



Mary's Notes

VOLUME 3

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“Be
It
done
unto
me
according
to
Thy
Word”

St. Mary's Sodality Begins New Year

By Brigit Sullivan

Hi, I am the new prefect. Barbara Williams is my vice-prefect, Rosie McRann is our Hospitality Manager, Carmen de Perignat handles our Communications and Pat Adams is the Treasurer. We are all glad to be working for Sodality.

I'll share one thing about myself — my favorite prayer: the Memorare. My mother taught it to me as a child and it is always my prayer of last resort, but the BVM has always answered. The answer was often not the immediate, easy answer I wanted but nonetheless, it was always answered.

Remember. O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thine intercession was left unaided.

Inspired by this confidence, I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my mother; to thee do I come, before thee I kneel, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

The new year in Sodality:

Oct. 13 meet after Mass and Rosary

Father Gallagher will talk on Faith and Politics to prepare us for the election.

Oct. 25 6:15 pm Parish Hall

Father Corey will talk about the problem of same sex marriage

Oct. 26 Potluck dinner and Art Show

Dec. 15 meet after Mass and Rosary

Christmas party include stuffing stockings for shelters

January

March for Life hosting

February 1 Bingo

February 9 meet after Mass and Rosary

Talk on Our Lady of Lourdes.

May 18 Pilgrimage to Baltimore to the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Blessed Virgin Mary

June 8 meet after Mass, Rosary and Crowning of Mary

Ice Cream Social

By Barbara Williams

On Saturday, September 8, St. Mary's Sodality started a new year. After the Rosary and 9:00 Mass in St. Mary's Chapel, the meeting began with a catered breakfast and introduction of the new officers: Brigit Sullivan (Prefect), Barbara Williams (Vice Prefect), Carmen de Perignat (Secretary), Pat Adams (Treasurer), and Rosie McRann (Hospitality). Chuck Durbin of CRD Catering generously donated his talents and wonderful food. Sodality members discussed how the Blessed Mother helps and guides us in our daily lives. We then talked about the plans Sodality has for the upcoming year. Some of the meetings will include a talk about Faith and Politics, a potluck dinner, a talk about All Souls Day, a Mass for all deceased Sodalists, a Christmas party with a stocking stuffer for children in local shelters, a talk on Our Lady of Lourdes, and a possible pilgrimage to a restored church in Baltimore. The Sodality is looking forward to an interesting year "To Jesus through Mary." All ladies in St. Mary's parish are welcome at the meetings, which are held on the second Saturday of every month.

Are you a Martha or a Mary?

By Cindy Selby

As they continued their journey he entered a village where a woman whose name was Martha welcomed him. She had a sister named Mary who sat beside the Lord at his feet listening to him speak. Martha, burdened with much serving, came to him and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me by myself to do the serving? Tell her to help me." The Lord said to her in reply, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and worried about many things. There is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part and it will not be taken from her."

Each of us, upon hearing this Gospel story, likely identifies with one or the other of the women. In my younger years, I was definitely a Martha. Life always seemed to be consumed with preparing, fixing, working, doing. Looking back, this is most evident when children came on the scene. Non stop from morning to night there was feeding, cleaning, changing, working. As children got older, new tasks were added to the daily routine that included checking homework, traveling to and from school events, new sport activities, field trips, and let's not forget preparing the family for Sunday Mass.

My experience was certainly not unique. The Selby household concerned itself with only two children along with the husband's work and playing baseball and my work and church folk group rehearsals. How in the world did moms with more than two children keep it all together. *Very well and quite efficiently I have come to find out, making my occasional complaining rather embarrassing...but I digress.*

Even amidst the flurry of activity day to day, these truly seemed to be the best times where the main focus was centered on the family and watching our young children experience the world and develop into young adults. But by being a Martha, my concentration was getting from point A to point B. Getting from Monday to Sunday, week after week, month after month and year after year. I lived through each one of those days and with the help of my husband, successfully reared the children to adulthood but did I truly experience every day to its fullest? Did I choose the better part?



I don't mean I should have gone off on my own and searched for who I am in some desert monastic community. I mean should I have been a slave to the clock? To my house? To stuff? When a little one asked me to color one more picture with her, would having dinner 15 minutes later have mattered? When friends came over to visit, could we have spent more time together if I didn't clean rooms in my house top to bottom before they arrived that they would never see? Did it really matter if the Christmas decorations were all perfectly placed on the tree? And would I have been any more tired if I had read just one more bedtime story?

Hind sight, as they say, is 20/20. Though Martha was busy in a different way honoring Jesus by preparing her home and a meal, she did miss sitting at the feet of our Lord and hearing the wisdom of His teaching, watching His expressions and feeling a closeness that only a few in His circle were able to experience. From this new vantage point, I realize what Jesus meant when He said that Mary has chosen the better part. She let go of what was not crucial and immediately necessary in order to enjoy the company of the Savior. She put Jesus first in a different way.

These days, work and a variety of projects still occupy a good deal of time but I have learned that my "to do" list never ends so there is no reason to be so concerned about checking everything off in one day. What's most important is giving time - undivided attention - to what's most important.

In an effort to put that into practice, I enjoy the occasions when my youngest actually wants to sit and talk even if it means putting off a "planned" activity. I jump at a friend's invitation to go to an event during the week even when it means using leave time. It also involves, like Mary, placing myself at His feet with Bible study, Sodality, spiritual reading and any occasion that helps me better understand my faith. Now, perhaps I can be a better combination of both Martha and Mary.

Too bad wisdom takes
so long to acquire!



For Greater Glory: The Fight for Religious Liberty

By Carmen de Perignat

The movie “For Greater Glory” depicts a long overlooked period in Mexican history: the persecution by the government of President Plutarco Elías Calles against the religious practice and liberty of its citizens, and the armed response from Catholics known as “Cristeros” in many parts of the country to defend their religious freedoms. As Archbishop José Gómez of Los Angeles explains, the reason why the movie has become so timely is because it reminds American Catholics that religious liberties must never be taken for granted.

The Cristero War or “La Cristiada” lasted four years (1926 – 1929) and was preceded by the largest and longest rebellion in Mexican history, the Mexican Revolution (1910 – 1920). The Revolution, largely based on peasants’ demand for land and social justice, would provide the background for key anti-clerical statutes included in the 1917 Constitution. Key articles were Article 3 which struck at Catholic education, Article 5 at monastic orders, Article 24 at outdoor worship, Article 27 at the Church’s right to own property and Article 130 which denied the Catholic clergy the right to vote or to criticize public officials. The advent of President Calles an avowed atheist in 1924, would see the enactment of even more stringent anti-clerical laws. These laws coupled with the farmer’s revolts against land reform in the heavily Catholic Bajío (in Central Mexico), would set the stage for scattered guerrilla operations coalescing into a serious armed revolt against the government forces (*Federales*). Calles applied the anti-clerical laws throughout the country and added his own anti-clerical legislation. His “Law for Reforming the Penal Code” provided specific penalties for priests and individuals who violated the provisions of the 1917 Constitution. To help enforce the law Calles seized church property, expelled all foreign priests and closed the monasteries, convents and religious schools. The final straw was a decree that priests in charge of churches be required to register with the government and that the churches be placed under control of neighborhood committees. This was complete subordination of church to state.

In response to these measures, Catholic organizations began to intensify their resistance. The bishops worked to have the offending articles of the Constitution amended but the Calles government considered the bishops’ activism an act of sedition and had many more churches closed. The rebellion also attracted the attention of Pope Pius XI who issued a series of papal encyclicals between 1925 and 1937 addressing this problem. On December 11, 1925 the pope issued *Quas Primas*, instituting the Feast of Christ the King. The cries of *¡Viva Cristo Rey!* and *¡Viva la Virgen de Guadalupe!* would soon become the rallying cries of the Cristeros. Violence escalated when in August 1926, four hundred armed Catholics shut themselves up in the Church of Our Lady of Guadalupe. This battle resulted in 18 dead and 40 wounded. Following this action on November 18, 1926 the Pope issued the encyclical *Iniquis Afflictisque* denouncing the violent anti-clerical persecution in Mexico.

The violent crackdown is illustrated in the film by showing churches being set on fire, priests being murdered, and countless faithful peasants killed and then publicly hanged on telegraph poles. A young boy, José Luis Sánchez del Río who later joins the Cristero movement, witnesses the murder of one of such priests, Father Christopher.

The Cristero War in Mexico

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Mexico City based group called the National League for the Defense of Religious Liberty headed the Cristero Insurgency. They selected a professional soldier to lead them, the retired General Enrique Gorostieta Velarde. Although an agnostic, the attack against religious liberty was so blatant the general was willing to take arms to defend religious freedom. Gorostieta takes an interest in young José Luis Sánchez, and the boy soon becomes his protégé. During the rebellion two priests, Father Pedrosa and Father Vega served Gorostieta as skilled combat commanders. Under his leadership the Cristeros were never defeated in the field. However the film doesn't shy away from the truth when depicting Father Pedrosa as a faithful priest but Father Vega as an atypical priest who showed no compunction about sharing in the rough pleasures of his troops. To retaliate for the killing of his brother in a shootout, Fr. Vega had the wooden railway cars doused with gasoline killing 51 civilian passengers. This atrocity completely turned public opinion against the rebels. But the message of religious freedom continued to inspire the movement and encourage the Cristeros. Blessed Miguel Pro was executed before a firing squad in 1927. Later while fighting against the *Federales* young José is captured in a firefight and savagely tortured to force him to renounce his belief in God. When he resolutely defends his faith, he too is executed.

Fathers Vega and Pedrosa and General Gorostieta all died violently in the final month of the rebellion. Gorostieta was killed in an ambush, in the battle of Jalisco by a pro-cristero engineer who infiltrated the rebel movement, thus ending the most unlikely careers in military history. The rebellion came to an end through a diplomatic settlement in 1929 as the result of the arrangements brokered by Archbishop Leopoldo Ruiz y Flores, President Emilio Portes Gil (who succeeded Calles,) and the U.S. Ambassador Dwight Morrow. However, persecution of Catholics and anti-government terrorist attacks continued into the 1940s, when the remaining organized Cristero groups were incorporated into the Synarchist Party.

The moving account of the Mexican struggle for religious freedom in the 1920's has many similarities to the current situation undergoing the Catholic Church today. While Americans don't face suffering and death for practicing our faith, we confront other softer forms of secularist intimidation, as exemplified by the current administration's insistence of forcing Catholic institutions to violate their beliefs through the provision of health insurance for contraception services, including abortion-inducing drugs, thus denying the free expression of Catholic faith and moral values. Unlike the 1926 anti-clerical Calles Laws enacted to enforce the anti-clerical provisions of the 1917 Constitution, the First Amendment of our Constitution protects our religious liberties. We must then not be afraid to take a stand to ensure the protection of our religious rights. The courage of Blessed Miguel Pro, of young José Luis Sánchez del Río, and of all the many Cristero priests and lay martyrs who followed, inspire us with the courage needed to stand up for our religious beliefs and values. Archbishop José Gómez encourages us that "we need to ask for the strength to be Cristeros. By their dying, they show what we should be living for. We need to make that our prayer: that like the Cristeros we might be always ready to love and sacrifice in order to stand up for Jesus and his Church".

¡Viva Cristo Rey!