

Good evening and welcome to the opening Mass for our 2013 World Apostolate of Fatima Rosary Novena.

My name is Father David Jenuwine, and I am the Spiritual Director of the Saginaw Division of the Blue Army. Please allow me to welcome my brother priests ...

Also with us is Fr. Andy Cravalho, from the Father's of Mercy ... who has been ordained for the long, long, period of 14 months. As far as his biography, you can certainly read it your self on the flyers that were sent out.

I know that Fr. Andy has had occasion to meet some of the more recently ordained priests from the Diocese of Saginaw during his studies at Holy Apostles Seminary in Cromwell, CT.

Perhaps unknown to Fr. Andy ... he was a senior at Franciscan University of Steubenville for his last semester in journalism; at roughly the same time that a slightly larger version of myself was beginning graduate studies in Theology.

Nonetheless, I'm not sure that we knew each other in Ohio ... and if we did - I apologize for anything I might have said.

In today's first reading, we hear from the Book of the Prophet Jonah.

Jonah is one of the 12 Minor Prophets, and according to Jewish tradition he was the boy that the Prophet Elijah brought back from the dead. It is customary that on the Jewish Day of Atonement, that the entire book of Jonah is read in Hebrew at the time of the afternoon prayer.

Jonah refuses to give the people of Nineveh the opportunity to repent, and instead opposes God's request.

Perhaps a lesson we can take from this is - that forgiveness and repentance aren't ours to give and take at our convenience. God's desire - as we hear in the Second Letter of St. Peter - that God wills "*that all should come to repentance.*"

However, we need to remember that we are called to be forgiving and merciful as much as God is forgiving and merciful.

If we do not give witness to the mercy and love of God in the way we live our lives - then we, ourselves, must repent of such behavior.

In the Gospel, we hear the Parable of the Good Samaritan.

It is important to understand that the Samaritans were ethnic enemies of the Jewish people. To use the word "Samaritan" against someone brought into question their parentage, their history, their loyalty ... it was - at least among the Jews of that time - used as a racial slur.

And yet, in the parable, the only person who showed mercy to the victim, was a Samaritan.

Briefly, in defense of the priest and the levite - they were just doing their job. If they were on their way to the Temple, any contact with blood or a dead body would have defiled them - and made them unworthy to serve in their role.

Nonetheless, their focus was on an external duty to their office; and not on their duty to another human being.

We can never forget that we are called to be disciples of Jesus Christ and are called to be examples of Christian charity in how we live our lives.

Finally, a famous personage you may be familiar with - for better or for worse - is Dr. Seuss ... of Cat in the Hat fame. It was in 1957 that Theodor Geisel - known to the world as Dr. Seuss, in response to a magazine article decrying the boring children's books, he wrote his most famous work, "The Cat in the Hat." He went on to write others, such as "Green Eggs and Ham" and "A Fox in Socks."

One of his collaborators whose books were published under the "Beginner's Books" was P. D. Eastman, who wrote "Go Dog Go," "The Best Nest," and "My Nest is Best."

His first book was about a newly hatched bird who goes off to find its mother - who has gone off looking for food. The baby bird asks a kitten, a hen, a dog, and a cow. Finally confronting a steam shovel ... searching for his missing mother.

Spoiler alert - the bird is finally reunited with its mom.

The book is titled, "Are You My Mother;" and in keeping with the theme of this homily - namely that we live our lives as examples of God's love and the mercy of Jesus Christ ... we can take as our final reflection this question ... do we live our lives as if Mary truly is our mother?

Today is the Memorial of Our Lady of the Rosary ... the Rosary is a powerful weapon for Christian victory - not through some magical feature of 153 recited prayers ... but rather in that we are to contemplate the Mysteries of the lives of Jesus and Mary. And in meditating on the Mysteries of the Rosary, we are meditating on virtues reflected in them.

For those of you who attended the First Saturday Masses at Holy Family in Saginaw ... held back in March, April, and May - I tried to point out the specific virtues associated with the Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries.

It is important that we not only reflect on ... or know what those virtues are, but also that we pray for the graces of conversion so that we might live those virtues in our day-to-day lives ... and daily grow in holiness.

Shortly, we will re-consecrate ourselves to the Immaculate Heart of Mary ... and in doing so, we need to know that she is our mother ... and that we need all the grace we can get to overcome our natural concupiscence so that we can truly grow in virtue and holiness.

As we pray the prayer of consecration, make a conscious decision ... a conscious commitment ... so that there is no mistake in your mind - to have God as your Father, Jesus Christ as your Savior, and Mary as your Mother ... and beg for an outpouring of the graces necessary to effect the changes in yourself.

So that as we approach this altar to receive the Sacred Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity of Jesus Christ ... you might receive from this Most Blessed Sacrament ... from this Font of Grace ... the power you need to be transformed from the person that you are ... into the person that God created you to be.

Our Lady of the Rosary ... Pray for us.