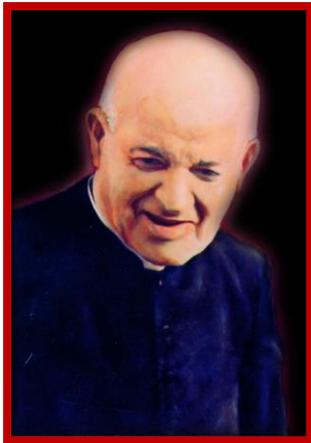


# THE 'MYSTERIES OF LIGHT'

## and

### SAINT GEORGE PRECA



Following the announcement of the five new 'Mysteries of Light' announced by His Holiness Pope John Paul II in the last apostolic letter 'Rosarium Virginis Mariae', references were made in many reports in the media to a Maltese priest, Fr George Preca from whose writings the idea of the new 'Mysteries of Light' may have originated. (See article 'Pope adds new Mysteries to Rosary' The Universe, October 20, 2002 by Gerry O'Connell and Robert Doyle).

Better known as the founder of S.D.C. (Societas Doctrinae Christianae), Saint George Preca was born in Malta in 1880 and started his Society in 1907 soon after his ordination as a priest. Besides carrying out his normal duties as a priest Fr Preca spent most of his time giving talks, writing, hearing confessions and talking to people who queued to ask for his advice on a whole range of personal matters. Though some of his numerous publications were intended for use by the members of S.D.C., many others make good spiritual reading for any Christian who want to go beyond the formalities of just being practicing and dig deeper into the core gospel values. Favourite themes of Fr Preca were the Spirit of Christ, the Right Intention, Meekness and Discipleship. All his writings were written in his first language, Maltese, although a few have also been translated into English.

The 'Mysteries of Light' can be found in a 1957 publication by Fr Preca called 'The Rosary of Our Lady'. In this short writing he suggests a new set of Mysteries for the Holy Rosary which he called 'The Mysteries of Light'. The close similarity between the five mysteries as suggested by Fr George in his writing and those published in the pope's document is striking. The mysteries suggested by Fr George are:

1. The baptism of Jesus in the river Jordan and his time in the desert.
2. Jesus proving his divinity through his word and his miracles.
3. Jesus teaching the beatitudes.
4. The Transfiguration.
5. The Last Supper.

Fr George worked hard in many ways to strengthen and further develop devotion to our Lady in many ways. Apart from this writing on the Rosary he was very keen on encouraging more and more people to wear the 'scapular' of our Lady of Mt Carmel or carry the 'Miraculous Medal' of the Immaculate Conception. He also instructed the members of the Society he founded to pray the Rosary every day and wrote additional short prayers to be recited before each decade.



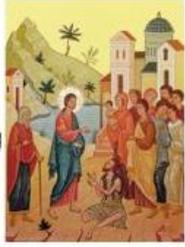
S.D.C., the Society Fr Preca founded in Malta has since its inception opened centres in several other countries, England being one of them. It is a society for lay people who though not taking any vows as in the case of religious orders, still live celibate while remaining 'in the world' leading their normal lives in their various ways. However, they also commit themselves to work within the Church through passing the Word of God to others particularly through catechism courses.

'To God alone honour and glory' was one of the favourite sayings of Fr Preca. He would surely never approve of anyone giving him any credit for anything good that he would have done. Nevertheless, if his original ideas have now been presented by the Church for everyone's use in praying the Rosary there's nothing wrong with us giving credit where it is due, in this case to this humble Maltese priest. The mysteries of light are the Church's and Fr Preca's gift to all of us as a way of 'contemplating with Mary the face of Christ'.

'Contemplating the face of Christ' is precisely at the heart of Fr George's spirituality. Apart from his several writings about this he wanted all SDC members to honour the Holy face of Jesus every Thursday night through a prayer he himself wrote. A special programme in honour of the Holy face of Jesus is also held at all SDC centres in the night between Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, in remembrance of the sufferings received by Jesus' face during that night in Jerusalem.

Fr George Preca was declared Blessed by Pope John Paul on the 9<sup>th</sup> of May 2001 in Malta. This was during his last stop during a journey 'On the footsteps of St Paul', when the pope visited Greece first, then Syria and finally Malta. He was then Canonised by Pope Benedict XV1 in the Vatican on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2007.

## THE MYSTERIES OF LIGHT

<p><b>1. THE BAPTISM OF JESUS</b></p>  <p>John baptises Jesus in the river Jordan</p>	<p><b>2. THE MIRACLE AT CANA</b></p>  <p>Jesus turns water into wine at a Wedding</p>	<p><b>3. JESUS PREACHING</b></p>  <p>Jesus proclaims the coming of the Kingdom of God</p>
<p><b>4. THE TRANSFIGURATION</b></p>  <p>Jesus in glory on mount Tabor with Moses and Elijah</p>	<p><b>5. THE EUCHARIST</b></p>  <p>Jesus gives us himself at the Last supper</p>	