

Homily – May Procession & Crowning – May 22nd 2017

Tonight we celebrate Our Lady of Fatima – where, 100 years ago this month, MARY appeared to three children asking them to gather (on the 13th of the month); and to pray the rosary – for world peace.

Fatima is by far the most prophetic of all the modern apparitions of Mary. The first and second parts of the “Secrets” of Fatima are thought to refer to the world situation: especially to the vision of hell (to evil); the impending Second World War, and to the damage that Russia and Communism would do to humanity. Much of that prophetic prediction materialized in various ways; and yet, much of the spiritual revival that Our Lady of Fatima predicted – also came about. When you think about it, all the rosaries that were prayed as a result of Mary’s invitation – not one single Hail Mary – was wasted because years later – the “Iron Curtain” collapsed.

We’re here tonight because of our belief in the power of prayer. The world responds when multitudes of people turn to the higher power. As the family of the human race, we can change (collectively) when we feel others are in the same boat – interceding for peace and hope. There’s power in mutual gathering. And there’s a great power in believing and trusting in the efficacy of our personal prayer.

Exhibit A is Saint John Paul II. Pope John Paul believed that Mary interceded with God to redirect the bullets that was went into his body on May 13th 1981. A year later he traveled to Portugal to place a bullet the doctors had removed from his body into the crown of the Virgin’s statue where it remains to this day. His belief in Mary’s intercession – lead him to trust that each day forward God had a plan for him – and he would never abdicate his responsibility. If you genuinely believe that Mary interceded with God to suspend the laws of nature to keep you in office, then you would never just wake up one morning and decide – you’ve had enough.

John Paul regarded his papacy as belonging to Mary – not to him, as expressed in his motto – “Totus Tuus” meaning: – ENTIRELY YOURS – a line drawn from the spiritual works of Saint Louis de Montfort. But we know that the world itself doesn’t belong entirely to God because of His gift of freedom given to humanity. We can say NO to God – as an individual and as the human race. And we do. Human nature is such with personal freedom, that evil is always possible to return. And all we have to do – is look at the world – or look at the news.

In today’s Gospel, Jesus says: “The hour is coming when everyone who kills you – will think he is offering worship to God.” Many Radical Islamic Terrorists – think they are offering worship to God by their horrific atrocities around the world. President Trump yesterday called the Muslim World to stand with the US against the common threat of terrorism “by denying the extremists” safe harbor; financial backing; and social standing within their countries. The President said – “drive them out of your places of worship; your communities; your holy land, and this earth.” “This isn’t a fight,” he said, “between or among religious faiths – but between good and evil.” It’s a cosmic battle.

At Fatima, 100 years ago, our Blessed Mother spoke about good and evil in the world. And that tension and evil still exists so that’s why we’re here, and that’s why we still have to pray, and for us as Catholics, pray the rosary yet, not just to pray – but work actively for peace in the ordinary events of human life .

There’s another story in the news today (more locally) about the end [after 146 years] of the “Greatest Show On Earth” – The Ringling Brothers & Barnum Bailey Circus. Some people say that the “greatest show” on earth wasn’t the circus but was the dancing of the sun 100 years ago outside of Fatima. But then and now, we’re not here for a show. But we are here in great numbers on a rainy Monday night to show our faith to the world and to one another even with the sin and evil that still remains in our hearts and in the world. And many times, our prayer to Mary is simply to help us deal with the local (near-by) battles of family life.

That's why, maybe it's no coincidence that we gather for this May Crowning on the Feast of Saint Rita of Cascia. (1381 – 1457) [650+ year ago today]. One of the most popular saints [Prayer Garden [HERE!](#)] Known as saint of the “impossible” because of her amazing answer to prayer – as well as the remarkable events of her own life. St. Rita wanted to become a nun, but in obedience to her aged parents – she married. Her husband caused her much suffering – he was both physically abusive and unfaithful to her. He caused her much suffering, but she repaid his cruelty with prayer and kindness. In time (much later) he was converted and became considerate and God-fearing. Later, Rita was to undergo another great sorrow – when her husband was murdered. She publicly forgave her husband's murderers at his funeral!

But soon afterwards, she found out that her two sons were entertaining thoughts of avenging their father's murder. And she feared they would put their desires in effect with the evil custom of the vendetta. Eventually they died, and then bereft of spouse and children, she entered an Augustinian convent at Cascia – and was known to help many people in difficult personal and family situations. She devoted herself to prayer and obtained remarkable cures; deliverances from the devil; and other special favors from God – through Mary.

She is the patroness of abuse situations and abuse victims; Marriage difficulties; parenthood, widows.