

THE PASTOR'S DESK

October 4, 2009 - Our Lady of the Rosary



Dear Parishioners,

This Wednesday, October 7th, is the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. This feast finds its origin in the Battle of Lepanto in 1571. In this naval battle, fought on October 7th, the European forces defeated the Turkish navy off of the coast of Greece. This was a severe setback to the Turks in their plans to capture Vienna and invade Europe. The Feast was first established as Our Lady of Victory. Pope Pius V regarded the intercession of Mary, in answer to the many Rosaries said for her help, as decisive in gaining the victory.

The Feast is now a celebration of Mary and the prayer that is most associated with her. The Redemptorists have a very strong devotion to the Rosary. As a Redemptorist, Bishop John Neumann prayed the Rosary often. He continued to wear his Redemptorist habit as a Bishop. In pictures of him, you can see the Rosary wrapped around the belt of his habit. Indeed, he was praying the rosary when stricken with a fatal heart attack as he was walking down a street in Philadelphia. We need look no further than the Catechism to see how we join with Mary in prayer to her Son. These are the sections of the Catechism which tell of the place of Mary in our prayer:

2673 In prayer the Holy Spirit unites us to the person of the only Son, in his glorified humanity, through which and in which our filial prayer unites us in the Church with the Mother of Jesus.

2674 Mary gave her consent in faith at the Annunciation and maintained it without hesitation at the foot of the Cross. Ever since, her motherhood has extended to the brothers and sisters of her Son 'who still journey on earth surrounded by dangers and difficulties.' Jesus, the only mediator, is the way of our prayer; Mary, his mother and ours, is wholly transparent to him: she 'shows the way', and is herself 'the Sign' of the way, according to the traditional iconography of East and West.

2675 Beginning with Mary's unique cooperation with the working of the Holy Spirit, the Churches developed their prayer to the holy Mother of God, centering it on the person of Christ manifested in his mysteries. In countless hymns and antiphons expressing this prayer, two movements usually alternate with one another: the first 'magnifies' the Lord for the 'great things' he did for his lowly servant and through her for all human beings. The second entrusts the supplications and praises of the children of God to the Mother of Jesus, because she now knows the humanity which, in her, the Son of God espoused.

2678 Medieval piety in the West developed the prayer of the rosary as a popular substitute for the Liturgy of the Hours. In the East, the litany called the *Akathistos* and the *Paraclesis* remained closer to the choral office in the Byzantine churches, while the Armenian, Coptic, and Syriac traditions preferred popular hymns and songs to the Mother of God. But in the Ave Maria, the theotokia, the hymns of St. Ephrem or St. Gregory of Narek, the tradition of prayer is basically the same.

2679 Mary is the perfect *Orans* (pray-er), a figure of the Church. When we pray to her, we are adhering with her to the plan of the Father, who sends his Son to save all men. Like the beloved disciple we welcome Jesus' mother into our homes, for she has become the mother of all the living. We can pray with and to her. The prayer of the Church is sustained by the prayer of Mary and united with it in hope.

There is also an indulgence attached to praying the Rosary. Number 17 of the Book of Indulgences, grants a plenary indulgence to any of the Christian faithful who piously recite the Rosary in a Church or oratory, or in the family, and in a religious community. In other cases, the indulgence is partial. To gain either indulgence, the praying of the Rosary must include five decades continuously recited; a pious meditation of the mysteries (Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious, or Of Light) while the decades are being said; in public recitation, an announcing of the mysteries.

Let us celebrate the great prayer of the Holy Rosary and join ourselves with the Mother of God in contemplating the mysteries of Our Lord.

**God bless,
Fr. LaHood**

St. Luke Productions presents "VIANNEY"
This Tuesday, October 6th at 7:00 pm in the church. It is the gripping story of the remarkable priest who battled the devil to save souls. Leonardo Defilippis is well-known as the director and star of the feature film THERESE, which ran in mainstream movie theaters for more than a year. His live performance of VIANNEY includes a spectacular set, numerous costumes and a moving musical score. Tickets will be \$10 for adults and \$5 for youth 17 and under. There are still tickets available, send an e-mail or call the rectory at 301-977-5492. All priests, religious, and seminarians are welcome as special guests. In this "Year of the Priests", this is a great way in the spirit to pray for vocations.