

Pastor's Column

April 6, 2014

The Rosary

Greetings in Christ Jesus.

For years now Queen of Angles and St. Joseph parishes have been praying the rosary before Mass begins. I haven't ever devoted a whole pastor's column on the rosary or why we pray it before Mass and I've always meant to, and well here it is.

As most of you know the rosary is a prayer to God and the Blessed Virgin Mary asking for our petitions to be answered, and to honor and foster a deeper relationship with Mary. The miracles brought about by praying the rosary are countless: famous battles won, storms averted, people protected, relationships healed, etc., most going unrecorded. Perhaps more important than getting what we want is the relationship it fosters. In a way it is like spending time with someone we love: the more time we invest with someone, the more we bond. God wants all of us to love His Mother not just as the Mother of Jesus Christ (who is God) but as our beloved mother too. Of all of God's creation, Mary is the greatest and is the most powerful intercessor before God in heaven; what's more, she desires a personal relationship with each of us. To these ends, the rosary can't be beat.

Most Catholics don't know how to pray the rosary from start to finish without some help on a given prayer or remembering what mystery comes next. Don't be ashamed, I know priests who can't say a whole rosary without help – you'd be surprised. Of course some Catholics don't even know where to start. We pray the rosary before Mass begins so that we can learn it by hearing it and participating in it, over time becoming more comfortable with it and inspired to pray it on our own; which for most of us isn't happening often enough. If you don't know how to pray the rosary please take a "how to" brochure from the pews home with you, they're free.

The rosary is prayed right up to the start of Mass because half of the people who attend Mass arrive in the ten minutes before Mass begins. If the rosary ends 5 or 10 minutes before Mass begins then those people miss out, and those people are often the ones who need the rosary in their life the most. Another reason why the rosary is prayed up to the start of Mass is because nature abhors a vacuum, in this case silence. Silence is very foreign to our culture today and so people fill it with sound. Without the rosary being prayed before Mass some people would fill that silence with socializing or the musicians with rehearsal. This isn't something that any of us can effectively police. When we enter a church, we need to transition from the spirit of the world that we just came in from, to the spirit of God. The rosary with its familiar rhythmic prayers helps us to make this transition and prepare ourselves for God in the Mass. For these reasons the rosary starts being prayed about 20 minutes before all the Masses and ideally ends at the time Mass is supposed to begin.

So arrive early enough to church to pray the rosary with the parishioners and pray the rosary on your own away from church too, especially with your family. God and His Mother will reward you and others in ways known and unknown.

To Jesus through Mary,



Fr. Thomas Nathe