

- The first of our upper stained-glass windows on the left side of the church is the image of Our Lady of Pompeii, which depicts Our Lady with the Christ Child on her lap.
- While the Christ Child is placing a crown of thorns on the head of St. Catherine of Siena, Our Lady is shown giving the Holy Rosary to St. Dominic.
- Of course, it was St. Dominic and his Dominicans who, more than any other religious order, have propagated devotion to this most important sacramental.
- In fact, the Dominican Order holds that Our Lady has made 15 promises to those who devote themselves to regularly praying the Rosary, which I recently listed in one of my bulletin articles.
- Among those 15 promises, Our Lady said: *I promise my special protection and the greatest graces to all those who shall recite the rosary.*
- Our Lady also stated that *the rosary shall be a powerful armor against hell, it will destroy vice, decrease sin, and defeat heresies.*
- Of course, the saints have much to say about the Rosary's power against evil. Indeed, St. Dominic himself stated that: "The Rosary is a fortress against evil. It is a sign to satan that you belong to Our Lady."
- In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Pope St. Leo XIII, who devoted a papal encyclical to the Rosary said: "The Rosary is a remedy for all our evils and the root of all our blessings."
- And closer to our own day, St. Padre Pio advised his followers: "Love the Madonna and pray the Rosary, for her Rosary is the weapon against the evils of the world today."
- Whether we want to acknowledge it or not, there is a devil, and he is – as St. Peter describes – prowling like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour (cf. 1 Peter 5:8).
- Being diametrically opposed to God and His holy will, the evil one maliciously seeks to lead as many souls to eternal perdition as he possibly can. He does this primarily through tempting us to sin.
- His attacks are often subtle at first, encouraging us toward smaller, venial sins – all the while lying to us that these are not really sins at all, or that they are sins that don't really hurt anyone.
- Once he gets a hook into us, the evil one strives to lead us eventually into larger and graver sins, with the hope that we will die in mortal sin and thus be damned for eternity.
- Yet, our Lord doesn't leave us sitting ducks in the face of the devil's assaults. God is infinitely greater and more powerful than the devil, and as He desires our salvation, God provides us with a variety of means to protect ourselves, most especially the Sacraments and sacramentals.
- But God does allow this battle for our soul to take place, for it is through being tested by this battle that we grow in holiness, that we prove our love for God, and that we are prepared for the glories of Heaven.
- And so tried and true are the weapons that God gives us that, the well-formed Catholic who has taken the time to learn his Faith, who practices our Catholic faith with zeal, and who humbly confesses his sins and does penance, should be ever hopeful of his salvation.
- Our epistle today from St. Paul's Letter to the Ephesians speaks of the spiritual warfare that Christians must expect to undergo in this life, and St. Paul tells us how we are to prepare ourselves for battle.
- St. Paul says our loins must be girded in truth, that we must be clothed with righteousness as a breastplate, with our feet shod in readiness for the Gospel of peace.
- He instructs us to hold faith as a shield to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one, and to put on the helmet of salvation and to take up the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

- And the Rosary helps us to do these things! In bringing us to meditate upon the lives of Jesus and Mary, the Rosary girds us in truth and clothes us in righteousness, giving us intimate knowledge of both Jesus and Mary, and of the Gospel.
- Furthermore, praying the Rosary regularly and with true devotion increases our faith, giving us a more powerful shield against the flaming arrows of the evil one.
- Truly, faithfully praying the Rosary improves the likelihood of one's salvation, and it makes us so much stronger and more virtuous in the face of temptations and life's adversities.
- Again, when we look at the 15 promises Our Lady made to those who devote themselves to praying the Rosary, we find that the Rosary:
  - *...will cause virtue and good works to flourish; it will obtain for souls the abundant mercy of God; it will withdraw the heart of men from the love of the world and its vanities, and will lift them to the desire of eternal things....*
  - Our Lady promises that *the soul who recommends itself to [her] by the recitation of the rosary, shall not perish.*
  - She said: *Whoever shall recite the rosary devoutly, applying himself to the consideration of its sacred mysteries shall never be conquered by misfortune. God will not chastise him in His justice, he shall not die by an unprovided death; if he be just, he shall remain in the grace of God and become worthy of eternal life.*
  - And: *Whoever shall have a true devotion for the rosary shall not die without the sacraments of the Church.*
  - *Those who are faithful to recite the rosary shall have during their life and at their death the light of God and the plenitude of His graces; at the moment of death they shall participate in the merits of the saints in paradise.*
- Mary's promises for those who faithfully pray the Rosary also include deliverance from purgatory, a high degree of glory in Heaven, having prayers answered, her maternal aid in the necessities of life, and having as intercessors the entire celestial court during their life and at the hour of death.
- So, the graces that imbue the Rosary not only protect us in our battle against the evil one, but they provide for our needs throughout our earthly lives and prepare us well for the glories of Heaven! And this is why we must pray the Rosary faithfully and devotedly every day.
- Brothers and sisters, facing evil can be daunting, but it's something we must all do.
- Outside our personal temptations to sin, as we slog through yet another election cycle in our country, we can see very clearly the divisive evil that plagues our society. It's easy to believe that the evil one has the upper hand and that he cannot be conquered.
- Yet, being in this position is nothing new for the Church and her faithful children. Faithful Catholics have faced seemingly insurmountable evils countless times in our history, and through Our Lady's intercession, the evil one's head has been crushed.
- So, as we face up to the evils in our world, and as we continue fighting our own personal battle for salvation, let us do so with confidence in Our Lady's power to crush evil in our lives and in our world, and may we call upon her intercession through the faithful praying of her Rosary.
- She who is the fairest honor of our race is also more awesome than an army in battle array!
- Mary, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for us!