come the first five sets of tens to any of the Mysteries: (279) Joyful, Sorrowful or Glorious; and then immediately after the sixth set of tens, if you wish, to be applied to whatever one may desire.

Nevertheless, in the case that the Rosary may have only five sets of tens, the sixth set of tens can be said repeating one of the former set of tens, which has the same Indulgencies as the rest.

In addition, if there is no disposition to say the sixth, not by this the Indulgencies of the rest are lost.

It is possible also to continue prying all the Rosary of fifteen sets of tens, which is called entire Crown, of the one of five only, that would be just part of it.

Moreover, the fact that this materially be of six or five, or ten, or fifteen sets of tens, nothing will hinder

the Indulgencies, which do not depend from these material factors, but from the blessing.

And if the Rosary has also the blessing of the Dominican Religious Order, the Indulgencies of both Rosaries form the two benedictions of Saint Bridget and of Saint Dominic, with the condition that, as the prayers are said, the one who prays may be meditating or thinking at the same time in its Mysteries, according to his own ability; otherwise he will not gain the Indulgencies, as the Sacred Congregation of Indulgencies declared in the 6th August 1726, and the Pope Benedict XIII approved, who in his Brief *Pretiosus*, granting that the simple people, who do not know how to meditate them, may receive them praying devoutly and attentively.

However, who will be the one who cannot at least think on them, without knowingly distracting himself to speak, or do something else while praying? This, besides being a fault out of lack of respect to God and His Most Pure Mother, causes them not to acquire the Indulgencies and to receive what they ask.

405. The Indulgency of a hundred days to each Credo, Our Father and Hail Mary were granted first to the Crown or Rosary of Saint Bridget (p. 280) by the Pope Leo X, as said.

And after and at his likeness the mentioned Lord Benedict XIII of the Dominican Order, seeing them granted thus to said Crown, gave them also to the Rosary of His Sacred Order (according to what showed me a true Religious of it) on the 13th April 1726, but not the ones attached to the Credo, Our Father and three Hail Marias of the beginning in the one of Saint Bridget, for these are not prayed in the one of Saint Dominic.

Even if these two come to be only one indistinctly, as I said before. Because the one that the Monks and Nuns of the Monastery of Zion prayed, and with which the fire of that new heresy in London was extinguished, was no other than the Rosary of Saint Dominic.

In addition, if in the Rosary of Saint Bridget the Credo, the Our Father and the three Hails Mariés were not recited, not by this the rest of its Indulgencies will be missed, for this is not substantial, but accidental and optional.

And the fact that this Crown consist ordinarily (as they always come from Rome to be sold) of six sets of tens and the rest that we have explained has not or has been found no more origin than the custom of the Religious Order, as we said in the preceding number, approved or admitted by the Supreme Pontiffs that recite it thus and even bless by themselves many times these Crowns and have granted their Indulgencies also to the Credo, Our Father and three Hail Mariés of the beginning, as we have seen in their mentioned concessions.

In the primitive Religious Order, when they mention Jesus after the Hail Mary, they add in the Joyful Mysteries, at the first Ave, these words: *That He may increase in us a righteous Faith*, at the second: *That He may increase in us a (p. 281) firm Hope*, at the third: *That He may increase in us a perfect Charity*.

In the Sorrowful Mysteries they say at the first: *That He may fortify our Memory*, at the second: *That He may enlighten our Intelligence*, and at the third: *That He may perfection our Will*.

When they go to pray the Glorious ones, they say at the first Hail Mary: *That He may guide our Thoughts*,

at the second: *That He may guide our Words*, and at the third: *That He may govern our Deeds*.

In which they pray the Most Sweet Jesus and Savior in every part of the Rosary everything that there is to ask in any need either spiritual or temporal for the welfare and achievement of our salvation.

I have put it here, that it be known and that anyone who wants to do it like that, he may do it, for it is not something necessary for the Rosary nor for its Indulgencies; but of much devotion only.

For a better understanding of the Indulgencies granted to and by these Crowns, I will transcribe literally their Summary quoted above, formed and printed by order of the Sacred Congregation. It is as follows.

SUMMARY OF THE INDULGENCIES granted to the said Rosaries or Crowns of Saint Bridget, blessed by the Superiors of the Monasteries, or by other Priests of the Order of the Most Holy Savior or of the same Saint Bridget, deputed for this.

1. The Holiness of our Lord the Pope Benedict XIV, to the mentioned Rosaries or Crowns called of Saint Bridget, blessed by the Superiors of the Monasteries or by other Priests of the Order (p. 282) of the Most Holy Savior or of the same Saint Bridget, deputed for this, besides the Indulgencies, to be mentioned, already granted by Leo X and by Clement XI of holy memory, recognized and approved by the Sacred Congregation of Indulgencies and Holy Relics, adds more Indulgencies anew by His Brief of the 15 January 1743, as follows:

2. Whoever by his will says the Rosary or Crown of Saint Bridget will acquire a hundred days of Indulgency at each Our Father, a hundred days at each Hail Mary and a hundred at each Credo that he may recite: Leo X on 10 July 1515.

3. Whoever recites the said Rosary or Crown of fifteen sets of tens, apart from the mentioned Indulgencies of a hundred days, will gain besides the Indulgency of seven years and seven quarantines: the same Pope Leo X in the cited Bull.

4. Whoever recites the same Rosary or Crown together with another or some other persons, all and every one of them will acquire the same Indulgencies, as if each one of them prayed the Crown by himself: the same Pope Leo X in the cited Bull.

5. All the mentioned Indulgencies each person can gain from himself or apply them as a suffrage to the Souls of Purgatory: Benedict XIV on 10 March 1724.

6. He who prays said Crown at least of five sets of tens every day for a full year, and truly repented, and having gone to Confession one day at his election, receives Holy Communion, and prays to God for the harmony among the Christian Princes, the extirpation of heresies and for the exaltation of our Holy Mother Church, will gain plenary Indulgency (p. 283) of all sins, with the faculty of applying it to the Soul of the Faithful deceased: Clement XI on 22 September 1714.

7. Whoever has the custom of reciting said Crown, at least of five sets of tens, at least once a week, has confessed and received Holy Communion in the Festivity of Saint Bridget, has visited his own Parochial Church, or any other Church and in it he prays to God as said above, he will acquire a Plenary Indulgency from all his sins: Benedict XIV on 15 January 1743.

8. Whoever in article of death, commending his Soul to God, and having confessed and gone to Communion, and if he cannot do this because of an impediment, at least repented says with the heart, if he cannot pronounce it with his mouth, JESUS, he will gain Plenary Indulgency of all his sins: the same Benedict XIV in the cited Bull.

9. Whoever has the custom of reciting the said Crown every day for a continuous month, and has confessed and communicated in one day at his election in that month, and visits a Church and in it he prays to God, as we explained above, he will acquire a Plenary Indulgency of all his sins: the same Benedict XIV in the cited Bull.

10. Whoever has with him the mentioned Crown and prays to God kneeling down at the sign of the Bell for any person who is dying, every time he does this, he will gain the Indulgency of forty days: the same Benedict, loc. cit.

11. Whoever carries with him the mentioned Crown and repenting from his sins makes the examination of his conscience and says three times the Our Father and three times the Hail Mary, will acquire an Indulgency of twenty (p. 284) days: the same Benedict, loc. cit.

12. Whoever has with him the said Crown and hears any day, either feast or not, the Holy Mass, or participates in hearing the word of god, or accompanies the Most Holy Viaticum when it is brought to a sick person, or brings back some one to the path of salvation, or does any other pious deed in honor of Our Lord Jesus Christ, or of the Most Holy Virgin, or of Saint Bridget, and prays three times the Our Father and three times the Hail Mary, he will acquire the

Indulgency of a hundred days: the same Benedict XIV in the cited Bull.

13. Anyone can acquire all the mentioned Indulgencies for himself or apply them as a suffrage to the Souls of Purgatory: the same Benedict XIV in the cited Bull.

14. In order to gain each and every one of the Indulgencies expressed above, the Rosaries or Crowns mentioned must be blessed before by the said Fathers of the Order of the Most Holy Savior or of Saint Bridget; otherwise they will not enjoy any Indulgency.

15. The Sacred Congregation of Indulgencies and Sacred Relics, renovating the Decree of the 26 November 1714 prohibits whomsoever to be able to sell or lend or lend in pawn to others the said Crowns or Rosaries once they are blessed and declares that they are deprived of the granted Indulgencies.

These nevertheless by Apostolic Decree of 18 February 1745 will remain for the one who lent or lost them, when he will have found or had them again; and once one of the Rosaries is lost, another cannot be subrogated instead of it, if it is not blessed first by one of the mentioned Fathers.

16. (p. 285) Benedict XIV mentioned above on 9 February 1743 granted that this Summary may licitly be printed in any language and Country and press of a Catholic.

Anthony Maria Erba, Apostolic Notary and Secretary.

To acquire these Indulgencies they have to have the Bull of the Holy Crusade of the last Preaching.