LITURGY BYTES

The Month of the Rosary

By tradition, the Catholic Church dedicates each month of the year to certain devotions. The month of October is dedicated to the Rosary, one of the most popular known devotions.

The actual feast of Our Lady of the Rosary is October 7th. You might be wondering, why was October 7th chosen to celebrate this feast? On October 7, 1571, a great victory over the Turkish fleet was won by Catholic naval forces from Spain, Venice, and Genoa under the command of Don Juan of Austria.

The ships were powered by the Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary because the Pope at the time (St. Pius V) called for all of Europe to pray the Rosary for victory. This victory was significant because it prevented the Islamic invasion of Europe and showed the hand of God working through our Blessed Mother.

In various places in Italy, there are images from this victory. For example, in Rome on the ceiling of St. Maria in Aracoeli there are decorations in gold taken from the Turkish galleys. Over in Venice, in the Doges' Palace, one can see a giant Islamic flag from one of the Turkish ships. At St. Mary Major Basilica in Rome, close to the tomb of St. Pius V (Pope), is another Islamic flag from the battle. It should be noted that in 1965, the flag was returned to Istanbul as a friendly token of accord.

At Lepanto, the victory over the Muslims was won because of the praying of the Rosary. This battle was celebrated as a feast called Our Lady of Victory, but later it was renamed the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary and extended throughout the universal Church by Pope Clement XI in 1716.

In later years, Our Lady appeared to the children of Fatima and told them she was Our Lady of the Rosary and taught them and us to pray the Rosary every day.

In 2002, Saint Pope John Paul II expanded the Rosary's power announcing the Year of the Rosary and adding the Luminous Mysteries. During this month of October, may we renew our devotion to Our Lady of the Rosary.

Have a safe, healthy, and blessed week! ~~~*Michele Hahn*