**October Chaplain’s Report**

***Month of the Holy Rosary and Our Lady of Victory***

October is Respect Life Month. Traditionally it is also a month dedicated to the most holy rosary. The faithful are encouraged to offer this prayer for the protection of the Church in the midst of an increasingly unfriendly and outright dangerous world.

This Sunday, October 7th is traditionally the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. What many may not realize is that before we celebrated this day in memory of Our Lady of the Rosary, we remembered Our Lady of Victory and the time when Mary saved Western Civilization.

At the heart of this great feast was a great and yet oft-overlooked naval battle of the 16th century, the Battle of Lepanto. In 1571 the Ottoman Turks, a Muslim empire then riding high on their recent conquest of the Byzantine Empire and stretching from the Middle East almost all of North Africa and parts of Southeastern Europe was beginning to set its sights upon Rome.

Pope Pius V realized that the Ottoman threat was more immediate than many in Europe cared to admit. England and Germany having been recently throw into chaos by the Protestant Reformation were of no immediate help. The Spanish King, Phillip II, a natural ally wasn’t much help either, busy managing his own interests at home and abroad.

The Pope was able to convince Phillip to offer a detachment of his main fleet as well as the Knights of Malta and the Merchants of Venice to unite in defense of Christian Europe, forming the Holy League. Tapped to lead this ragtag fleet was the unlikely Don John of Austria, half-brother to Phillip II and only 24 years of age.

Lepanto, a great port city of Greece, was something of a gateway to main land Europe. Several thousand Venetians were captured there by the invading Ottoman Turks, their leader brutally slain and the remainder left enslaved. The League’s effort began as a rescue mission but the League was too late. It became clear very quickly that the Ottoman Turks under the great Muslim Admiral Ali Pasha wasn’t going to remain content with Lepanto but had his sights set on Italy and ultimately the heart of the Christian Church, Rome.

Pope Pius V realized that what was about to ensue was very much a “holy war” and would not be won by military might but power from on high. In preparation for the battle, Pope Pius instructed Don John to outfit his troops, each man with a rosary. They were all to recite the most holy rosary and the chaplains on each ship were to offer mass before the ships engaged the enemy. He also spread word to the wider Church to fast and pray, offering the rosary for the league and the coming battle.

After three days of sailing near-blind through the fog. The league came upon the Turkish force. The Ottomans began to resound with shots and shouts to taunt and intimidate the nearing out-numbered force of the League. Don John, realizing the time had come, set out to rally the troops and entering a row boat, moved to and fro across the front line of ships shouting: ***“You have come to fight the battle of the Cross—to conquer or to die. But whether you die or conquer, do your duty this day, and you will secure a glorious immortality”[[1]](#footnote-1)***

Don John made the first move and engaged Ali Pasha’s flagship head on. The fleets engaged. Then something incredible happened. The wind changed allegiance and now was with the Holy League. Bolstered by this advantage the fleet went on full attack. Ali Pasha was struck dead early in the battle and by four in the afternoon the battle was over and Turks were sent fleeing back Don John and the league had won the day.

It is said that the Pope in Rome received a vision of the great victory before ever being notified of it by envoy. In gratitude for the victory for Christian Europe, the Pope instituted the Feast of our Lady of Victory. In time the victory would be overshadowed by the weapon that one such a great combat – the Rosary.

Today we find ourselves in a different time and place but we are nevertheless at war. As we continue to battle as Knights in building a Culture of Life and Civilization of Love we must turn with greater and greater confidence to Our Lady and the Most Holy Rosary if we are to be agents of reform, renewal and rebuilding in the Church, our nation and the world today. Our Lady of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for us!

**Practical Tips:**

***1) Read up on the great Battle of Lepanto here:*** [***https://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/no-paradise-for-cowards-lepanto-1571***](https://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/no-paradise-for-cowards-lepanto-1571)

***2) Pray the Rosary in the Month of October in a special way for promotion of a Culture of Life.***

***3) Attend a 40 Days for Life Campaign. St. Robert’s and several other parishes have opportunities on Saturday, 10/13/2018.***

**Coming Up:**

***October***

* Memorial of St. Francis of Assisi – Thursday, 10/4/2018
  + Traditional Blessing of Animals in evening at St. Robert’s and possibly OLMC
* Respect Life Sunday – Sunday, 10/7/2018
* Forty Hours at St. Agnes, Sellersville: Friday 10/19 – Sunday 10/21
  + Preached by Fr. Matthew Biedrzycki

***November***

* All Saints Day – Thursday, 11/1/2018
  + Holy Day of Obligation
* All Souls Day – Friday, 11/2/2018
* 4th Degree Memorial Mass – Monday, 11/8/2018
  + St. Catherine of Siena Parish @ 7:30PM
* Forty Hours at OLMC – Sunday, 11/11-11/13/2018
* Month of the Holy Souls
  + **Plenary Indulgence** available to those who visit a cemetery in first eight days of November under all other ordinary conditions:
    - Complete detachment from sin, even venial sin
    - Receive Communion
    - Go to Confession (within twenty days before or after)
    - Pray for intentions of the Holy Father (Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be)

1. Ahlquist, Dale. Lepanto (p. 62). Ignatius Press. Kindle Edition. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)