

THE ROSARY AS SPIRITUAL WEAPON!

In his book "CHAMPIONS OF THE ROSARY: The History and Heroes of a SPIRITUAL WEAPON", Fr. Donald Callaway starts with St Dominic as the First Champion of the Rosary: on September 12, 1213 (over 800 years ago!), at the request of MARY, St Dominic was praying the Rosary inside the St James Church (St Jacques) in the besieged city of MURET, in South-west France. His praying the Rosary led to the FIRST MIRACLE OF THE ROSARY: the miraculous and decisive VICTORY of the much smaller troops of the King of France which were encircled by a much larger army of the King of Aragon. The King of France and his troops were leading a Crusade against the Cathars at the request of Pope Innocent III.

At stake was the fate of the Albigensians, leaders of the Cathar heresy threatening to divide the entire Catholic Church. Their heresy was their belief in dualism: good (spiritual realm created by God) and evil (physical world created by Satan). They were the chosen ones, and everything belonging to the world was evil, including our own bodies. As I was born in Muret and my grandmother was born near Foix (another center of Cathars), I recall her telling us stories about the Battle of Muret and the beliefs of the Cathars, including their objection to marriage and having children (so as to escape the world of evil).

A large concentration of Cathars was located near Toulouse and Albi (town that gave name of Albigensians to the heretics). The Battle of Muret was decisive in the rapid decline of Cathars' influence and preserving the UNITY OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH.

When our parish went on pilgrimage to Fatima and Lourdes in 2017, we had the opportunity to stop in Muret (on the way between Toulouse, where we had flown from Fatima/Lisbon) to celebrate the Mass in the 12th century church of St James and visit the still existing Chapel where St Dominic prayed the Rosary! As six-day old baby, on September 12 (the Feast of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary) I had the privilege to be baptized in that very church. This was the beginning of my Marian spiritual journey...

Why writing about this First Miracle of the Rosary? I do not need to boast about my little village of Muret...But I simply want to illustrate the celebration of Our Lady of the Rosary last Sunday when Bishop Dorsonville blessed our large Statue of Our Lady of Fatima, consecrated to Mary the Greater Waldorf Area, led an outdoor procession of the Blessed Sacrament and the statue of Our Lady of Fatima. You may recall that in last week's column "WHO IS OUR LADY HELP OF CHRISTIANS?",

I attempted to explain the very close relationship between Our Lady of Victory, Our Lady of the Rosary, Our Lady of Fatima (Inviting us to pray the Rosary daily) and Our Lady Help of Christians, by using the Second Miracle of the Rosary: the Naval Battle of Lepanto (October 7, 1571). Also to be totally transparent, one of our parishioners regretted that I had not written about the Battle of Muret last week as it is clearly also a victory for Our Lady Help of Christians!

Bottom Line: there is only ONE LADY, the MOTHER OF JESUS, who receives many titles (50 of them in the sole Litany of Loretto). Some of her titles however are closer to that of HELP OF CHRISTIANS...While initially, the HELP OF CHRISTIANS title referred to assistance against physical attacks to the Church (e.g. invasion by barbarians in 1571), it has become much broader, covering any attacks against the Church, whether physical, spiritual, ideological, emotional or political (persecution). This is why we also chose to renew our personal consecration to Jesus through Mary on this Feast Day of Our Lady of the Rosary. To foster our spiritual renewal as a parish and as individuals, I invite each of you to recite the following consecration prayer following the 33 Days of Preparation proposed by St Louis de Montfort:

Blessed Mary, Ever-Virgin Mother of Jesus, Faithful Daughter of God the Father, and Spouse of the Holy Spirit:

I _____, a poor sinner, renew and ratify the vows of my baptism. I renounce forever Satan, his works, and his empty promises. I consecrate and give myself entirely to Jesus Christ. I choose to take up my cross and follow him all the days of my life, and to be more faithful to him than I have ever been before.

In the presence of all the angels and saints I choose you this day as my Mother and take you into my own heart. I entrust all that I am to you and resolve to honor and love you this day and every day for the rest of my life.

O Mary, you have already opened your heart to me! Accept now the gift of my heart, the offering of all that I am to you. Lead me to Jesus that through you I may The King of France and his troops were leading a Crusade against the Cathars at the request of Pope Innocent III in 1209. belong to him, with you I may adore him, in you I may be in communion with him and the Blessed Trinity, and by you I may become so perfectly his disciple so as to glorify him on earth and be lead to his glory in Heaven. Amen

One in Christ,

Father Alain