

May 6, 2020

My dear parishioners,

Yesterday I received the good news that Bishop Burbidge has called Daniel Reuwer, our seminarian, to receive the office of Acolyte. With this call Daniel is another step closer to ordination. God willing, toward the end of this year, perhaps in November, Daniel will be formally received as a Candidate for Holy Orders. After that, ordination to the diaconate would typically follow in May of 2021, and a year after that, ordination to the priesthood.

Our hearts and prayers of gratitude go out to Daniel and his family, who for several years truly belonged to Saint William of York. Many of you will recall that Daniel taught at Saint William of York Catholic School for two years, leaving us only for the seminary.

Writing those last words, “for the seminary,” reminds me of something I recalled after writing you yesterday’s letter, *Our Mother’s Rosary*. Yesterday I remembered Father Gould and Father Riley. Today I am remembering the late Monsignor Kenneth Roeltgen.

The moment I met Monsignor Kenneth Roeltgen, Rector of Mount Saint Mary Seminary, I knew I was going to be in good hands. Monsignor accepted me personally to the Mount and bore a large part of the responsibility for my priestly formation. He got to know my family, and my family, in turn, got to know him. Monsignor made many exceptions of his own choosing for me as my mom battled cancer at home. Exceptions are rarely made in solid houses of formation and Mount Saint Mary was a very solid place to be.

The incident I recall happened about two weeks after Mom died. Easter break was over and we were back at the Mount. Looking back today I can see only now that I was feeling lonely then and trying not to show it. One afternoon I was going down a stairwell just as Monsignor was ascending. “Hey, Bob,” he said. “Tonight I’m going to offer up my Mass for your mom.” “Thank you Monsignor,” I said. “Thank you very much.”

As I continued on my way I began to wish that I could offer Mass for Mom too, but of course that was fourteen months away, though I couldn’t know that then. Then suddenly I recalled something I had heard from Archbishop Fulton Sheen. I was listening a lot to his recorded conferences back then, picking up pointers here and there. For example, it was him who inspired me to make a Holy Hour of prayer every day for the rest of my life.

What I recalled that evening after my brief encounter with Monsignor was something that Archbishop Sheen had said on one of those tapes, that whenever he prayed the Liturgy of the Hours he’d offer up the Hour for a particular person or intention. I realized then that I could do the same thing. From that day on I began to offer up the different Hours of the Liturgy of the Hours for my family and friends; it’s been almost thirty years now.

Very soon, I went on to expand that idea by extending the same practice to my praying of the Rosary. If you look back at my prayer of intention from yesterday’s letter you will detect this in the words that I am underlining for you today:

*Poor as I am, I hope to bring You special joy...
by offering up the Holy Rosary...
in honor of Your Mother, in memory of mine, in your Name,
to the glory of God the Father, in the power of the Holy Spirit, especially
on behalf of my mother, Rose, my father, Joseph, my sister, Linda,
N.N. and N.N.*

Those last two intentions (*N.N. and N.N.*), for the fourth and fifth decades of my Rosary, are friends I have been praying for every day since 1998.

When I wasn't yet able to offer Mass for them, offering up the decades of the Rosary and the offices of the Liturgy of the Hours for my family and friends was such a grace for me. The brief encounter with Monsignor Roeltgen, the taped recording of Archbishop Sheen, and even the stairwell, all revealed God's provident hand to me. It was the Lord Whom I discovered every time. It was He, the Lord of Everything, who directed everything.

May God bless and keep you. I prayed so fervently for us at Mass this morning; then I realized I forgot to light the candles on my makeshift altar. And I used to be an altar boy. Come to think of it, I never became a Master Server. But that was then and this is now, and I did make pastor, so I'll close for now, and send you my blessing through the air.

Remaining faithfully yours, in Jesus and Mary,

Father DeMartino