

Homily—Silver Rose of Guadeloupe 2015

The silver rose of Guadeloupe. Once again, Saint John Paul II parish is honored to receive this symbol of the pro-life movement and our devotion to the Blessed Mother.

And as always when I begin writing a homily, my first thought is always, what can I say about this, that I haven't already said?

I always try to say something different, or look at something in a new way.

And what struck me this time was, why do the images of roses always surround the Blessed Mother? There are so many plants. There are so many flowers.

Why roses? Because the Blessed Mother is also an image of our faith.

So whatever we say about the Blessed Mother we can also say about our faith.

And also, Mary, being a mother, and the mother of the author of life, what we say about Mary we can also say about life.

And the rose best symbolizes those three things; the Blessed Mother, our faith, and life.

So what can we say about roses? The first thing we can say about roses is that roses are beautiful, because Mary is beautiful, our faith is beautiful and life is beautiful.

Look at some of the things we believe as Catholics; "The Son of God became the son of man, so the sons of men, might become the sons of God." That's beautiful!

The concept that God becomes one of us, so we could have an eternal life with him in heaven is beautiful! No other world religion outside of Christianity believes this.

Well, Father Sisco, in the pagan religions the gods used to sometimes take on human form to interact with us. True enough, but none of them ever died to save us.

That's beautiful. The concept that God would become food for us to eat and drink, just because he wants to touch us, and allow us to touch him, is beautiful.

On the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome, one of Michelangelo's famous fresco's and one of my personal favorites, is the creation of Adam.

God the Father, stretched out on a cloud as far as he can, reaching out toward Adam, and Adam, reclining back, his arm resting on his knee, barely lifting his hand, and the fingers don't touch, because God's quest from the beginning has been to touch us.

God wanted children, not servants, not pets. He wanted children. He wanted a family.

And what parent doesn't want to hold their child? What parent doesn't want to touch--?

So God gave us the sacraments so he could touch us. That's beautiful.
And now all human life is beautiful, because through the sacraments we are all God's
Children; Catholic and non-Catholic; Jew, Moslem, and even pagan.
We are all God's children because of the sacraments of the Catholic Church.
Thus the rose also becomes a symbol of the pro-life movement, because life, all life is
beautiful.
And that's one of the blessings of the Knights of Columbus, they promote the beauty of
our faith, by promoting devotion to the sacraments, the Blessed Mother, and
defending the beauty of all human life.

OK Father, no one is going to dispute that roses are beautiful, but all flowers are beautiful.
Heck, even a dandelion is pretty, and that's a weed!
True enough, but no fella ever picked dandelions for his wife or girlfriend, and if he did,
he was probably paying for that mistake for a long, long, time.
Because aside from being beautiful, roses are also symbolic of romance and love.
God and the Blessed Mother love their children, they love humanity.
All of scripture is a love story between us and God, and the relationship gets spoiled right
at the beginning of the story, and the whole rest of the bible is God trying to
reconstruct this love relationship. And we are called to imitate that love.
We are called to show our love for God by loving humanity.
We are called to love people and use things.
Instead we live in a world where people love things and use people.
That's why our nation and our world have become so dysfunctional.

If the act of abortion wasn't horrifying enough, now we see the latest scandal of Planned
Parenthood selling the parts of aborted babies, and even planning abortions to harvest the parts of
babies to sell. Brothers this is beyond sinful. This left the realm of sin, long, long, ago.
This is now in the realm of the demonic, and I know that, because these video's depict
these gruesome acts being spoken of by abortion providers, as they laugh and
joke about it over COFFEE!
And yet despite this, there are still many people defending Planned Parenthood.

There are still many people willing to believe the lie that Planned Parenthood provides vital health care services for women, and even more people who just don't care. And those are the three signs of the demonic; defending evil, not simply committing sin, but defending evil, and Planned Parenthood has now clearly demonstrated they fall neatly into that category.

Second sign of the demonic, a willingness to believe lies to justify sin.

Everyone knows Planned Parenthood doesn't provide any healthcare services to women that aren't provided by any hospital, or doctor.

That fact is just conveniently ignored. Third sign of the demonic; indifference.

I just don't care. That's a sign of the demonic because indifference is the opposite of love. "But Father, I thought hate was the opposite of love."

Hate isn't the opposite of love. Hate is misdirected love.

Hate is either caused by an excessive love of the self, a deficiency of loving God, or a misunderstood love for people or things.

For instance, someone HATES the Catholic Church and pro-lifers, because I believe that every woman has the right to choose what she does with her own body.

So the hate stems from a misunderstood love of freedom.

The correct understanding of freedom is the ability to promote the individual and the common good, but when the two are in conflict, the common good prevails.

I would even argue the point that abortion is EVER a personal good, based on the eighty percent of women who've had abortions, and now claim if they could change any decision in their lives, it would be that one. But you can work with a hater.

It's just a matter of redirecting the misguided love, but when someone is indifferent, there's really nothing you can do, because to be truly indifferent is to be void of love, it's just not there, so you have nothing to build on.

God Bless the Knights of Columbus who combat these trends by demonstrating their love for humanity through their many charitable deeds.

What else can we say about roses? They're fragile, as our faith is fragile, as life is fragile.

Well, Father you can say our faith is fragile and life is fragile but you said roses also

symbolize the Blessed Mother, and the Blessed Mother is anything but fragile. She is probably the strongest woman creation has ever known. True enough. But she does have a tender side doesn't she? How many apparitions of the Blessed Mother have there been throughout history where she appears crying? And why is that? I believe it was one of the messages of Medjugorje where the Blessed Mother allegedly said that she appeared so often in the past crying because, "there is nothing that will move children to repentance faster than seeing their mother cry, but now my tears are not met with repentance, rather they are met with indifference." Our faith is fragile, so it must be protected. We protect our faith through prayer, through confession, through Mass and learning about our faith. Life is fragile, so life must be protected. And again, God Bless the Knights who protect and promote the faith, and who protect and promote life.

And finally the last things we can say about roses is that they have thorns.

My cousin, who is a florist in Westerly, once said to me, "no matter how careful you are, if you work with roses, you're going to get stuck sometimes." For anything that is beautiful, an image of love, and fragile, there's going to be some sacrifice involved. We're going to get stuck with thorns occasionally. Our faith, our love of humanity, our devotion to God and Mother Mary come with a price tag; people will persecute us. People will attempt to silence us. People will attempt to make us ashamed of being Catholic. People will lie about us, and exaggerate our faults and mistakes and turn public opinion against us. People will ridicule us and call us names. So each of us has to decide for ourselves, is having roses worth risking a few thorns? I think it is. I think it's worth it. God Bless the Knights for their constantly defending our beliefs, and our practices, and continue to stand with the Catholic Church without shame as a witness to an unbelieving world. Continue to stand strong brothers. Continue to work in and for the Church, for every grace we receive for those labors is a rose of indescribable beauty.