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## FEAST OF THE HOLY ROSARY

Homily of the Right Reverend Dom Jean PATEAU  
Abbot of Our Lady of Fontgombault  
(Fontgombault, October 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023)

*Qui me invenerit, inveniet vitam.*  
He that shall find me, shall find life.  
(Pr 8:35)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,  
My dearly beloved Sons,

**S**T. THOMAS AQUINAS, as he meditates on the first moment of creation, exclaims: “When the key of love opened the hand of God, then the procession of creatures set off.”<sup>a</sup> Among the creatures, God created in His image and likeness man and woman, and gave them a mission: “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it.”<sup>b</sup> “And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to work it and to keep it.”<sup>c</sup> The role of man is thus defined. He doesn’t have to create the garden anew. He has to make it bear fruit, according to God’s plan and will. We know how man preferred to carry out his own plan, that of his own will against the will of God.

But the pride of man and Satan not only did not throw out the divine plan, but it contributed to the revelation of an unexpected face of this plan. To the *No* of Adam and Eve, answered the *Yes*s of the new Eve, Mary, and of the new Adam, Christ.

A new procession is therefore going to set off, that of all men and women rescued from the power of Satan and evil by the gift

a. *Sentences*,  
Bk. II, Prol.

b. *Gn* 1:28.

c. *Gn* 2:15.

Christ made of His life out of love. These men and women will then receive a new mission:

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always, to the end of the age.<sup>a</sup>

*a. Mt 28:19-20.*

As the Church is carrying out a synodal process, it is worth pointing out that concord, unity, synodality in implementing the mission received from Christ, take root in Christ's act of love and obedience towards the Father in the work of Redemption, and ultimately, in divine love, the source of all love and all creature.

*b. Mt 28:20.*

"Teach them to obey everything that I have commanded,"<sup>b</sup> recommends the Lord before His Ascension. The Word of God, the word of Christ is a word that is fruitful and life-giving: "This do: and thou shalt live,"<sup>c</sup> says the Lord to the lawyer.

*c. Lk 10:28.*

But this will will not be fruitful unless it is received, and first of all, heard. The Book of Proverbs proclaims:

Blessed is the man that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates, and waiteth at the posts of my doors. He that shall find me, shall find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord.<sup>d</sup>

*d. Pr 8:34-35.*

The word takes flesh only in the hearts of those who keep watch, of those who remain heedful.

Such is Mary, and the gospel of the Annunciation we have just heard this morning bears witness to this fact. Mary hears the Angel Gabriel's word. She believes him. She gives her consent:

*e. Lk 1:38.*

"Be it done to me according to thy word."<sup>e</sup>

For decades now, the transmission of faith has been undergoing a crisis within the Church and families, especially in the old Christendom countries. Many are content with a Christian culture and neglect to cultivate their faith. Experience shows that where the faith is no longer cultivated, even the last remaining shreds of Christian culture vanish, making place for paganism and nothingness.

During the general audience on last August 30<sup>th</sup>, dedicated to St. Kateri Tekakwitha, the first native saint of North America, who lived during the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Pope Francis remarked:

Many of us were also first introduced to the Lord in family settings, especially by our mothers and grandmothers. [...] Evangelization often begins this way: with simple, small gestures, such as parents helping their children learn to talk to God in prayer and telling them about His great and merciful love.

Cardinal Sarah fondly remembers how his father taught him to love the Blessed Virgin, through his own example. The rudiments of Marian theology entered deep into the child's heart as he saw his father kneeling with devotion three times a day as the Mission Fathers sounded the Angelus. The child then understood that Mary was an important lady, Our Lady. How could he forget that, after seeing his father and mother draw their beads from their pockets, and recite the rosary?

Yet, if transmission or example should fail, if the word should no longer be heard, what will be left to men of good will? For many, the solution to the decrease in the number of vocations and faithful seems to be a greater opening of the Church to the world, and especially to its vision on man. Is that the will of God?

St. Bernard composed, as he meditated on the Annunciation mystery, a prayer that everyone could make his own, and address with the holy abbot to Mary:

Make haste, answer the angel, or rather, through the angel answer the Lord. Answer a word, and receive the Word. Pronounce thy own word, and conceive the Word of God. Utter a fleeting word, and embrace the eternal Word. Why tarry? Why tremble? Believe, confess, and receive. May thy humility become bold, thy modesty trustful. Assuredly, it would not be proper that the simplicity of thy virginal heart should in that moment forget prudence. Yet, in this unique encounter, fear not presumption, O prudent Virgin. For if thy silent reserve pleased God, more necessary now is the eager agreement of thy word. O happy Virgin, open thy heart to faith, thy lips to assent, thy bosom to the Creator. For behold, the Desired of all nations is knocking at thy door. [...] Arise, run, open to Him: arise by thy faith, run by thy assiduousness to His will, open to Him by thy consent. Behold, quoth she, the handmaid of the Lord: be it done to me according to thy word.<sup>a</sup>

*a. Sermon on  
Mary's Praises  
Homily 4, n. 8.*

Such is the disposition we should expect from the members of the Synodal Assembly. Let us entrust Mary with this intention, and keep it in the prayer of our rosaries. Don't the beads gathered around the cross evoke the Church?

*a. Jn 2:5.* May Our Lady, Mother of the Church and Mother of men, walk with the Church during this synodal time, and repeat the message of Cana: "Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye."<sup>a</sup> Then the Church, Mother and Teacher of truth, will be able to give to the world the word that this same world, and especially young men and women, are expecting from her, a word that is true, a word that is fecund, a word of life.

Amen.

