



The Rosarian

Volume 2 — Issue 4

TheRosarian.org

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"[The Confraternity of the Rosary is] so to speak, the battalion who fights the battle of Christ, armed with his sacred mysteries, and under the banner and guidance of the heavenly Queen."

— Pope Leo XIII

Dear Friend in Christ,

As I write this message and look back on the past month, my

heart goes out to all who receive this message; I hope that you are in the midst of a blessed Easter Season. This month has begun - and next month will continue - a season which sets the rhythm for the rest of the year. As we look back at the month, I ask a question: What does Easter have in store for us?



Last year, a student asked me what I gave up for Lent; when I shared and returned the question, the student shared how hard and meaningful that Lent had been, that they felt freed by their Lenten resolution, and intended to keep it as a regular part of life going forward. If we gave up chocolate or coffee, that story might not resonate and perhaps it shouldn't. But if our Lenten resolution was something that could be built upon, we may find ourselves pondering the next step during Easter.

The Rosary helps to interpret and point the way to the next step, especially during this season in the form of the Glorious Mysteries. When we pray those mysteries during this season, we pray in the midst of the Resurrection, Jesus' accompaniment of His apostles until the day of His Ascension, and then His sending of the Holy Spirit, who has not left us to this day. Even when the Easter Season ends, the mission of the Spirit continues and leads us forward. The lives of the apostles show that the journey is not always easy or pleasant, but that if we live in Christ, we will always end up right where He wants us.

As we walk through this season, let's give thanks for all the grace on offer during Easter; let's hold fast to the Rosary, asking Mary's help to see what the season has in store.

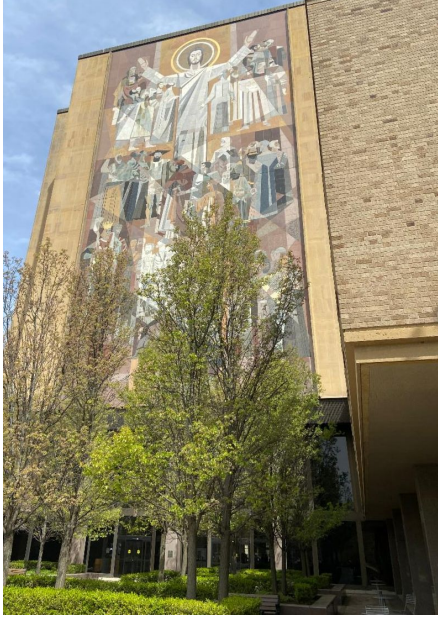
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. James Pierce Cavanaugh O.P." The signature is written in a cursive style.

Fr. James Pierce Cavanaugh, O.P.
Promoter for the Rosary Confraternity

Update

This week's newsletter does not come with a Spanish Translation due to lack of availability. If you or someone you know has the capacity to translate this Newsletter into Spanish on a regular basis, please contact the Confraternity Promoter.

News



This past month included the conclusion of a Rosary series, given at St. Vincent Ferrer Parish (below), a talk given to our Dominican Campus Ministry at Indiana University in Bloomington, IN and a couple of visits to South Bend for collaboration with our Dominican Laity (left: The Word of Life Mural, University of Notre Dame). Please reach out if you would like to arrange a visit by the Confraternity Promoter.



Feast of the Annunciation (Part II)



Image: Annunciation — painting by Carmelite Fra Filippo Lippi, c. 1445, Galleria Doria Pamphilj, Rome. Courtesy of Fr. Lawrence Lew, OP (Flickr)

This year within the Roman Catholic Church, the celebration of the Annunciation gives a special case study of the Solemnity across ecclesial boundaries and also in concert with the great celestial event which caught the attention this year of most of the country. If you read last month's newsletter, you'll notice that the Solemnity of the Annunciation is so nice we treat it twice!

Whereas the Solemnity is ordinarily celebrated within the Roman Church on March 25th - nine months before Christmas - the celebration is moved in cases when it coincides with Holy Week; this year, Holy Week began on the 25th, and so celebration of the Annunciation was delayed for two full weeks in the calendar of the Roman Church. The movement of the Solemnity can be contrasted not only with the approach of the Orthodox, but also Byzantine Catholics.

The Orthodox celebration of Annunciation on March 25th this year would have created no special conflict because of the different celebrations of Easter between the Catholic and Orthodox; Orthodox observing the older and less accurate Julian calendar operative in the earlier days of the Church, with Catholics observing the more accurate Gregorian calendar promulgated in 1582. The difference, though, is not only seen between Catholics and Orthodox, but within the Catholic Church. Catholics at Annunciation Byzantine Catholic Church celebrated the Solemnity of the Annunciation on March 25th this year, with the Solemnity superseding the Monday of Holy Week.

This obscure point is not just a matter of curiosity, but worth pondering; what ought the faithful to

take away from the Solemnity's various celebrations even within the Catholic communion? Proponents of the Roman calendar might wax poetic about the moving of the Solemnity as in keeping with Mary's life on earth; as Mary functioned in the background all throughout the life of her son, so it is appropriate that the Paschal Mystery ought to take center-stage when coinciding with the Annunciation. But proponents of the Byzantine calendar could do the same, speaking about the traditional ties between the Annunciation and Good Friday and even pointing to the special way in which Good Friday is celebrated in the Byzantine Liturgy when the two celebrations coincide. Even though the celebration is vanishingly rare - the next occurrence not taking place until 2157 - there exists a special set of prayers for such an occurrence.

[\(https://media.ascensionpress.com/2020/03/24/connections-between-the-annunciation-creation-and-good-friday/\)](https://media.ascensionpress.com/2020/03/24/connections-between-the-annunciation-creation-and-good-friday/)

One more wrinkle to this year's celebration can be seen in the Roman Church's celebration coinciding with the solar eclipse which passed over the United States. By the next day, there were many photographs depicting the eclipse, and descriptions of the eclipse as a, 'religious experience.' Even individuals with no faith to speak of can perhaps understand in a new way the vision spoken of in Revelation 12:1; "A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars." One can validly apply the awe experienced at the eclipse and apply it to the Mother of God and to her Son.

As we take one more month to celebrate the Annunciation, we can more actively ponder the centrality of the Incarnation in our lives. Jesus being made flesh in the womb of the Virgin Mary is a central event in human history; may our pondering this mystery make us more aware of the complimentary and diverse realities of Marian devotion within the Catholic Church, and may no legitimate Marian devotion be set to the side.

Behind the Cloister Gate

Mary's Witness of Gratitude and Generosity

Introduction:

When we learn to live gratefully, we allow God to use us despite ourselves. We can afford to lose ourselves and courageously accept the will of God with love and confidence. Mary teaches us to live gratefully by daily accepting events of life with gratitude.

Gratitude is an inherent quality of the heart that translates itself into behavior. It is a readiness to express appreciation or to pay back, with some kind acts or words,



for a favor received. Mary received her call to be the mother of the Messiah. How could she repay God for such great a favor, save with the donation of her life even though she did not fully understand the implications of her daunting mission?

The Annunciation:

Mary's 'fiat' at the Annunciation is an expression of gratitude for God's election. She responded to God's gift with a grateful heart and readiness to serve. "I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled" (Luke 1:38). Here we see Mary as a model of one who lived gratefully. She received everything as gift, and she is a witness of one who was gifted by God; and in receiving the gift she expresses her gratitude in giving it back to

God through her service to others.

Mary prayed with gratitude. She was not afraid to say yes to God's gift. She chose to love instead of fear in embracing God's invitation of love. She overcame her fear with love and God's love merged with her love. Fear and gratitude cannot coexist because "There is no fear in love" (1 John: 18). Her disposition of calm confidence opened a door for her to meet the challenge of her call.

Mary's unconditional yes stirred her interior attitude of gratitude and she expressed the ability to serve others. She realized she was in communion with love, and that she was totally taken up by that love. Through the inner process of discipleship, Mary was liberated, she came to true inner freedom, the peace of God that surpasses understanding. She was united with God because love unites and fear separates. She was not hindered by anything or anybody from embracing love. She was totally free, true to herself and from a deeper sense of self-knowledge she knew what was real, true, and good and put it into practice. Scripture commends her behavior. It tells us that she is indeed blessed because "she believed the Lord's Word would be fulfilled in her" (Luke 1: 45). She became the mother of God and mother of us all. "...Anyone who does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother" (Mt 12: 50).

Another example of gratitude for grace received, comes from Zacchaeus' encounter with Jesus. "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today" (Luke 19:5). Jesus invited himself to Zacchaeus' house. Jesus gratuitously gives the gift of his presence to Zacchaeus. In return, Zacchaeus like Mary, is moved with gratitude. To express it, he promised to undo his way of life, to give generously to the poor. He vowed to stop his underhanded practices that oppressed the poor. This is an expression of gratitude through generosity and service to the poor. Zacchaeus radically learned to live gratefully, and Jesus commended his gratitude. "Today salvation has come to this house" (Luke 19: 9).

Again, we read of an outpour of gratitude in the life of Mechthild of Magdeburg, a beguine woman who lived gratefully amid deep interior spiritual darkness and physical diminishment. Her gratitude to God for services received from others runs like this:

“Lord, I thank You that since in Your love You have taken from me all earthly riches, You now clothe and feed me through the goodness of others, so that I no longer know those things that might clothe my heart in pride of possession.

Lord, I thank You that since You have taken my sight from me, You serve me through the eyes of others.*

Lord, I thank You that since You have taken from me the strength of my hands and the strength of my heart, You now serve me with the hands and hearts of others.” Open hearts and hands receive and give spontaneously.

The Visitation:

Right after Mary had given her consent, she moved in haste to the hill country to visit Elizabeth. Mary recognized the gift of God within her as well as in Elizabeth in whom the impossible became possible by God’s grace. And in acknowledging the gift of God in her life, she brought it forth to serve others. In the non-canonical Gospel of Thomas, Jesus tells us: “If you bring forth that which is within you, it will save you. If you do not bring it forth, it will destroy you.”* Mary was grateful that God had removed the shame of barrenness in the life of Elizabeth. Mary joined her gratitude with her loving service to Elizabeth.

A grateful heart flows into action and expresses itself in generosity. Gratitude and generosity are linked. Mary did not keep her sentiment of gratitude to herself. She shows to others that she was grateful by her service. Her arduous journey to Judea was an outward expression of gratitude as she generously gave herself to the work of God in giving of herself to others. And Elizabeth also accepted Mary’s presence with joy and gratitude.

Conclusion:

Because she was equipped for action, Mary acquired a new way of seeing the world around her. The energy of life and love within her flowed out to benefit others. She did not set out to go to do anything spectacular for those she served; rather she allowed God to do something in and through her. She did not hold back anything but gave herself generously to God in carrying out her mission and, in doing so, became an instrument of grace to others.

Mary expresses gratitude, generosity, peace, and joy in an exemplary manner, not only in her Magnificat, but by engendering grace in Elizabeth as well, who exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear...” (Luke 1: 43). The two women build each other in love by their expressions of gratitude for God’s mighty deeds in their lives. They were a gift to each other. It was one of those gratuitous moments when God does great things for those who allow God to be God in their lives.

May we welcome God with grateful hearts as Mary did and may we be agents of that gratitude in serving others. Amen.

*Citations for referenced sources are below

Mechthild, *The Flowing Light of the Godhead* 7.64, in *Meditations from Mechthild of Magdeburg*, ed. Henry L. Carrigan Jr. (Brewster MA: Paraclete Press, 1999), 126.

Gospel of Thomas, saying 70. For other translations of the *Gospel of Thomas* and links to additional non-canonical resources, see http://www.gnosis.org/naghamm/nhl_thomas.htm

Rosary Story

Each month, The Rosarian will feature a Story of the Rosary from a person within the Provincial Territory of the Dominican Province of St. Albert the Great. These stories will range from the mystical to the everyday; we hope these stories will encourage readers to share their own stories of the Rosary. This month's story is told by Fr. Gerard Cleator, O.P.



On the Rosary in your youth?

My father was a real missionary even though he only had an 8th-grade education. He organized a regular Rosary at work; from the factory they would go over to the church and say the Rosary on their lunch hour. He had over 100 men coming. Only in my older age, I came to see how much of an influence my father had on me. But I thought everything I'm doing now imitated my father. Taking the initiative that came from him. In October, we'd have a family Rosary. We'd kneel on the floor, I hated it. That was my father. Sometimes things got confused; for the longest time he didn't go to communion. I asked him why not. He went to confession and was told to say the Rosary every day, and he thought it was his penance, and when he missed a day, he thought he had to stop going to communion. When I explained as a priest he could come back to communion, Dad was very happy. But the Rosary kept him going.

My mother had a different kind of faith; we'd sing, 'O Come O Come Emmanuel', and she'd ask who Emmanuel was. But she had a very deep wise faith. My faith comes through my mother and I think she had a deep influence on my own spirituality, and she would pray the Rosary. She prided herself that from the time of being a young girl, to the time she was getting ready to die she prayed the Rosary. Giving birth? Prayed the Rosary. Sick? Prayed the Rosary.

She didn't join the Legion of Mary; going out to talk with people was too much for her. She had a high school education and didn't go beyond that, and was afraid to go to the pastor like many people were in those days, but loved going to church, just to visit. Some of our friends would come

to her when they had problems. She was so accepting and good with them. She had a great gift of intercession; she said she prayed so much for other people that she didn't have time to pray for herself. But all these people would come to her and ask for prayers and she would put them on the list. She had a big influence on me. Just a good woman.

On the Rosary in Your Own Life?

In my own ministry, in the earlier days, I didn't do much about the Rosary, and there was a guy who got me back on it. I would think to myself, "I'm very liberal, and here's this guy who's much more liberal than I am, and he's saying the Rosary every day." Got me back on it. It's become a contemplative experience. I can't really sit very much any more contemplatively, but I can pray the Rosary. You do the Rosary and you get insights, you see things.

You can get insights into scripture, you can see what you need to be doing, you can see all kinds of things like that. It gave me real confidence. The Hail Mary, obviously we say it all the time. But it really struck me, I was having trouble with the idea of my death; trusting I'll make it, but was very nervous. But you say, 'Now and at the hour of our death, amen.' And you realize, 'She'll be there at the hour of my death, what am I worried about?!' It took all the fear away. I miss the Office (Liturgy of the Hours) in the community. I love the Office, I say it, I get a lot out of it, but I'm coming to a decision these days about getting (the Rosary) in three times a day, and I think I can do it.

What would you say to someone about the Rosary?

I can only give witness, what it's done for me, what I've seen it do for other people. It's a powerful prayer it really is.

Fr. Cleator is a former Prior Provincial of the Province of St. Albert the Great, currently living at Ascension Living Resurrection Village in Chicago. Fr. Cleator lives with Parkinson's Disease, and carries out a ministry of prayer.

Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary

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