



HOMILY by Father Robbie Low

Pentecost Sunday-Year A-May 30th 2020

***Readings: Acts 2: 1-11, Psalm 103, 1 Corinthians 12: 3-7, 12-13,
John 20: 19-23***

On the occasion when people ask who most influenced me on my journey home to the Catholic Church, I am spoilt for choice among the good hearted, faithful praying friends and fellow pilgrims who waited patiently for my enlightenment and sweet surrender to the truth. But my reply is, perhaps unjustly, not one of them. I reply that two people really finally convinced me.

One was Pope St. John Paul II who demonstrated for me, beyond peradventure, the meaning, dignity and purpose of the Papacy. In him Christ revealed a living ikon of the ministry of Peter, the fulfilment of magisterium and the glorious unity of the Universal and undivided Church. In his faithful and beautiful life he answered all my questions. The second was even greater, though no less surprising to my long educated Protestant mind. It was, of course, Our Lady. My long wrestling with the mystery of the Mother of Christ was resolved in two simple ways. The first was the spiritual. My dear late old friend, Rachel John, Catholic historian and Cornish bard, had been clearing her shelves. On her desk were a number of items. 'Help yourself', she said. I picked up an old but simple Rosary. 'May I have this, please?'

I had long kept a set of orthodox beads in my pocket but baulked at the

Rosary. Visions of droves of ‘mindless’ pray-ers rattling their beads had established firm prejudice in my mind and heart. In short, I surprised myself by my choice. ‘Of course,’ Rachel replied. ‘My father would be delighted. They were my father’s. He would be pleased that they were back in use.’

She went on to tell me that it was a ‘Catacomb Rosary’ –the hollow back filled with dust from the catacombs. The lock pin from the base was missing but the whole crucifix was corroded shut so not to worry. I took it gratefully and decided, when I got home to my Anglican parish, to give it an outing after Morning Prayer in the Lady Chapel of our church.

Several weeks in I was trying to get to grips with this new way of prayer. Light was streaming through the chapel window on the ikon of Our Lady. Kneeling in the complete silence of early morning, rosary in hand, I heard the sound of something dropping on the floor several pews in front. An almost inaudible but sharp tinkle. I went forward to look. There was a silver lock pin. More than that it was not new and, to my astonishment fitted the crucifix. (Later, on my return to Rome to buy my children Catacomb Rosaries I confirmed that it was exactly the lock pin in all of them. Only one shop sold them.) I assumed, thick as I was, that Our Lady was telling me something.

Over the months that followed the penny dropped. Catholics were not obsessed with Our Lady because they had a deficient version of the Faith. They loved Our Lady because she was the very model of the Church. She was obedient, pure, at the disposal of God, open to the Holy Spirit, bringing Jesus into the world, pondering His life, following Him even when she did not fully understand, suffering for Him, standing by Him at the Calvary, given to the faithful disciple, present at the Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended on the Apostles – just as He had overshadowed her at Nazareth all those years ago. Her mission and ministry was that of the Universal Church. She was the greatest of the Saints. She was what all Christians aspire to be – A HEART OF LOVE FOR JESUS. She

intercedes for us just as surely as she interceded at Cana. She stands with us at the foot of the Cross. She is with us in the Resurrection dawn and she accompanies us in the ministry let loose at the first Pentecost.

How could we not love her? How could we not ask for her prayers?

‘Behold your mother.’ Was Jesus message not just to his beloved John but to all His beloved disciples.

If we want to know what the Holy Spirit wants to do with us on this Pentecost Sunday, we can always look to Mary.

The Rosary has fallen out of fashion in the post-conciliar years but it is now resurgent as Catholics realise again the purpose and place of Our Lady. And the mystery of the Rosary is that it is, what all Christians would surely seek in their prayers, a profound meditation on the life, death and resurrection of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and the ultimate and glorious destiny of those who give their lives to His service. All things in the beautiful and radiant company of the one who loves Him more than all. What more could we ask?

There are few more beautiful sights than a lone pray-er walking in the garden at twilight, the chaplet in her hands.

One of my most powerful memories of this parish will always be the annual Saints Way walk with our young people stopping in fields and on headlands to lead one another in a decade of the Gospel mysteries.

Or seeing my dear old sponsor in the Faith, Frank Philips, praying the Rosary in the back of the bus taking him home from Mass in Wadebridge. Beautiful.

Last month we rededicated our land to Our Lady.

Today our bishops and the Shrine of Walsingham invite us to join in the National Rosary Rally praying for the Faith, Sanctity of Life and Peace among the nations – and for deliverance from this plague.

Our diocese has been given the 11.00 am slot in the relay today.

The Rosary is one of the greatest weapons in the spiritual war against the destructive power of the dark. Let us take up our arms and, in the

beautiful company of Our Lady, offer this precious hour for our world
with a heart of love for Jesus.