

Commentary on the Gospel for Sat, Oct 7th 2017

Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary

It was the middle of the night—windy and rainy and I was about to have a baby. It was my first pregnancy and my husband and I were feeling anxious and fearful because I was in labor four weeks early. After a long battle with infertility and having been blessed with two incredible, adopted sons, I had most unexpectedly and miraculously become pregnant. Now the baby was coming--ready or not.

On the way to the hospital, we dropped off our sleepy toddlers at my parents' home. When they heard our car doors, they rushed out to greet us. I saw something sparkle in my mother's hand. It was her rosary. That's when my tears of relief started to flow because I realized that my mother would pray for us every minute that I was in labor. My anxiety dissipated and I knew that all would be well.

Today is the Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops/USCCB explains: The repetition in the Rosary is meant to lead one into restful and contemplative prayer related to each Mystery. The gentle repetition of the words helps us to enter into the silence of our hearts, where Christ's spirit dwells. (USCCB website)

That was it—her rosary, the symbol of my mother's prayers helped me to find my way to a place deep within the silence of my heart where God would center me during labor and delivery and provide safety and care for our baby. If my mother could go through labor and delivery eight times, surely I could do it once! Our beautiful baby boy arrived safe and sound and I have never forgotten the impact of seeing the rosary in my mother's hands that night.

Jesus listens to the excitement of his seventy-two recently empowered disciples in today's Gospel as they return from having gone out in twos to many towns and villages in order to prepare the way for Jesus. They relay to him how the goodness of his spiritual teachings has been received. They are awed by the results of their preaching and prayer which have demonstrated that sin and evil can be conquered. Jesus then prays in thanksgiving to God through the Holy Spirit for revealing this truth to his disciples.

Today's Memorial to Our Lady of the Rosary reflects the truth of this Gospel. Prayer is always a link to Mary and Jesus and gives us great strength in the face of obstacles and struggle. The gentle repetition of the words helps us to enter into the silence of our hearts, where Christ's spirit dwells. (USCCB website)

My mother recently turned 93. Throughout the past three years she has needed more care and more assistance with life tasks. Her health is failing and her spirit is drawing inward. Between our large family and her wonderful caregivers, she has been able to continue to live in her home. She always keeps three or four rosaries at her bedside and goes to bed with one in her hand every night. Whenever I look at the rosaries by her bed, I am comforted by her faith and I trust that God is with her.

She is no longer able to kneel by the side of her bed to pray the rosary as she did when we were growing up. She no longer remembers every family member's name or even what she did a few minutes ago but she remembers how to pray the rosary. It will be in her hand until the end. And even

now as we walk with her in this fragile, difficult time of life, her contemplative prayer continues to light our way and be a source of strength in the heart of our family.

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