

The History of the Feast of Our Lady of Victory



The Battle of Muret - September 12, 1213

The beads of Paternosters and Aves have been prayed from very early times and were commonly prayed by the knights and sergeants of the military religious orders when in battle and on campaign when they could not pray their prescribed office.

St. Dominic formalized the current Dominican rosary prior to the Battle of Muret in 1213 (that battle was again won on 12 September) when he prayed for Count Simon de Montfort and his 700 knights as they sallied forth against a huge army of 50,000 Albigensians.

Count Simon de Montfort and his knights routed the Albigensians by charging straight into their midst. They gained the Albigensian headquarters and when their leader, the heretic King Peter of Aragon, was slain, the Albigensians fled.

Thus the day was won and the tiny Catholic army triumphed over the huge heretic army. This was great victory obtained by the all-powerful rosary of Our Lady.



The Battle of Lepanto - October 7, 1571

On 7th October 1571, Don John of Austria, son of the Emperor Charles V, commanding the navies of the Pope St. Pius V and the Emperor, together with the navies of Spain and Venice, defeated a much larger Turkish navy off the coast of Greece at a place now called Naupactos.

To the men of his day this place was called by its Roman name: LEPANTO

How did this extraordinary victory come about? The answer is simple enough: It was obtained - yet again - by the most powerful weapon known to men: the holy rosary- the chaplet of the Blessed Virgin Mary given to St. Dominic in the XIIIth century.

In preparation for this battle, one of the greatest naval battles of Roman Christendom, the Pope, St. Pius V, (himself a Dominican friar) ordered that the holy rosary be prayed throughout the length and breadth of Christendom - just as was later to be done before the Battle of Vienna in 1683.

As a result, the feast of Our Lady of Victory (later our Lady of the Rosary) was instituted by the popes to be celebrated on October 7th for an everlasting memory of this great victory.

Let us hear what Abbot Prosper Gueranger OSB of Solesmes writes of that great battle and feast in his great work, *The Liturgical Year* (the book read to St Therese of Lisieux when she was a child):

"Soliman II, the greatest of the Sultans, taking advantage of the confusion caused in the West by Luther, had filled the 16th century with terror by his exploits. He left to his son, Selim II, the prospect of being able at length to carry out the ambition of his race: to subjugate Rome and Vienna, the Pope and the Emperor, to the power of the crescent. The Turkish fleet had already mastered the greater part of the Mediterranean, and was threatening Italy, when, on 7th October 1571, it came into action, in the Gulf of Lepanto, against the pontifical galleys supported by the fleets of Spain and Venice. It was Sunday; throughout the world the confraternities of the holy rosary were engaged in their work of intercession. Supernaturally enlightened, St Pius V watched from the Vatican the battle undertaken by the leader he had chosen, Don John of Austria, against the 300 vessels of Islam. The illustrious Pontiff, whose life's work was now completed, did not survive to celebrate the anniversary of the triumph; but he perpetuated the memory of it by an annual commemoration of Our Lady of Victory. His successor, Gregory XIII, altered the title to our Lady of the Rosary, and appointed the first Sunday of October for

the new feast [now celebrated on 7th October, the actual day of the battle], authorizing its celebration in those churches which possessed an altar under that invocation. A century and a half later, this limited concession was made general. As [now Venerable] Innocent XI, in memory of the deliverance of Vienna by King Jan Sobieski, had extended the feast of the most Holy Name of Mary to the whole Church, so, in 1716, Clement XI inscribed The Feast of The Holy Rosary on the universal calendar, in gratitude for the victory gained by Prince Eugene of Savoy [commander-in-chief of the Imperial forces] at Peterwardein, on 5th August, under the auspices of our Lady of the Snow. This victory was followed by the raising of the siege of Corfu, and completed a year later by the taking of Belgrade."



The Battle of Vienna - September 12, 1683

One of the most important battles of the 17th century was the battle of Vienna, which was fought on September 12, 1683. The outcome of this battle would have a profound effect on the future of Eastern, if not of all, Europe. The Battle of Vienna was mainly fought by the Turks, with about 15,000 Tatars on their side, against a less numerous combination of Polish, German, and Austrian forces. The Turkish forces were led by the Grand Vizier Kara Mustafa, an ambitious man, but who wasn't a very good general judging by the number of battles he had lost. The opposing forces were led by Jan Sobieski. On May 21, 1674, Sobieski was elected king as John III by the Diet. This was after the death of King Michael Wisniowiecki the previous year, on November 10th. Sobieski was an intelligent, talented, and brave man. He was also a patriot of Poland and always wanted the best for his country.

Since about March the Turks were preparing for an attack on the Hapsburg capital, Vienna, and were gathering their forces together rather rapidly. By June, they had invaded Austria.. Kara Mustafa Pasha lead an Ottoman force of 140,000 against Vienna, defended by a force of 11,000. King Leopold and his court fled to Passau. On July 14, the Turks reached Vienna. They laid siege to the great city. One of the disadvantages that the Turks had was that they did not have sufficient heavy artillery. The defenders fought bravely but their food supply and their ammunition were growing low. The Turks had made some breaches in the walls but their effort was hindered by the barricades erected by the people of Vienna.

Earlier that year on March 31, 1683, King John III had signed the Treaty of Warsaw with the Holy Roman Emperor Leopold. In this treaty, it was agreed to come to one's aid if the Turks attacked either Krakow or Vienna. Following his agreement in the treaty and the appeal of the pope, Sobieski marched to Vienna with an army of about 30,000 men. Sobieski said that his purpose for going to Vienna was "to proceed to the Holy War, and with God's help to give back the old freedom to besieged Vienna, and thereby help wavering Christendom."

Upon reaching Vienna, he joined up with the Austrians and Germans. Sobieski had noticed that the Turkish resistance was weak. When he ordered full attack, he completely surprised Kara Mustafa. Sobieski and his husaria, which is Polish heavy cavalry, alongside with the cooperation of the whole army, played an important role in the victory. Sobieski with his husaria charged toward Kara Mustafa's headquarters and seeing this, Mustafa's army fled in panic. Even so, the Turkish army suffered heavy losses. This victory freed Europe from the Ottoman Turks and their invasions and secured Christianity as the main religion in all of Europe.

After the Battle of Vienna, Jan Sobieski entered Vienna in glory. The King and his Polish army had won lots of fame after their victory. Jan III Sobieski was not only looked upon as the savior of Vienna, but as a savior of the whole Europe from the Ottoman Turks.

Such are but a few examples of the many victories obtained through the extraordinary power of the holy rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary! Our Lady has so often appeared and asked her children to pray the holy rosary for victory and peace, as she did to St. Bernadette of Lourdes and later to the little shepherds at Fatima in 1917 during the Great War.

The Battle of Lepanto and the Battle of Vienna were great victories for Catholic Europe. However, they did not end the threat of invasion nor completely break the power of the Ottoman Turks. More naval and land battles would follow in the years to come.

Christendom and Islam today

Today, the long clash between Christendom and Islam is still evident in the political and ethnic geography of Europe, Africa, Byzantium, and north into Russia. The battle also extends, in varying degrees, throughout the Near and Far East, and the islands of the Pacific.

Sadly, many high ranking members of the post- Vatican II Modernist Church would have Christians believe that Islam is no longer a threat. They organize 'ecumenical inter-faith gatherings' with Moslems, Jews and many others. Some of these Modernists have actually asserted that Christians "worship the same God as do the Jews and the Moslems....". This is utterly false and blasphemous!

We worship the One True God - The Most Blessed Trinity - the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost! There is but One True God! Christ is the Second Person of the Most Blessed Trinity. Anyone who does not worship the Most Blessed Trinity does not worship the One True God! Jews and Moslems (and others) deny Christ's Divinity and thus they do NOT worship the One True God.

Many Christian knights, soldiers, and sailors have died defending Christendom against the onslaughts of Moslems throughout the centuries. Today, the borders of many European countries, Canada, and the United States are wide open, and the old enemy is invited to come in and make himself at home. Many in the West are preoccupied with materialism and thus forget the true nature of the worldwide threat of Islam.

One must remember that the very word: 'islam' does not mean 'peace' as many Moslems would have you believe but rather the word 'islam' means 'submission' or 'surrender'. Moslems believe that the 'infidels' (i.e., all non-Moslems) must submit or surrender to Islam - either willingly or by the force of the sword.

In our times, the threat of Islam is a true and present danger. We must not be complacent but rather we must turn to Our Lady and we must invoke Her intercession and use the powerful weapon which is the holy rosary and through which great victories have been obtained.

The Divine Office and The Holy Rosary

Holy Mother the Church puts upon the lips of her priests each day the Divine Office - the official prayers of the priests of the Church. The Divine Office consists of the psalms, readings from sacred scripture as well as readings from the Fathers of the Church. The full psalter consists of one hundred and fifty (150) psalms. Our Blessed Mother has given to us the holy rosary through St. Dominic. There are the joyful, the sorrowful and the glorious chaplets which commemorate and bring to our minds and hearts the various mysteries of our Faith. Each chaplet consists of five decades; hence in the complete rosary, there are one hundred and fifty (150) Aves! The holy rosary has thus been called the psalter of the laity or the psalter of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

It is so simple to learn to pray the holy rosary that even a young child can easily be taught to do so. It is prayer that can be prayed by those who are well educated even as it can be prayed well by those who are illiterate.

St. James reminds us: "GOD RESISTETH THE PROUD AND GIVETH HIS GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." (James IV:6) Likewise St. Paul teaches: "...THE WEAK THINGS OF THE WORLD GOD HATH CHOSEN THAT HE MAY CONFOUND THE STRONG." (I:Cor.I:27)

David vs. Goliath

David, the psalmist, as a young man bravely went forth in battle against Goliath, the giant of the Phillistines. We read in the XVIIth chapter of the First Book of Kings:

"And there went out a man baseborn from the camp of the Philistines named Goliath, of Geth, whose height was six cubits and a span... And standing he cried out to the bands of Israel, and said to them: Why are you come out prepared to fight? am not I a Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose out a man of you, and let him come down and fight hand to hand. If he be able to fight with me, and kill me, we will be servants to you: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, you shall be servants, and shall serve us. And the Philistine said: I have defied the bands of Israel this day: Give me a man, and let him fight with me hand to hand.... And all the Israelites when they saw the man, fled from his face, fearing him exceedingly. And some one of Israel said: Have you seen this man that is come up, for he is come up to defy Israel.... And David spoke to the men that stood by him, saying: What shall be given to the man that shall kill this Philistine, and shall take away the reproach from Israel? For who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? ... And he took his staff, which he had always in his hands: and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them into the shepherd's scrip, which he had with him, and he took a sling in his hand, and went forth against the Philistine. And the Philistine came on, and drew nigh against David, and his armour bearer before him. And when the Philistine looked, and beheld David, he despised him. For he was a young man, ruddy, and of a comely countenance. And the Philistine said to David: Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with a staff? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. And he said to David: Come to me, and I will give thy flesh to the

birds of the air, and to the beasts of the earth. And David said to the Philistine: Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, which thou hast defied. This day, and the Lord will deliver thee into my hand, and I will slay thee, and take away thy head from thee: and I will give the carcasses of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air, and to the beasts of the earth: that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. And all this assembly shall know, that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for it is his battle, and he will deliver you into our hands. And when the Philistine arose and was coming, and drew nigh to meet David, David made haste, and ran to the fight to meet the Philistine. And he put his hand into his scrip, and took a stone, and cast it with the sling, and fetching it about struck the Philistine in the forehead: and the stone was fixed in his forehead, and he fell on his face upon the earth. And David prevailed over the Philistine, with a sling and a stone, and he struck, and slew the Philistine. And as David had no sword in his hand. He ran, and stood over the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath, and slew him, and cut off his head. And the Philistines seeing that their champion was dead, fled away..."

The Holy Rosary = The 'Spiritual Sling-Shot'

David, of his own natural strength, did not stand a chance against Goliath. David knew that, by using the means at his disposal and aided by Almighty God, the victory would be his. David chose a seemingly innocuous sling-shot and five simple stones and yet with these humble weapons he defeated the Goliath - giant of the Philistines.

Almighty God, through Our Blessed Mother, has given us the 'spiritual sling-shot' - the holy rosary with three sets of mysteries: the joyful, the sorrowful and the glorious each with five well chosen decades. This simple set of beads prayed well is a most powerful weapon against the Goliaths - the giants of evil of our times.

We know that, if left to our natural strengths alone, the situation would be hopeless for of our natural strengths alone, we could never overcome the praeternatural power of the devils. However, aided from above, by the grace of Almighty God through the powerful intercession of Our Blessed Mother, we know that the victory will be ours!

As Our Lady has promised: "In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph."

Our Lady of Victory, Pray for us!

And he took his staff, which he had always in his hands: and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them into the shepherd's scrip, which he had with him, and he took a sling in his hand, and went forth against the Philistine And David said to the Philistine: Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the

armies of Israel, which thou hast defied. This day, and the Lord will deliver thee into my hand, and I will slay thee

Each set of 5 mysteries is reminiscent in shape of the slingshot of DAVID by means of which he defeated GOLIATH, the GIANT OF THE PHILISTINES. It was the slingshot and the 5 well chosen stones that brought to ruin that GIANT of EVIL.

Likewise, the ROSARY is our 'Spiritual Sling-shot' by means of which we too can bring to naught the FORCES OF EVIL that seek our eternal ruin.

THE FAMILY THAT PRAYS TOGETHER STAYS TOGETHER - IN THIS LIFE AND IN ETERNITY!

If we truly wish to defeat the giants of evil that seek to encompass us on all sides then we MUST take our weaponry: we must arm ourselves with our 'SPIRITUAL SLING-SHOTS' and go forth bravely as did David, the King and by using our weapons aided from above our enemies shall be brought to ruin and the eternal victory shall be ours!

War with the Philistines. Goliath challengeth Israel. He is slain by David.

1 Now the Philistines gathering together their troops to battle, assembled at Socho of Juda, and camped between Socho and Azeca in the borders of Dommim. 2 And Saul and the children of Israel being gathered together came to the valley of Terebinth, and they set the army in array to fight against the Philistines. 3 And the Philistines stood on a mountain on the one side, and Israel stood on a mountain on the other side: and there was a valley between them. 4 And there went out a man baseborn from the camp of the Philistines named Goliath, of Geth, whose height was six cubits and a span: 5 And he had a helmet of brass upon his head, and he was clothed with a coat of mail with scales, and the weight of his coat of mail was five thousand sicles of brass:

6 And he had greaves of brass on his legs, and a buckler of brass covered his shoulders. 7 And the staff of his spear was like a weaver's beam, and the head of his spear weighed six hundred sicles of iron: and his armourbearer went before him. 8 And standing he cried out to the bands of Israel, and said to them: Why are you come out prepared to fight? am not I a Philistine, and you the servants of Saul? Choose out a man of you, and let him come down and fight hand to hand. 9 If he be able to fight with me, and kill me, we will be servants to you: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, you shall be servants, and shall serve us. 10 And the Philistine said: I have defied the bands of Israel this day: Give me a man, and let him fight with me hand to hand.

11 And Saul and all the Israelites hearing these words of the Philistine were dismayed, and greatly afraid. 12 Now David was the son of that Ephrathite of Bethlehem Juda before mentioned, whose name was Isai, who had eight sons, and was an old man in the days of Saul, and of great age among men. 13 And his three eldest sons followed Saul to the battle: and the names of his three sons that went to the battle, were Eliab the firstborn, and the second Abinadab, and the third Samma. 14 But David was the youngest. So the three eldest having followed Saul, 15 David went, and returned from Saul, to feed his father's flock at Bethlehem.

16 Now the Philistine came out morning and evening, and presented himself forty days. 17 And Isai said to David his son: Take for thy brethren an ephi of frumenty, and these ten loaves, and run to the camp to thy brethren. 18 And carry these ten little cheeses to the tribune: and go see thy brethren, if they are

well: and learn with whom they are placed. 19 But Saul, and they, and all the children of Israel were in the valley of Terebinth fighting against the Philistines. 20 David therefore arose in the morning, and gave the charge of the flock to the keeper: and went away loaded as Isai had commanded him. And he came to the place of Magala, and to the army, which was going out to fight, and shouted for the battle.

21 For Israel had put themselves in array, and the Philistines who stood against them were prepared. 22 And David leaving the vessels which he had brought, under the care of the keeper of the baggage, ran to the place of the battle and asked if all things went well with his brethren. 23 And as he talked with them, that baseborn man whose name was Goliath, the Philistine, of Geth, showed himself coming up from the camp of the Philistines: and he spoke according to the same words, and David heard them. 24 And all the Israelites when they saw the man, fled from his face, fearing him exceedingly. 25 And some one of Israel said: Have you seen this man that is come up, for he is come up to defy Israel. And the man that shall slay him, the king will enrich with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and will make his father's house free from tribute in Israel.

26 And David spoke to the men that stood by him, saying: What shall be given to the man that shall kill this Philistine, and shall take away the reproach from Israel? for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? 27 And the people answered him the same words saying: These things shall be given to the man that shall slay him. 28 Now when Eliab his eldest brother heard this, when he was speaking with others, he was angry with David, and said: Why earnest thou hither? and why didst thou leave those few sheep in the desert? I know thy pride, and the wickedness of thy heart: that thou art come down to see the battle. 29 And David said: What have I done? is there not cause to speak? 30 And he turned a little aside from him to another: and said the same word. And the people answered him as before.

31 And the words which David spoke were heard, and were rehearsed before Saul. 32 And when he was brought to him, he said to him: Let not any man's heart be dismayed in him: I thy servant will go, and will fight against the Philistine. 33 And Saul said to David: Thou art not able to withstand this Philistine, nor to fight against him: for thou art but a boy, but he is a warrior from his youth. 34 And David said to Saul: Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion, or a bear, and took a ram out of the midst of the flock: 35 And I pursued after them, and struck them, and delivered it out of their mouth: and they rose up against me, and I caught them by the throat, and I strangled and killed them.

36 For I thy servant have killed both a lion and a bear: and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be also as one of them. I will go now, and take away the reproach of the people: for who is this uncircumcised Philistine, who hath dared to curse the army of the living God? 37 And David said: The Lord who delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine. And Saul said to David: Go, and the Lord be with thee. 38 And Saul clothed David with his garments, and put a helmet of brass upon his head, and armed him with a coat of mail. 39 And David having girded his sword upon his armour, began to try if he could walk in armour: for he was not accustomed to it. And David said to Saul: I cannot go thus, for I am not used to it. And he laid them off, 40 And he took his staff, which he had always in his hands: and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them into the shepherd's scrip, which he had with him, and he took a sling in his hand, and went forth against the Philistine.

41 And the Philistine came on, and drew nigh against David, and his armourbearer before him. 42 And when the Philistine looked, and beheld David, he despised him. For he was a young man, ruddy, and of a comely countenance. 43 And the Philistine said to David: Am I a dog, that thou comest to me with a staff? And the Philistine cursed David by his gods. 44 And he said to David: Come to me, and I will give

thy flesh to the birds of the air, and to the beasts of the earth. 45 And David said to the Philistine: Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield: but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, which thou hast defied.

46 This day, and the Lord will deliver thee into my hand, and I will slay thee, and take away thy head from thee: and I will give the carcasses of the army of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air, and to the beasts of the earth: that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel. 47 And all this assembly shall know, that the Lord saveth not with sword and spear: for it is his battle, and he will deliver you into our hands. 48 And when the Philistine arose and was coming, and drew nigh to meet David, David made haste, and ran to the fight to meet the Philistine. 49 And he put his hand into his scrip, and took a stone, and cast it with the sling, and fetching it about struck the Philistine in the forehead: and the stone was fixed in his forehead, and he fell on his face upon the earth. 50 And David prevailed over the Philistine, with a sling and a stone, and he struck, and slew the Philistine. And as David had no sword in his hand,

51 He ran, and stood over the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath, and slew him, and cut off his head. And the Philistines seeing that their champion was dead, fled away. 52 And the men of Israel and Juda rising up shouted, and pursued after the Philistines till they came to the valley and to the gates of Accaron, and there fell many wounded of the Philistines in the way of Saraim, and as far as Geth, and as far as Accaron. 53 And the children of Israel returning, after they had pursued the Philistines, fell upon their camp. 54 And David taking the head of the Philistine brought it to Jerusalem: but his armour he put in his tent. 55 Now at the time that Saul saw David going out against the Philistines, he said to Abner the captain of the army: Of what family is this young man descended, Abner? And Abner said: As thy soul liveth, O king, I know not.

56 And the king said: Inquire thou, whose son this man is. 57 And when David was returned, after the Philistine was slain, Abner took him, and brought him in before Saul, with the head of the Philistine in his hand. 58 And Saul said to him: Young man, of what family art thou? And David said: I am the son of thy servant Isai the Bethlehemite.