

Rosary Sunday

October 1, 2006

Zechariah 2:14-17, Ps: Luke 1:46-55, Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12,
Luke 1: 39-47

Preaching: S. Beth Quire, O.P.

Today is the Dominican celebration of the Feast of the Queen of the Holy Rosary. This privilege of celebrating on Sunday is given because of the tradition that says during a supernatural experience; Mary gave Dominic the task of introducing and sharing the Rosary.

For us as Dominican Sisters of Mission San Jose it is an even higher feast because it is our Patronal Feast.

So what does the Rosary have to do with the feast? Dominican, Gabriel Harty, says it well in his book, Rediscovering the Rosary. "The Rosary is a method of Preaching the Gospel, of making known the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. What we are to preach is not the rosary itself, but the gospel by means of the Rosary." So the rosary is an instrument that focuses us and allows us to meditate on the events of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus in the Gospel looking through the eyes of his mother.

Today's gospel looks at one of the mysteries. It is a familiar story, the young Mary going to see her aging cousin. Both women are pregnant; they make a connection and their unborn children make a connection.

This image has been a powerful one for me for several years. As a woman religious I have had several women who have been Elizabeth's in my life and shared the benefit of their wisdom and years. They have challenged me to think about things from a much different perspective, to think about things I did not want to, and face the whole cycle of life when it was their time to go back to God.

This image of Mary and Elizabeth amazes me, because new life comes from both the younger and the older woman. Both have their gift to bring. Both are called to birth something new into the world. In relationship they can do and be infinitely more than they could each be on their own.

All of us are called to give life: if we are older the call maybe to encourage, to support and yes to challenge the younger ones among us. If we are younger the call may be to really deeply listen to the stories and experiences of those with more experience than ourselves. Not just write it off as, "Times are different now." But listen to it from the perspective of: what does it have to tell me to be used today? We need to accept the guidance and wisdom and then build from there for the future.

Our Church and our world both desperately need people of faith willing to listen to the voice of experience from the past and then allow something new to be born for the present.

Do we like Elizabeth ask, "Why has this happened to me?" What could God be wanting from me, now? I'm old and my time has passed. I don't have the energy. And yet here I am pregnant, can new life really be born from one so old?

Can we rejoice with Mary? Can we accept and trust the unknown future and say, "... my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has look with favor on his lowly servant ..." ? We know that Mary's journey of life after her "fiat" was not an easy one, are we willing to be open as she was to allow God to use our lives?

What new life are we called to share? Are we called to stand up for the rights of immigrants and migrant workers, when they are not treated with dignity and respect? Even when it is politically unpopular? Are we willing to give up some of our comforts, so others can have the basic necessities of life? Are we willing to work with kids drawn to gangs, helping them to find loving supportive environments or do we think it is just better to lock them away? Do we choose to vote for propositions that will help me to get ahead regardless of how they affect other people? Do I stand up for peace, even when I'm accused of "aiding the enemy"?

Our world needs new life, new hope, and new ways of finding peace. May our praying of the Rosary and meditating on the mysteries help us to answer these questions, in way that bring life and hope to our world.