



# LIGHT & LIFE

VOICE OF THE ROSARY CENTER & CONFRATERNITY

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Fr. Dismas Sayre, O.P., *Director*

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Western Dominican Province

**Fr. Peter Do, OP, our previous interim Director, recently traveled to Rome for the Jubilee of the Confraternities, which includes the Rosary Confraternity. Below is his report.**

## **A Jubilee Pilgrimage of the Rosary: Dominican Fraternity and the Universality of the Church**

As I write to you from a recent trip to Bracciano, Italy—a tranquil town nestled on the shores of Lake Bracciano just outside of Rome—I wish to share the graces and experiences of my recent journey to participate in the Assembly of International Rosary Promoters of the Dominican Order. This special gathering brought together about twenty Dominican friars from every region of our Order, united in our common mission to preach the Gospel through the Rosary, to encourage devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary in the spirit of St. Dominic, and to promote the Rosary Confraternity.

We were graciously hosted by the Dominican Sisters of St. Cecilia—commonly known as the “Nashville Dominicans”—at their retreat house in Bracciano. Surrounded by nature, in an atmosphere of quiet prayer and fraternity, we entered into days of reflection, discussion, and shared prayer. We started each day with Matins and Lauds, followed by Mass, and then breakfast. The serene environment and the sisters' joyful hospitality provided the perfect setting for our international assembly.

The heart of our time together was a series of conferences and discussions focused on deepening our understanding of the Rosary and our role in this Dominican mission to promote the Rosary. Each friar had a chance to share his work of promoting the Rosary in his province. Fr. Lawrence Lew, OP, the current Promoter General of the Rosary for the Order of Preachers, led our gathering and offered reflections to anchor our work. We were particularly enriched by a presentation from Fr. Michael Sherwin, OP, of the Western Dominican Province, who traced the historical development of the Rosary and its theological integration into the Dominican charism.

Another notable contribution came from Fr. Louis-Marie Ariño-Durand, OP, the former Promoter General of the

Rosary and current international chaplain of the “Teams of the Rosary” (*Équipes du Rosaire*), who shared insights into this vibrant lay movement that continues to bring the Rosary to families and communities worldwide. As part of our practical collaboration, we spent time reviewing the **Handbook of the Rosary Confraternity**, a resource to help provincials and promoters of the Rosary to better promote the Rosary Confraternity in a unified and fruitful manner.

After our days of prayer and meetings in Bracciano, we traveled together to Rome from May 16–18 to participate in the *Jubilee of Confraternities*, a global gathering of lay confraternities in celebration of the 2025 Jubilee Year of



Hope. On Friday, our pilgrimage began with a communal recitation of the Rosary as we walked through the two Major Basilicas of Rome—first through St. Paul Outside the Walls, then St. John Lateran—passing through the Holy Doors of each, a grace tied to the Jubilee indulgence. On Saturday morning, we visited Santa Sabina, the headquarters of the Dominican

Order, where we were welcomed by the Master of the Order, Fr. Gerard Francisco Timoner III. He graciously gave us a tour of the church and the offices of our Order,

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## **THE ROSARY LIGHT & LIFE**

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Novena of Masses in honor of the

## **Assumption of Mary**

Aug 6th - 14th

TO BE OFFERED FOR YOUR INTENTIONS

# THEOLOGY FOR THE LAITY

## Is God just, holy, and merciful?

By Fr. Dismas Sayre, O.P.

20 Q. Is God just, holy, and merciful?

A. God is all just, all holy, all merciful, as He is infinitely perfect.

"All just"--that is, most just. "Just" means to give to everyone what belongs to him--to reward if it is merited or to punish if it is deserved. "Holy"--that is, good. "Merciful" means compassionate, forgiving, less exacting than severe justice demands. In a court a just judge is one who listens patiently to all the arguments for and against the prisoner, and then, comparing one with the other, gives the sentence exactly in accordance with the guilt. If he inflicts more or less punishment than the prisoner deserves, or for money or anything else gives an unfair sentence, then he is an unjust judge. The judge might be merciful in this way. The laws say that for the crime of which this prisoner is proved guilty he can be sent to prison for a term not longer than ten years and not shorter than five: that is, for anything between ten and five years. The judge could give him the full ten years that the law allows and be just. But suppose he believed that the prisoner did not know the law and did not intend to be as wicked as he was proved; or that it was his first offense, or that he heard the prisoner's mother, who was old and infirm, pleading for him and saying he was her only support; or other extenuating circumstances that could awaken sympathy: the judge might be merciful and sentence him for the shortest term the law allows. But if the judge dismissed every prisoner, no matter how guilty, without punishment, he would not be a merciful but an unjust judge, who would soon be forced to leave the court. In the same way, God is often merciful to sinners and punishes them less than He could in strict justice. But if He were to allow every sinner to go without any punishment whatsoever--as unbelievers say He should do, by having no Hell for the wicked--then He would not be just. For as God is an Infinite Being, all His perfections must be infinite; that is, He must be as infinitely just as He is infinitely merciful, true, wise, or powerful.

Now He has promised to punish sin; and since He is infinitely true, He must keep His promise.

### Justice, Mercy, Love: One in God

Once again, we find ourselves trying to explain God from a human vantage point. Just as we often confuse our limited participation in God's goodness with His own infinite goodness, and have difficulty conceiving of the infinite God, so do we confuse God's ways and man's ways here. And yet once again, we must stress: God's love is *not* like man's love. God's justice is *not* like man's justice. And most certainly, God's mercy is *not* like man's mercy. As we've mentioned before, for the ancient Jews, to say that God was "holy" was to say that God was "other," so

much *not* like ourselves. To say He is "Holy, Holy, Holy" is to say that God is not only *not* like us, and He's not even *more* so not like ourselves, but indeed, He is the MOST not like ourselves; indeed, outside of and beyond all His Creation. As the psalmist wondered, "What is man that You are mindful of him, and a son of man that You care for him? Yet You have made him little less than a god, crowned him with glory and honor" (Psalm 8:4-5). What does this exalted, infinite being who is totally "other" to ourselves have to do with us? Of course, as Christians we see the answer in Christ, who bridges that infinite gap in the way only an infinite God can. But even for the ancient Jews, there was an incredible act of love here at play. And even Creation in itself was not enough, no, He inserted Himself in human history through His prophets to deliver His chosen people. And when the Jews wandered away from God or were unfaithful, still, He held up His end of the Covenant, and always sought to bring them back to Himself. As limited creatures with a limited perspective, we might see different aspects of God here at play: we see God as good and loving in Creation. We might see Him as merciful in sending the prophets to warn His people. And we might see Him as a Righteous Judge when He allowed them to wander away to their own ruin. But God's plan was *always* in full communion with man. The Bible isn't simply a story about the Garden of Eden becoming a permanent *Paradise Lost*, but really, about how we get to *Paradise Regained*. God had written the ending and the beginning of His story at the same time in His mind. But we are not simply ending right back where we started from -- we are ending up somewhere even better, in even closer communion with God, because He has adopted us through His only begotten Son. We are more now than created creatures -- we are coheirs with His only Son. Man fell because he wanted to be like God, as the Evil One falsely promised him. But God not only restored man, but placed him even higher than he was at the beginning- not by human nature, but by His grace. It makes sense when you look at the big picture, but the only one who can really see the Big Picture at times is He who is the author and artist.

### Limited Perspectives

So how do we see justice, mercy, and love? (I am using "love" here, because I want to stress the goal, and we have already spoken of His holiness). We see them, and treat them in everyday life, as little compartmentalized aspects of human experience. If someone does something that we like or enjoy, we might bring out something from the box called "Love." "Love" is what we bring out when we have good company over to the house. However, if they do something that we most definitely do *not* like, or we feel wronged, insulted, or slighted, then we dig into the

box labeled, “Justice,” and find the Hammer of Justice to whack them over the heads with it. Oh, now we feel sorry for them? Okay, let’s dig something out of this box called “Mercy,” and have some pity on them, since we’re so magnanimous that way. Just to be nice. So, according to common human experience, love, mercy, and justice are not really related terms or categories.

Don’t we often say that mercy and justice are opposites? Or at least, that love and mercy and justice are separate categories? And even in the Church’s prayer, things *seem* to get separated. In one of the older translations of a Eucharistic preface we used at Mass, we began, “In love You created man, in justice You condemned him, but in mercy You redeemed him.” Well, that certainly *does* seem to place everything in categories, does it not? But really, this is not how the Church Fathers see it.

That’s because for them, and for us, as we know, God is love. We agree there, right? The saints teach us that justice and mercy aren’t just little static boxes, for they have their own goal, their own end, and that end is, what? Nothing more and nothing less than returning to love, God’s love. Justice and mercy are not opposites, but work together *toward* that ONE goal: love, which conquers sin. We start in love, in God’s friendship, and we lose it by sinning. All justice does is point out the obvious reality – we sinned. But, it doesn’t end there, for justice attains its end by enacting mercy *in order to* overcome sin. And mercy overcomes sin to achieve its true end, which is justice, that is, a right relationship with God. And it all flows back to... you guessed it, love. God’s love. Do you see the cycle? You can’t get stuck on one!

As St. Thomas Aquinas reminds us, “Mercy without justice is the mother of dissolution [a life without restraint or goal; just purely pleasure]; justice without mercy is cruelty” (*Super Mattheum*, V, l. 2.). You can’t divide them without damaging both. And even in damnation, both mercy and justice *are* acting at the same time. Elsewhere he shares the opinion that “Certain works are attributed to justice, and certain others to mercy, because in some justice appears more forcibly and in others mercy. Even in the damnation of the reprobate mercy is seen, which, though it does not totally remit, yet somewhat alleviates, in punishing short of what is deserved” (*Summa Theologica*, I, q. 21, a. 4).

### Justice and Vengeance are NOT the Same Thing

In our modern world, man sees Jesus’ forgiveness and mercy as almost givens, taken for granted. Of course, even the most permissive and “merciful” want whatever *they* might consider evil to be punished, but never their *own* evil. It’s funny how that works. As has often been stated by various authors, two thieves were crucified with Christ. One was saved, so we should not despair, but one was lost, so we should not presume.

Yes, it is *very* possible for us to lose our salvation, to lose our way eternally. Our Lord is crystal clear on this point in His many parables, as much as He is crystal clear on the need for forgiveness and mercy. But the goal of God’s

justice is *not* to separate us eternally, but to restore us. In our modern penal system, we most often think of a punitive justice, where we inflict some kind of punishment on the criminal, in order to discourage other potential criminals from committing the same crimes and make the criminal “pay” for his crimes. But then, we forget that all justice is meant to be *restorative*, that is, to make the criminal a full and productive member of society once more, restored to where he was in the society, with his friends, family, and fellow citizens. Yes, there may be some criminals who have no desire to repent and disdain society and all bounds of decency and goodness, or who can never be allowed back into society. They do not want to be saved. So be it. Regardless of the criminal, however, we tend to punish and forget, lumping the redeemable together with the irredeemable.

St. Thomas Aquinas elsewhere writes that, “God acts mercifully, not indeed by going *against* His justice, but by doing something *more* than justice; thus a man who pays another two hundred pieces of money, though owing him only one hundred, does nothing against justice, but acts liberally or mercifully. The case is the same with one who pardons an offence committed against him, for in remitting it he may be said to bestow a gift. Hence the Apostle calls remission a forgiving: Forgive one another, as Christ has forgiven you’ (Ephesians 4:32). Hence it is clear that mercy does not destroy justice, but in a sense is the fulness thereof” (*Summa Theologica*, I, q. 21, a. 3, emphases mine).

The Good Thief on the cross confessed his own crimes, rebuking the Bad Thief, saying, “we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal” (Luke 23:41b). He realized what he deserved, but he also came to understand one very important fact that we often overlook: God wanted him back. And not only back on the ground in Jerusalem, but beside Himself in Paradise, the *Heavenly* Jerusalem. “Then he said, ‘Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom’” (Luke 23:42). God was extending to him on the cross the gift of His mercy and love, and the Good Thief seized the hand extended in mercy, as a drowning man grabs his rescuer. The Good Thief didn’t really “steal” Heaven – Heaven stole *him* from Hell; that was Jesus’ plan all along. *That* is Jesus’ plan all along for *all* of us.

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### A Brief Pause

A reminder that we will take a short detour next issue to commemorate the canonization of one of the great modern apostles of the Rosary, soon-to-be-Saint Bartolo Longo.





## Death of Our Predecessor, Fr. Reginald Martin, OP.



Fr. Reginald Martin, OP, died on May 4th from complications associated with a heart attack. He was the only child of David Regner and Margaret Colleen (Ryan) Martin of Los Angeles, CA, who named him William David. He described his family as “small, somewhat unstructured, mobile, and rather athletic.” His parents encouraged his exploration of faith and supported that faith by sending him to Catholic elementary

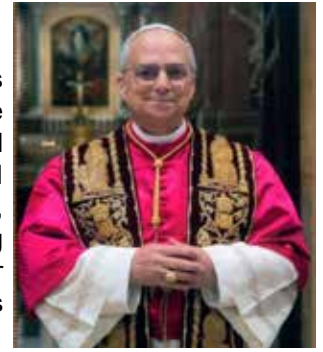
schools in North Hollywood and Reno, and then Daniel Murphy Catholic High School in Los Angeles, which was administered and staffed by Dominican friars. The Dominican integration of study of God, the human person, and creation in the spiritual life impressed him deeply and became the seed of his vocation. He spent two years at St. Martin’s College in Olympia, WA, then completed his B.A. in English Literature at Loyola University, Los Angeles.

Entering the Dominican novitiate in 1968, he took the name Reginald, after Blessed Reginald of Orleans, one of the early followers of St. Dominic. A hospital chaplain who worked with him in a chaplaincy training program commented that Fr. Reginald, “found in the Order an expression of commitment to activity and mobility that was paralleled by an equally firm grasp of the necessity of a deeply contemplative life.” He completed a B.A. in philosophy and a Master of Divinity prior to his ordination to the priesthood on June 21, 1974.

His brothers in the Order treasured several of Fr. Reginald’s characteristics: he had a fine intellect, a gentlemanly manner, and was a masterful preacher. Here at the Rosary Center, we remember his writings most fondly as witty and learned, yet very accessible and understandable, expressing his love of the Faith with joy. Fr. Reginald supported the fraternal life in every community in which he lived, from cooking for the brethren to accepting the role of superior. Willing to serve in whatever capacity was needed, Fr. Reginald ministered as a chaplain in campus ministry at the University of Oregon, Eugene, OR; as a parochial minister at Holy Family Cathedral, Anchorage, AK; St. Raymond of Peñafort, Menlo Park, CA; and as pastor at Blessed Sacrament parish, Seattle, WA. An excellent administrator, he not only served here, but he was also appointed Director of the St. Jude Shrine in San Francisco, and Director of Development for the Province. After completing an M.B.A. at St. Mary’s College, Moraga, in 1989, he was appointed Vicar of the Prior Provincial for two terms and then Assistant Treasurer of the Province. His brothers in five different communities elected him to be their prior (superior) at various times throughout his life in the province. He was always a

## *Habemus Papam!*

Pope Leo XIV elected as successor to Peter, and is the first U.S. born pope, Cardinal Robert Prevost. Pope Leo XIII was known as the Rosary Pope, so let us rejoice in his coming papacy. Please pray for our Pope and all Church shepherds and teachers—every day!



## Jubilee Pilgrimage Report

(Continued from page 1)

offering reflections on the history and mission of the Order. It was a powerful reminder of our spiritual roots and the ongoing mission of our common life and preaching. In the afternoon, we joined thousands of pilgrims in a prayerful procession through the streets of Rome, ending at the historic Circus Maximus, with prayers and public witness to the life of faith.

On Sunday, our pilgrimage culminated in the inaugural Papal Mass, led by Pope Leo XIV, and the celebration of a series of rites and prayers, including the bestowal of the pallium and the fisherman’s ring, which symbolize the Pope’s authority and mission. This entire journey was a gift of fraternity, grace, and renewal—not only for those of us who promote the Rosary but for the universal Church. This special gift—completely unexpected and unplanned—was the opportunity to concelebrate the inaugural Mass of the new pope, in front of St. Peter’s Basilica. To stand at the altar with thousands of priests and to join in prayer with more than 200,000 faithful pilgrims was a moment of profound ecclesial communion. The joy and unity of the Church were tangible, and I was deeply moved by the hope and anticipation that marked the beginning of this new pontificate. After the Mass, I had hoped to greet the Holy Father at the nearby Augustinian priory, where he is known to visit and dine informally with his brethren. Sadly, as I had to leave early to fly back home to Portland, I was not able to stay and greet him in person. Still, the desire itself was a sign of my affection for our new Pope and his humble approach to the Petrine ministry, and his love for Mother Mary.

May Our Lady of the Rosary continue to intercede for us and strengthen our preaching with her maternal care.

In Christ and St. Dominic,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Fr. Peter, OP." with a stylized flourish at the end.

Fr. Peter, OP

kindly superior, ever solicitous for the well-being of the individuals in the community as well as their fraternal communion and apostolic cooperation. They will miss his friendship, as will the many friends he made in the ministries in which he served.