



Fifth Sunday of Easter A May 10, 2020

◆ So glad to hear many, many parishioners are praying the Rosary

◆ Trusting God with my life

◆ Faith in a time of crisis

Last weekend, with the help of my technology man, John Baillie, and Laura Dodson, we made two videos of me praying the Rosary.

- ◆ one Rosary with three children
- ◆ one Rosary with a couple

We have had 945 hits on both Rosary events on Friday.

The Rosary is a gift from Heaven. During the praying of the Rosary, we:

- ◆ meditate on events in the lives of Jesus and Mary
- ◆ pray for intentions connected with these events and/or other intentions.

Fr. Patrick Peyton, born and raised in county Mayo, ordained a priest at Notre Dame in Indiana, became famous for his *Rosary Crusades*. He enlisted big Hollywood names like Bing Crosby and Grace Kelly to help him. He had Rosary Crusades all over the world. Fr. Peyton, now Venerable Patrick Peyton, famously said:

“The family that prays together stays together.”

Now that we are experiencing a long period of *‘sheltering in place,’* we have a new opportunity to have time for things we may not have *made time for* before.

While many, hopefully most of you, are familiar with the Rosary, some of you may not be as familiar, because the Rosary has not been one of your prayers. Recently, I visited a 70-year old man in the hospital who faithfully attends church. I brought him a Rosary. After I handed him the Rosary, he said: *Do you know how long it has been since I prayed the Rosary?* Then he added: *“Whatever you guess, double or triple it.”* So I realize not all *churchgoing* Catholics pray the Rosary.

A time to take a look at the Rosary

If you are like the man I met in the hospital, this might be a ‘God Moment’ or maybe a ‘Mary Moment’ for you. Concerning this prayer form, St. Louis de Montfort said:

The holy Rosary is a gift come down from heaven; a great present that God gives to His most faithful servants. God is the Author of the prayers of which it is composed and of the mysteries it contains.

When I was growing up, my family prayed the Rosary every evening. We never missed. After growing up, I didn’t pray the Rosary for many years. But now, for many more years, I have been praying the Rosary daily. Among other things, the Rosary gives me an opportunity to pray for global, local and personal intentions. This is a marvelous thing: a prayer that enables us daily to pray for many global, local and personal intentions.

The full Rosary has **Four Sets** of Mysteries or events in the life of Jesus and Mary. These are the Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious and Luminous Mysteries.

The Joyful Mysteries - Monday and Saturday

The Joyful Mysteries reflect on five joyful events in the life of Jesus and Mary. The Second Joyful Mystery is The Visitation (Luke 1:39-45), which invites us to ponder that wonderful moment in Mary’s life when she visits with her cousin Elizabeth. Mary has miraculously conceived a child, and so has Elizabeth in her older years. So these two cousins have much to talk about, much to share about the miraculous workings of God in their lives. Elizabeth’s husband, Zachary, cannot interrupt their conversation because he is on ‘verbal lockdown’☺ due to his lack of faith when he encountered an angel in the Temple (Luke 1:20).

For this decade, I usually pray for all those who *live, work and visit* nursing homes and rehabilitation centers. During this Covid-19 time, I especially pray for all who cannot have a visit from their family or friends.

The Sorrowful Mysteries - Tuesday and Friday

These Mysteries focus on five very painful events in the life of Jesus. The First Sorrowful Mystery is *The Agony in the Garden*, in which Jesus sweats blood as he ponders what is ahead of him and as he takes upon himself the sins of the world. For this decade, I usually pray for all those who are in agony in body, mind and spirit, and for all those who are trying to help them. As you can see, it is easy to connect this Mystery with Covid-19 as we know thousands and thousands of people are in agony because of Covid-19.

The Glorious Mysteries - Wednesday & Sunday

This set of Mysteries focuses on events in the lives of Jesus and Mary after their death.

The Fourth Glorious Mystery is the *Assumption of Mary into Heaven*. This Mystery allows us an opportunity to reflect on that wondrous time when Mary, at the moment of her death, is assumed or taken up to heaven. For this decade, I usually pray for the souls in Purgatory—those who were not taken up to heaven directly after death.

The Luminous Mysteries or The Mysteries of Light - Thursdays

This set of Mysteries is relatively new. Created by Pope John Paul II in October 2002, these Mysteries focus on the *Public Life of Jesus*. The other three sets of Mysteries touch upon the beginning or early years of Jesus' life (Joyful Mysteries) and the end of Jesus' life (Sorrowful and Glorious Mysteries).

The second Luminous Mystery—*The Wedding Feast at Cana*—invites us to reflect on that wonderful moment when Jesus, at the intercession of his mother, works his first miracle. For this decade, I pray for engaged couples, married couples, and couples who may be having marital issues.

So, as you can see, the Rosary is indeed a wonderful prayer, allowing us, as I said, to reflect on key moments in Jesus and Mary's life, and to pray for many, many intentions.

For more information on the Rosary, contact Teresa at the Parish Office and ask for a leaflet on *How to Pray the Rosary*. You probably google all kinds of information on the Rosary.

TRUSTING GOD WITH MY LIFE

The following was written by Fr. Frank McAuliffe, a priest who served the Church in South Africa.

In reading the gospels we notice how remarkably little Jesus actually tells us about prayer. He does indeed give us the Our Father as the model of how to pray, but he does not go into any detail on what happened during the many nights he spent in prayer to his Father. However, a close reading of the gospels makes clear the attitude that dominated Jesus' life—that of loving acceptance of the will of his Father. I would like to suggest that it is by entering into this attitude of Jesus that we can best learn the meaning of Christian prayer. Christ did not just say prayers; his whole life was prayer. For us, as for Christ, prayer is giving God the freedom to direct and control every moment of our lives. It is an entry into the prayer of Jesus himself, a prayer that culminated in his “becoming obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

Letting God Take Control

Our lives are a gift from God, and this gift is measured out to us, moment by moment, in the events and circumstances that make up each day.

Letting God take control of each moment is the key to a prayerful life. This involves the willingness to let go of a very basic instinct—the desire to take charge of my life and arrange my future.

This desire can become almost an obsession. I have set plans and goals for myself, and they must be achieved in my way and in my time. No one, not even God, is allowed to interfere! With such an attitude, two reactions are possible when I come face to face with the disappointments and failures that are an inevitable part of life. Firstly, I become irritated, frustrated and angry. I constantly blame God and others because things have not gone as I had planned. Or, secondly, I sink into a sullen mood of self-pity, brooding why fate is always so cruelly against me—Murphy's Law was made just for me!

If we reflect on these reactions, we see that they describe a life that has largely marginalized God—a life that is securely in my hands. Even though I may say many prayers, there is a radical separation between my prayer and my life. God may be there but he is confined to the times I'm 'saying my prayers'; his role is to help me live my life in my way. All this suggests a certain lack of faith in God—a refusal to let God into the really

significant areas of my life. My ego is firmly in charge, and when this happens there can be little real space for God. For that reason, my life will be anxious, tense and driven; it will not radiate those characteristics which testify to the presence of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, etc. These qualities are evident in a life that is handed over to God, that sees and accepts his will in all of life’s circumstances.

This acceptance is not born of stoicism or fatalism, but of a deep faith in God’s power and love. God is in control of my life, and in his own mysterious way he will arrange that, in those much quoted words of Julian of Norwich, “All shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well.”

When Life Is Difficult

Sometimes accepting God’s will is relatively easy—as with the minor inconveniences that come our way each day. But in other situations it can be extremely difficult. One thinks especially of those situations where I find myself a victim of circumstances beyond my control, and which try my patience so much. In such situations, how easy it is, as the English Carmelite, Ruth Burrows, remarks, to turn in on myself in self-pity and form a deep conviction that I am being wronged. If only I wasn’t trapped in this boring job; if only this next-door neighbor was living elsewhere; if only people understood and appreciated me more; if only my wife was less fussy, my husband more sensitive, my children more intelligent! The list is endless—always, if, if, if!!

The Christian solution is to face reality as it is, here and now. The truly Christ-like people are not those who spend themselves avoiding life’s difficulties, trying to control life to suit their own purpose. They are those who have taken to heart the words of Jesus that we must take up our cross daily if we are to be his disciples. The most genuine cross is not one we choose for ourselves, but one that is fashioned in the trials that come our way each day. It is in courageously accepting these trials that we prove our seriousness in wanting to be followers of Christ.

In Safe Hands

Recognizing God at the heart of the ordinary—is this not what Paul means by his suggestion that we pray ceaselessly? It often happens in the world of faith that

the meaning of our present trials is understood only in years to come, just as the disciples did not grasp the meaning of Christ’s death until after his resurrection. I’m sure our life-experience has taught many of us a similar truth—that our lives are lived in foresight but understood in hindsight. It is only through courage and perseverance in times of trial that we slowly come to see that, in the strange ways of God, “all things work together unto good.” And these times of trial teach us a very valuable lesson about prayer—that genuine prayer is not an attempt to make God conform to our plans but is rather a surrender of our plans to the loving design that he has for us.

To be able to bless God in everything that happens to us in life is to have allowed God to pass beyond our prayer routines and formula, and occupy the very center of our lives.

The following piece is by Jay Cormier.

Sacred Knitting

A group of women meet one or two evenings a week. They light a candle and offer a prayer together, perhaps singing a hymn. Then they begin their sacred work.

The women are part of a ministry that has touched many lives in many churches and parishes. They knit and crochet prayer shawls. The shawls are given to individuals suffering through a time of transition, crisis, illness or need. A wedding, the birth of a child, a broken bone, an illness, the death of a loved one—all are occasions for the “hug” in the shape of a shawl. While stitching, the maker of the shawl holds that person in her thoughts, making the very act of knitting a prayer.

Those who receive the shawls say that they feel loved, cared for and most of all, surrounded by God’s love and compassion. They are deeply moved to know that someone has cared enough to pray for them and to make this cozy, warm, comforting gift. The mother of a young girl battling cancer, told the knitters in her parish that her daughter said that when she felt bad, she wrapped herself up tightly in the shawl and it made her feel better. Another woman refused to take her shawl off during her final months of life because it was her “scarf of love.” Many who have known the solace of a prayer shawl in final stages of their illness ask to be buried with the shawl around their shoulders.

But the knitters believe that they receive as much from making the shawls as do those who receive them.

Their simple knitting and gentle prayer become offerings of God's compassion for others—and God is as present to them as they knit as he is to those who will wrap themselves up in the loving warmth of the shawl itself.

[From "Knit Together with Prayer" by the Rev. Susan S. Izard, Spirituality & Health, Nov/Dec 2004. For more on the prayer shawl ministry, visit the website shawlministry.com.]

The simplest work of compassion and charity, done in God's spirit of love, is to do the very work of Christ; the most hidden and unseen acts of kindness will be exalted by Christ as great in the kingdom of his Father. On the night before he died, Jesus asks his disciples to take up "the work that I do"—the work of humble servanthood that places the hurts and pain of others before our own, the work of charity that does not measure the cost, the work of love that transcends limits and conditions.

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Faith in a time of crisis

Reflecting on the words from today's readings, Fr. Flor McCarthy writes:

There comes a time in the lives of all believers when things get very dark, and they have to believe even though they cannot prove, and to accept even though they cannot understand or make sense of what is happening. It is at such times that we really need a strong faith, but it is precisely at such times that our faith may fail us.

It's easy to convince ourselves that we have a strong faith when things are going well. It's only when a crisis arises that we discover what kind of faith we have, or if we have any faith at all. By faith here I mean trust in God.

There are people who think that if God was with them, and if he really loved them, then no storm would ever hit them. Life would be all plain sailing. So, when a storm hits them, they experience a crisis of faith, thinking that God has abandoned them.

During the Last Supper, the apostles were thrown into crisis when Jesus started to talk about his death. Their hearts were troubled and filled with fear—and with good reason. That was a terrible night, not only for

Jesus, but also for them. It was a night of upheaval and terror. Seeing their distress, Jesus said to them, 'Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God still, and trust in me.' Since the apostles already believed, in effect what he was saying to them was, "You must *go on believing* in God and in me."

Often at a time of crisis people feel that God has abandoned them. But Jesus assured the apostles that, even though he was leaving them, he was not abandoning them. Rather, he was going to prepare a home for them, and would return to take them to that home. Hence, no matter what happened, they must go on believing, go on trusting in him and in the Father.

At a time of crisis, that is the only thing we can do—go on stubbornly trusting in God. What faith does is assure us that God is with us *in the midst of the crisis*. It is the conviction that we are not alone, that we are not abandoned, that enables us to get through the crisis.

Those who have faith have a source of comfort and support, especially when trouble strikes. It is not we who keep the faith; it is the faith that keeps us. "A person with a grain of faith in God never loses hope, because he believes in the ultimate triumph of truth" (Gandhi).

So when things are bad, let us remember the words of Jesus: "Believe in God, and believe also in me." The words of Jesus have a power to console and uphold us that no other words have. In times of difficulty, one's spirit seems to drink them in, to savour them, and to feel the divine power in them.

The words of Jesus have come down to us across the centuries, bringing light to those in darkness, and hope to those in despair. In him, who conquered death, we have the assurance that ultimately good will triumph over evil, and life will triumph over death.

Not all that happens to us is determined by God's will, but all is encompassed by his love. The fact that life is fragile and fleeting serves to bring home to us just how precious is the treasure we carry in earthen vessels.

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Have a blessed Mother's Day!

