



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,

It's good to talk with you again; it's hard to believe that we've transitioned into Lent. So much has happened regarding the

Confraternity that it's hard to keep straight (I look forward to giving more updates as the months progress). This reality gives us the chance to consider our own lives and ask; how can our Rosary practice help us to make the most of the time we have?

During the month of January, I found myself in a variety of places. First, there was a trip to Evansville to support our Dominican Laity in their efforts to promote the Rosary at the Diocesan Eucharistic Congress. The Diocese of Evansville reserved the Grand National Center in downtown Evansville, and thousands of people braved the frigid temperatures to attend the Congress. The Evansville Lay Dominicans — The Woman Clothed with the Sun Fraternity — for its part, served as sponsors for the Congress, set up a booth, and invited people to join the Confraternity. They were tremendously successful — many people reading this newsletter for the first time are doing so because of the work of that group. I hope that all our Rosarians can become more familiar with their work as we go through the year, and take them and other active Fraternities as an inspiration for local action.



The next weekend, I drove to Washington, D.C., to attend the March for Life, with our students at Fenwick High School. This year's trip to D.C. was unique because we made a special effort to coordinate our activities with the Dominican House of Studies; Fr. Richard Peddicord, O.P., celebrated mass in the main chapel, and we attended the Rally for Life with all the other Dominican friars in attendance. (See [@fenwickfriars](#) on Instagram) You may have seen [our video from the March](#) and heard of the blessed rosaries given to the kids; the whole Fenwick Right to Life group thanks you for keeping us in your prayers. After the March, I made for Cincinnati to celebrate a Saturday mass at St. Gertrude Parish, and to attend lunch with a group of Fenwick alumni. St. Gertrude is the home of the Novitiate for friars of the Province of St. Joseph, which serves in the Eastern United States. It was a pleasure to speak with Fenwick alums about the area, and hear of their continued gratitude for the gifts Fenwick has given them.

In addition to these trips, and in addition to my regular role at the high school, there have been meetings, phone calls, and other planning sessions, all for the sake of promoting the Confraternity. It's been hard for me not to get ahead of myself, and to keep a focus on the basic aspects of building organizational infrastructure, readying the ground for the good that is to come. I've often been taken aback at the potential scope of this task, and worked to avoid it becoming too big of an undertaking. To this end, I've often asked for both human and heavenly guidance regarding next steps to take.

In this work, I've been greatly consoled by your kind words and your gratitude. In the practice of everyday Rosarians can be seen the lesson of Ordinary Time's early part, which we've enjoyed this last month or so; a conformity with Christ in little, quiet ways. In embracing this lesson, the Rosary conforms one to Christ in a way similar to how Christ prepared for earthly ministry in His hidden life in Nazareth. As Jesus began to preach, I am sure He often found Himself remembering fondly

the quieter life He had once lived.

This month, I invite all of us to give thanks for the early days of Ordinary Time. As we do so, let's not wish or worry our time away, but go about our tasks as God would have us do. If we do that, we will make the most of our time, and we'll accomplish God's will for us.

Blessings to all of you in the month ahead.



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

Feast of the Presentation



Image: Presentation of the Lord — detail from the reredos in the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C. Courtesy of Fr. Lawrence Lew, OP ([Flickr](#))

The Feast of the Presentation seems worthy of special appreciation this month as a celebration of Mary's motherhood, a conclusion to the festivities around Jesus' birth, and a promise echoing in Mary's Immaculate Heart, pierced with sorrow.

Last month's feast of Mary, Mother of God, has been traditionally tied to the Feast of the Lord's Circumcision, which occurred 8 days after His birth. There is some scholarly disagreement about the extent to which the ritual purification in the temple was observed by practitioners of the Jewish religion in Jesus' day, with the observance of those who did not live or work near the temple thrust particularly into doubt. Even with that doubt, we seem safe in saying that Mary and Joseph were certain to observe the fullness of the law in order that their Son would participate as fully as He could in Israel's covenant with the Father.

Regarding the offering made, Leviticus 12 stipulates that an offering can comprise either a lamb and a pigeon, or else simply two young pigeons if one could not afford the lamb. In a world of lamb and pigeon families, Jesus, Mary and Joseph comprise a two-pigeon family. Such a revelation invites us to ask: Who are the two-pigeon families in the world around us? If we're a member of a lamb family, how can we be more grateful for what we have?

This feast serves as an example for how to observe festival, with overflowing gratitude for the goods of life which we have the opportunity to enjoy. That gratitude is perhaps the most relevant gift one can receive during the Christmas season, and is a rich enough gift to provide fuel through the mortification of Lent.

The Passion and Death of Jesus is foreshadowed in this scene as well, even as the joy of the Presentation is apparent. Simeon — not a temple priest, but a man with mystic assurance that he would behold the anointed one of God — names Jesus as that anointed one. But then he goes on; as he turn to Mary, he lets her know that a sword of sorrow will pierce her heart. All of the marvelous happenings from the beginning of her pregnancy to this moment come to her experience, and she moves her mind to ponder them with great seriousness. It is that pondering which allows her to accompany her Son on His way to the cross, and to be mother to the whole Church.

Where does that leave us? The parents among us can embrace the wide range of parental responsibility, which consists before all else in bringing up children in the faith. In that faith is the truest and richest cause for celebration; all that is good in worldly celebration has its roots in Christ. When we bear that root in mind, even when celebration gives way to penance and sorrow, we can still draw comfort from our loving Lord, and his devoted mother. Let our pondering of the Presentation encourage us to call upon our mother in our every need.



Monasterio Madre de Dios, Manatí, PR (*Diócesis de Arecibo, Facebook*)

In sharing the stories of the cloistered nuns within the territory of our province, some of the recent changes within the Dominican Order have sometimes made it hard to keep track of nuns who share our Provincial territory. In 2019, our Province communicated to the Master of the Order the desire to bring Puerto Rico into our Province, and have them be part of our Province's Dominican family. Bringing Puerto Rico into the Province has included a host of considerations; from navigating the fraught history between the island and the United States, to the suffering which has been brought to the island over the past number of years due to hurricanes of outsized strength. Even with those and other obstacles, one aspect of the union has been particularly beneficial. In incorporating Puerto Rico into our territory, our Province gains the benefit of being directly affiliated with the island's cloistered Dominican nuns at the Monastery of Mary, Mother of God (*Monasterio Madre de Dios*). The nuns, whose foundation began in 1966 in Manatí, make hosts for use at the Mass.

The presence of the nuns within our province is such a blessing, a welcome leaven to the Midwestern United States. As the nuns dedicate their prayers to the Order's mission, we now have the opportunity to promote their ministry, and also to benefit from their prayers in a new way. As the year progresses, we hope that our nuns in Puerto Rico will get to share parts of their lives with you, introducing us to their way of life, and inspiring us by their example. As a Province, we give thanks for the lives of these sisters in Christ!

Rosary Mailbag

Question

Why is the Rosary considered such a "big" or "super important" prayer by the Church?

Answer

This is a great question, especially considering that pretty much every Catholic has seen a rosary, and knows that it's a Catholic thing.




This question has two aspects. First, one could ask why the Church emphasizes the Rosary; the most recent answer to this question can be seen in the document *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, written by Pope St. John Paul II in 2002. In the different parts of that document, he points to various aspects of the Rosary which give it a priority of place among prayers of the Church. He calls it a simple prayer, which contains the Gospel in its entirety (paragraph 1), and which also provides both a path to and a model for contemplative prayer (par. 10 & 12) for both the individual and the family (par. 6). If a prayer can both teach the gospel message, and help the faithful to live that message, then it makes sense for that prayer to be prioritized. According to popes and saints up and down the ages, the Rosary actually helps to do all those things when it is prayed earnestly and well.


Second, one could ask why the Rosary has been so popular. Part of this answer is outlined above, but another part of this answer has to do with the Dominican friars, and our tie to the Rosary. Promoting Marian devotion has been a major focus of our Order since its beginning, and the Rosary has been an especially visible instance of this. The Dominican Order would never have been successful without the Blessed Mother's special patronage, and I like to think we've done our patronage proud by promoting Marian devotion since our beginnings. Marian devotion today is stronger because of the work of the Dominican Order; may that work only continue!



Confraternity of the Most Holy Rosary

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