

October 7th: Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary

Gospel text (Lk 1:26-38): In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a town of Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming to her, he said, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you."

But she was greatly troubled at what was said and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of David his father, and he will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

But Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I have no relations with a man?" And the angel said to her in reply, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called holy, the Son of God. And behold, Elizabeth, your relative, has also conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called barren; for nothing will be impossible for God." Mary said, "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel departed from her.

"You will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus"

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Today, well into the so-called "month of the Rosary", we celebrate the Virgin under the advocacy of the Rosary. What better way to honor our Mother than to pray the Rosary? So many times has She appeared with the "rosary in her hands"! She likes it! Why? The reason is this: although it may seem that the prayer of the Rosary is a manifestation of Marian piety (of course, it is!), however its substantiation is Christological, Jesus himself. Put it simply: the protagonist of the Holy Rosary is Jesus Christ, the Son of God born of Mary Most Holy.

In fact, the different mysteries of the Rosary -joyful, sorrowful, glorious and luminous - are like "photographs" of emblematic moments in the life of Jesus as seen with Mary's eyes. For example: today we contemplate the Annunciation by the Archangel Saint Gabriel to the Virgin Mary. The dialogue between the divine messenger and Mary is very important; more important is her "yes": "May it be done to me according to your word" (Lk 1:38). But here the very decisive thing is the Incarnation of the Son of God. The protagonist is Jesus Christ; Mary acts as an instrument (along with Her "yes", as mother, she offers her womb).

If we continue on to the second joyful mystery, the Visitation of Mary to her cousin St. Elizabeth, it may again seem that the protagonist of the scene is St. Mary, having as co-protagonist Elizabeth. But, actually, it is not like that: the protagonist - as always - is Jesus (with barely a few days of human existence) and the co-protagonist is John the Baptist (also in his mother's womb, already six months). The two are instrumental for the first prophetic act of the New Testament: John points to the Messiah already present in this world.

And so the prayer of this devotion takes place: the mysteries are mysteries of Christ. With good reason, Saint Paul VI said of the Rosary that "it is a compendium of the Gospel." In addition, to the "Hail Mary" - repeated around each one of these mysteries - it contains in its very heart the name of Jesus. Mary is blessed among all women because the fruit of her womb is blessed: Jesus!