



The Rosarian

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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,

Greetings!

I'm Fr. James Pierce Cavanaugh, O.P., Promoter of the Rosary Confraternity for the Province of St. Albert the Great. On the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, I ask for her special intercession for all readers of *The Rosarian*.



Since devotion to the Rosary began, the official Rosary group of the Church—the Rosary Confraternity—has always been administered by the Friars of the Order of Preachers. As the centuries have progressed, the value of this devotion as a common source of Catholic identity—and of abundant grace from God—has only become more clear. St. Louis de Montfort names many individual benefits in his book *Secret of the Rosary*, and each of those individual benefits is only strengthened when belonging to a group. According to St. Louis, one who unites her prayer to the prayers of a group gains the benefit of all the group's prayers. In this way, membership in the Church's Rosary Confraternity unites the prayers of one who prays the Rosary with the prayers of all other Confraternity members, amplifying the prayers of all involved. I share with you today a vision for this amplification in our Provincial territory.

In the Dominican Province of St. Albert the Great's geographical territory—the Midwest United States and Puerto Rico—there are more than 70 million people, and almost 17 million Catholics. It is our goal that every eligible Catholic in our geographical territory would be connected to the Rosary Confraternity, and that the growth of the Rosary would help make this territory more fertile for the New Evangelization.

We have reason to believe we'll reach this goal. Membership in the Confraternity is completely free. The only commitment—that one prays 15 decades of the Rosary per week—is already fulfilled by many who are not yet part of the Confraternity; for those people, enrollment should be a no-brainer. Even for people on the fence, we hope to provide benefits which complement the spiritual ones.

Every month, a new edition of this newsletter—*The Rosarian*—will be published. Initial features will include:

- an article exploring a traditional Marian devotion
- a message from our cloistered nuns
- a story of the Rosary from a person within our Provincial territory
- a spotlight of ministry from various corners of the Confraternity

As the Confraternity grows in our Provincial territory, we hope that devotion to the Rosary will be a catalyst for growth of the Body of Christ in ways that we can't yet imagine. Ours is a humble start, but one accompanied by a prayer for abundant growth; abundant as the fruits and graces given through the Rosary.

Our Lady of Guadalupe, Patroness of the Americas and Star of the New Evangelization, Pray for us!

Fr. James Pierce Cavanaugh O.P.

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

Our Lady of Guadalupe and God's Redemption of Culture



Image: The miracle of the tilma, 17th century painting housed in Alba de Tormes. Courtesy of Fr. Lawrence Lew, OP (Flickr)

December boasts abundant options for a spotlight on a traditional Marian devotion. Our Lady, the Immaculate Conception is a natural choice, given her status as Patroness of the United States under

that title. However, considering Our Lady of Guadalupe is especially appropriate.

Before Christianity ever came to the New World, the people indigenous to modern Mexico had revered the hilltop featured in the story of Our Lady of Guadalupe. At the time of the apparition to Juan Diego, only twelve years had passed since the beginning of the Spanish conquest. Pre-Christian religion still held sway, and Juan Diego was part of a small minority of persons who had accepted the new Christian religion.

On December 9th, according to the traditional account, as Juan made his way past Tepeyac Hill, he encountered a beautiful lady. She asked him to go to the Bishop of Mexico City to ask that a Church be built on that hilltop. Juan Diego fulfilled her request, but the kindly Bishop paid little mind to his petition. The next day Juan encountered the lady again, and she asked him to ask again; when he did, the Bishop responded by asking for a sign.

The next day, December 12th, Juan suspected that he would encounter the Lady again, and preferred not to return to the Bishop, so he took a different route in order to avoid her. As he took an alternate route, she appeared to him again, and sent him to the top of the hill to search for the Bishop. When he got to the top of the hill, he saw beautiful roses in bloom, and out of season. He picked a number of roses, stored them in his tilma—his outer cloak—and went to see the Bishop. When he arrived at the Bishop's residence, he opened the tilma and let the roses fall; on his cloak was an image of the Lady he had seen. That sign was sufficient for the Bishop, who approved the construction of the church on the hilltop. A church in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe still stands on that spot.

The miracle of the roses and of the tilma is well known, but perhaps just as notable is the wave of conversion that followed the Guadalupe apparition. Over the next decade, more than 9 million indigenous people converted to the Catholic faith, all under the auspices of Our Lady of Guadalupe. In the decades that followed, the institutional Church was slow to endorse the devotion, with many warning against the hilltop's pagan roots. In the face of this opposition, the Dominican friars—particularly Alonso de Montufar, the second Bishop of that Diocese—preached in support of the devotion, paving the way for Our Lady of Guadalupe to ascend to the place she holds in the life of the Church today.

In the centuries following the apparition, Our Lady of Guadalupe has gradually been given new titles; first as Patroness of Mexico, then as Empress of the Americas, and most recently as Patroness of the Americas and Star of the New Evangelization. This last title is especially appropriate in light of the scope of evangelization that followed her apparition, and suggests a path forward as the Church strives to evangelize today.

Our Lady of Guadalupe represents an affirmation of all that was good in the religious devotion of the people, and also represents the way in which Christ elevates and redeems that good—and yet incomplete—religious devotion. Even as the people of that place had worshiped a mother of the gods on that hilltop, Our Lady of Guadalupe drew their attention to the Mother of God, and so co-

operated in the redemption wrought by her Son—the true fullness of their desires.

As Our Lady saw the way to redeem the worship of the time, so this month we pray that the Church discerns what is worshiped in the present day—sports, music, movies, television and more. And as the subject of honor on Tepeyac Hill transitioned from a pagan goddess to the Son of the Mother of God, we ask Our Lady of Guadalupe to again help her Son redeem the culture, and show how all incomplete worship can be consecrated to her Son through her.

Behind the Cloister Gate



This past summer, I had the pleasure of spending a few weeks at the **Monastery of Mary the Queen**, in southern Illinois. The seeds for the visit were planted a few months before, when I visited the nuns' chaplain, Fr. Ed Ruane, O.P.. The surroundings so moved me that I told him to let me know if he ever wanted to spend time away from the Monastery in the summer, so that I could cover his duties. He told me that he'd been looking for just that opportunity, and so it was arranged; I would stay in the hermitage for a couple weeks, and give the nuns a retreat while I was there. To enrich the retreat, I asked my classmate to come as well and to design the retreat on Angelic Spirituality. During our stay, we celebrated mass, prayed with the nuns, gave the retreat and generally reveled in the tranquil surroundings. By the end of the two weeks, we were both loath to leave such a peaceful place.

The Monastery of Mary the Queen has not always stood on that property, or even been a single Monastery at all. In 2014, the Monastery of Mary the Queen in Elmira, New York, alarmed at its decline, felt drawn to move from New York to the American Heartland. The nuns settled with the Dominican Sisters of Springfield, looked for local options. After a few years they procured a

parcel of land in the fields near Girard, IL. The Monastery was built shortly after the land purchase, and dedicated on August 15th, 2022.

During our last Sunday there, I spoke with a family who came to visit the nuns; the family's husband and father revealed himself as one of the Monastery's architects. He told the story of his mother's faithful participation in her parish's Rosary Group, and that her special intention had been for a monastery of cloistered nuns to come to their little town. Given the size of the town, it had never seemed likely; when she heard the news that nuns would be coming and that her son would help build their monastery, she called it a miracle—hopefully the first of many.

The nuns' primary apostolate is prayer for the Dominican Friars, Sisters and Dominican Lay and Priestly Fraternities of the Midwestern United States. In the coming months, nuns will contribute to this newsletter reflections on the Blessed Mother which grow out of their cloistered life. By this, we hope to introduce our cloistered nuns to a wider audience, and give them a platform to share their way of life with the outer world. May Mary, Queen of the Rosary, pray for us; by her prayers, may the cloistered life thrive.

Stories of the Rosary

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 Colleen Pabst.




When I was pregnant with my oldest, I was having a really hard time sleeping; at the end of a pregnancy you're not very comfortable. I was blessed growing up to be close to our parish priest in Western Springs, Fr. Joseph McDonald. My kids always say how comfortable I am around priests, but I'm that way because I was comfortable around him and I saw him as a real person. We felt we could ask him about our faith, we weren't intimidated to ask if we had a question or a doubt.

When I told Fr. Joseph I was having a hard time sleeping, he basically told me to pray the rosary. He was kind of joking—he said it would put me right to sleep—but he got me a Rosary, and said to keep it on the nightstand or under the pillow. He got me a book too, about how to pray the Rosary. When I had a hard time sleeping, or worried about something, I would just grab the Rosary and I'd move the beads under the pillow. It would inevitably calm me down and help me sleep. I don't know how many full ones I got through—I fell asleep most of the time before I got through a full one—but it was just a calming repetition.

Fr. McDonald told me, "don't worry, God has it all." And that resonated with me; I thought, "God does have it all, and Mary has me." And I loved that. I don't pray it now as much as I wish I did, but that book is still on my nightstand, and I've never found something that does the same thing as the Rosary. It's an art.

The whole method, repetition and symbolism, and the way it brings people together makes me say that. There's not much in life that has a discipline that says, "this is how you do it," and it's neat to find those things. I think crocheting or cross-stitching is the same way. And it's an art that brings people together with a common interest. At our parish, St. John of the Cross, the kids do a Living Rosary; they spend their 7th grade year learning about the Rosary and each child gets a sweatshirt with a color that matches the decade of the Rosary they pray. 7th graders aren't always comfortable with each other, but in the living rosary, you have to stand next to your classmates, and it seems to bring them together. I'd love to see a resurgence of the Rosary, it's such a beautiful thing.

Colleen Pabst serves as President of the Mothers Club at Fenwick High School in Oak Park, IL.



Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary

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