

Good afternoon, and welcome to the First Saturday Devotions sponsored by the World Apostolate of Fatima - Saginaw Division, and hosted here at the most beautiful church in mid-Michigan, Holy Family in Saginaw.

The elements of the First Saturday Devotion is, on the first Saturday of five (5) consecutive months, to (i) go to Confession, (ii) receive Holy Communion, (iii) pray 5 decades of the Rosary, (iv) meditate for 15 minutes on the Mysteries of the Rosary, (v) all in a spirit of reparation for the neglects and blasphemies committed against the Holy Mother of God.

Since before 11:00, priests have been hearing confessions; at 11:30 the Rosary was prayed, and we are now in the midst of the liturgy of the Mass – where Holy Communion will be distributed. All you need do is meditate on the Mysteries of the Rosary for 15 minutes, and do this in a spirit of reparation ... and repeat this for 5 months. Although, I would strongly encourage all of you to come to First Saturday as often as you can.

Today is the Memorial of Saint Alphonsus Liguori who was a Bishop and named a Doctor of the Church. He lived in the 17th century - having been born in 1696, and initially trained as a Lawyer. He was ordained a priest at age 30. Six years later he founded the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, commonly known as the Redemptorists. 30 years later, he was consecrated Bishop. He retired 13 years after that, and died 12 years later.

He is most well-known for his *Way of the Cross*, which to this day are still used in parishes – especially during Lent. Also one of his more popular titles is *The Glories of Mary*.

In the book *The Glories of Mary*, he first goes line-by-line through the prayer *Hail Holy Queen*. He then speaks on several Marian feast days. The next part concerns the *Seven Sorrows of Our Lady*. The fourth part of this book speaks on 10 Virtues of Our Lady. The last part is a collection of prayers, devotions, and meditations. And an appendix speaks on Our Lady's Role as Mediatrix.

Focusing in on the Fourth Part, I'd like to at least enumerate what St. Alphonsis considers Our Lady's virtues, which are:

1. humility,
2. love of God,
3. love of neighbor,
4. faith,
5. hope,
6. love,
7. poverty,
8. obedience,
9. patience,
10. prayer.

Of note is that first and foremost is humility. Something that is grossly absent in our contemporary world. Next are the admonitions of the Great Commandment - love of God and neighbor. Then the three Supernatural Virtues of faith, hope, and love. Then the Evangelical Counsels - poverty and obedience. Second from last is patience. And finally is prayer.

We do not often consider prayer to be a virtue. Yet if we consider that a virtue is a firm and habitual disposition to do good – namely something which is a stable disposition.

Virtues are developed by performing specific acts and when formed into a habit – that is, a good habit – a virtue is formed.

And so, prayer most certainly is a good habit that must be formed in us by repetition. And like all virtues require that we first do the good action over and over again until we have developed the habit.

As we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ, let us pray to be reinforced in the virtues of Our Lady ... so that we might follow Her example as the First Disciple of Jesus Christ. And through the graces of this Eucharist, may we be formed into true disciples of Her Son.

Immaculate Heart of Mary. Pray for us.

Our Lady of the Rosary. Pray for us.

Our Lady of Fatima. Pray for us.