



FEAST OF THE HOLY ROSARY

Homily of the Right Reverend Dom Jean PATEAU
Abbot of Our Lady of Fontgombault
(Fontgombault, October 7th, 2025)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,
My dearly beloved Sons,

IT MIGHT BE worthwhile to go back to the origin of the feast of the Holy Rosary, instituted by Pope St. Pius V on October 7th, 1572, and of the devotion itself. We might thus renew our practice of the Rosary, the most popular of Marian prayers. Our present time is also an urgent incitation to do so.

Even before the middle of the 16th century, naval supremacy of the Turks in the Mediterranean kept increasing. Europe was jeopardised. Pope St. Pius V had undertaken intense and protracted political negotiations so as to strike an alliance between the Catholic States of Southern Europe. This alliance assumed the name of the Holy League. Its aim was to curb the advance of the Ottoman army.

Before engaging battle, St. Pius V blessed the banner of the army, depicting the Crucifix flanked by the Apostles Peter and Paul, crowned with Emperor Constantine's motto, "*In hoc signo vinces*, In this sign thou shalt be victorious." This symbol, together with the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the inscription "*Sancta Maria, succurre miseris*, Holy Mary, help those in need," were the only flags allowed to fly

over all the ranks composing the Holy League.¹

Above all, the Dominican Pope was aware of the fact that prayer was the best weapon to gain victory. He therefore asked the whole Christian people to join the battle by reciting the Holy Rosary. On October 7th, 1571, the League confronted the Turkish float off the coast of Lepanto, and totally destroyed it.

One year to the day after the victory credited to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin through the prayer of the Rosary, St. Pius V established the feast of Our Lady of Victories. His successor, Gregory XIII, changed it to “Our Lady of the Rosary.”

A few centuries before, St. Dominic was using the Rosary to combat the Albigensian heresy in the region of Toulouse.

Today, war is brewing between the nations. No continent is spared. In many countries, national unity is tottering, because the very principles of this unity have been either destroyed or lost. Men are living in an unreal world, where truth and falsehood no longer exist, a world constructed and deconstructed at the whim of the algorithms of artificial intelligence, which, if truly artificial, is in no way an intelligence.

The truths of faith are derided, and in the final analysis, man is full of self-doubt, he has doubts on the meaning of his life, on what he is called to. His ultimate comfort is to drown himself in an endless and ever deeper dazedness. No more peace in the world, no more peace in the hearts.

Whereas the arms of the nations are more and more powerful and destructive, whereas most media are but sound boxes in the pay of lies and shameful interests, what can we do?

To human eyes, the arms of prayer seem so weak. But unlike the other arms, the arms of prayer draw their strength not from their own power, but from the power of Him to Whom they are directed.

Making peace, making truth, is beyond the strength of man. And if the state of the world was not revealing enough, our families and communities bear testimony to this chal-

1. <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/liturgical-holidays.html#>

lenge. Lack of peace in a heart, a family, a community, reveals a lack of communion with God. Restoring communion with God entails restoring communion with our brothers.

Peace and truth are gifts from God. Praying means addressing the author of all gifts. We have just done so in the collect of the Mass:

O God, Whose only-begotten Son, by His life, death, and resurrection, has purchased for us the rewards of eternal salvation; grant, we beseech Thee, that meditating upon these mysteries in the most holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we may both imitate what they contain, and obtain what they promise.

In a first time, we are invited to meditate on the events of the Lord's life, death, and resurrection, the mysteries of the Rosary. It is through these events that our redemption was carried out.

But meditating the holy mysteries of Our Lord's and His Mother's lives wouldn't bear much fruit if we didn't imitate what they contain. And what do they contain? The simplicity of the joyful mysteries invites us to spiritual childhood and to give thanks for God's great works: "Nothing is impossible to God."^a

a. *Lk* 1:37.

The luminous mysteries remind us of the different steps in our life of faith, and the wealth of divine gifts, which we should then receive and allow them to work. The sorrowful mysteries teach us to carry the cross of our everyday life in communion with the Lord, Who not only carried His cross, but also our own crosses. Last, the glorious mysteries confirm in us hope of the blessedness God promises to all those who will trust in Him.

Let us also remark that materially speaking, the recitation of the Rosary helps to build up our peace. First, because of the simplicity of this prayer, made of the repetition of well-known prayers, the *Creed*, the *Our Father*, and the *Hail Mary*.

When we recite the rosary, we should remember that Christian prayer is not a bottle cast into the sea, a word drowned in a sea of other words, a word that would but reinforce the ambient noise, so often deafening and mind-numbing. No,

Christian prayer is a whisper of the heart that always reaches Him to whom it is addressed. God doesn't need the world to make silence in order to hear those who address Him. There lies the strength of prayer. It is addressed to a person Who is always available, always benevolent, all-merciful. What a peace to know that we are heard in such a way!

The Rosary is a chain. It brings together those who recite it, whether in common or alone. It unites them to the praying Church. Above all, it brings man closer to God.

May our prayers be true. May they have a soul. Let their material recitation be united with a surge of our hearts.

In that matter, let us follow the example of the saints. Last September 7th, the Holy Father canonised Pier Giorgio Frassati and Carlo Acutis. The latter started saying the rosary at the age of four and a half, and after his first communion, at the age of seven, he recited it every day of his life. As for Pier Giorgio, he cultivated his love for the Blessed Virgin, as do the simple and upright of hearts. He was a Tertiary of St. Dominic, and he recited every day a rosary with five decades, and towards the end of his short life, a whole rosary with fifteen decades.

Regina Rosarii, Regina pacis, ora pro nobis. Queen of the Rosary, Queen of peace, pray for us.

Amen.

