

Assumption A,B,C 2017 SML
LK 12:39-56

One of the most powerful prayers in the history of the Church is the recitation of the Rosary. While the prayers contained in the Rosary have been prayed since the time of the apostles, the Rosary in its present form has been in practice since the year 1214. In 1214, the Blessed Mother appeared to St. Dominic who received instructions on the Rosary. Since then, the daily recitation of the Rosary by all Catholics has been strongly encouraged.

Our Lady of Fatima told the children to "Say the Rosary every day, to obtain peace for the world."

Pope Leo XIII said, "A powerful means of renewing our courage will undoubtedly be found in the Holy Rosary."

Pope Pius XII said, "There is no surer means of calling down God's blessing upon the family than the daily recitation of the Rosary."

And most recently, in 2002, John Paul the Great added the Luminous Mysteries to the Rosary to renew this ancient prayer of the Church.

On October 4th, 1990, two priest friends and I had the privilege of being three of nine concelebrants a Mass with the late Holy Father John Paul II in his private Chapel at the

Vatican. (If you would like to see photos of that day, they are in the Gathering Space after the Mass). As we entered his Chapel, the Pope was kneeling at his praedo in the center of the Chapel, before the Blessed Sacrament. He was praying his Rosary. Now to watch this man pray . . . I couldn't take my eyes off him. As he meditated on the mysteries and the beads went through his fingers, the look on his face is something I will never forget. Every once in a while, he would rub his forehead or he would tap his foot. What I would have given to read his mind as he meditated on the mysteries. With the responsibilities of the Universal Church on this man's shoulders, his mind did not wander. I'm sure he prayed that Rosary a thousand times before that unforgettable day, and I'm sure he had prayed it a thousand times since, but there was nothing routine about how he prayed. After the Mass, all the priests, sisters and laity who were there met the Pope and he handed each one of us a Rosary.

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Assumption, the fourth Glorious Mystery of the Rosary. For me, the two hardest mysteries to meditate on are the Assumption and the Coronation because the scriptural references for them are implied and not explicit. The Assumption is not an obvious find

in the Bible. It is an article of faith, defined infallibly by Pope Pius XII in 1950 when he wrote that Mary's Assumption was Mary's "crowning glory to be preserved from the corruption of the tomb, and like her Son before her, to conquer death and to be raised body and soul to the glory of heaven, to shine refulgent as Queen at the right hand of her Son, immortal King of the ages."

So what do you think about when meditating on the Assumption? St. Alphonsus Liguori offers some food for thought:

"As the ark of the covenant was carried into the City of David with great pomp, how much more was the rejoicing when Mary entered into heaven. Elijah was carried to heaven on the fiery chariot, which according to some, was a group of angels. But more than a group of angels would greet Mary. The whole heavenly court, headed by its King, her Son, went forth to greet her.

All the saints in Paradise came to greet her. The virgins saluted her as the prime example of consecrated women. The confessors saluted her as their mistress, who, by her holy life, taught so many of the virtues. The holy martyrs came to salute her as their Queen, for she, by her constancy in the sorrow of

her Son's passion, had taught them to lay down their lives for Christ.

St. James, the only apostle in heaven at the time, came to thank her in the name of all of them, for her comfort and strength while on earth. The prophets are next in line, and then the patriarchs, for she is the glory of their line and the fulfillment of their prophecies.

Adam and Eve are among the number and they thanked her with the greatest affection, for she has repaired the injury they inflicted on the human race. And how beautiful was the reunion between her and her parents, St. Joachim and St. Anne, with St. Zechariah and St. Elizabeth, with St. John the Baptist.

And who can imagine the affection with which she greets her dear spouse, St. Joseph? Who can imagine his joy over the splendid reception Mary received as she entered heaven?

The humble and holy Virgin adored the divine Majesty, thanking Him for all the graces bestowed on her by His pure goodness, and especially for having made her the Mother of the eternal Word.

And then let him who can, comprehend with what love the Most Holy Trinity blessed her. Think of the welcome extended

to His Daughter by the Eternal Father, to His Mother by the Son, to His Spouse by the Holy Spirit.

The Father crowned her by imparting His power to her; the Son, His wisdom; the Holy Spirit, His love. And the three divine Persons, placing her throne at the right of that of Jesus, declared her Sovereign of heaven and earth; and commanded the angels and all creatures to acknowledge her as their Queen, and as such to serve and obey her.”

St. Mary of the Assumption, patroness of the Diocese of Trenton, pray for us.