

Children's Treasure

June 7, 2008

Do mothers know – do they still want to know – what treasures they, and they alone, can lay up in the hearts of their children? Here is a charming reminder from a young poet of the Irish countryside, born in the last years of the 19th century, who died on the eve of World War Two, Michael Walsh. The poem is entitled “Roses”:

Roses of evening – O loveliest of roses

Falling in music as the night came down –

To me the most familiar sound of childhood,

My mother praying on her beads of brown.

Evenings at home – O evenings long remembered!

Sunset on the meadows – moonrise on the snows,

Be it June or December – twilights that descended

To low soft music of a falling rose!

Of all the memories of a quiet valley

That haunt me, haunt me in this dusty town,

But one remains – the loveliest and the sweetest –

My mother praying on her beads of brown!

What a mother can give to her child in its earliest years cannot be replaced by the father, nor even at a later date by a beloved spouse. Both of them come upon the heart made, or unmade, by the mother. The key to its unmaking is her self-centredness, or selfishness, arising often today from the pursuit of her own fulfilment – how little does she know! The

key to its making, and to that profound veneration in which mothers are naturally held, is her self-sacrifice, or selflessness. See in "Roses" how deep in the child struck his mother's forgetting herself in God!

Kyrie eleison.