



Venerable Faustino Pérez-Manglano (Feast Day: March 3) - A Youth Who Prayed the Rosary

By Bro. David Betz

During a recent online reading group sponsored by the North American Center for Marianist Studies the discussion was dealing with the Spirit leading Jesus into the desert. The facilitator then asked the following question: Where is the Spirit leading you at this moment? I answered by saying that I have been drawn to praying the rosary during my walks. This answer may be a surprise to quite a number of people because I have said many times that the rosary has not been one of my prayer practices over the years. It was not a prayer form that my family did while I was growing up. The repetitiveness of the rosary did not attract me. Therefore, the rosary has not been a component of my Marianist life up to this point. But God is a God of surprises and I am surprised as much as other people who may know me!

I have found myself drawn to the Luminous Mysteries since they include the Wedding of Cana which is an important scripture passage for the Marianist Family. Mary's call to "do whatever he tells you" has been foundational in Blessed Chaminade's teaching on being a missionary. He stressed the necessity to be Mary's missionaries in witnessing to God's call to transformation in the world. Committing to be Mary's missionaries is also essential to our vow of stability in the Family of Mary. Blessed Chaminade wanted his disciples to make Mary known, loved and served as they seek to live the mysteries of Jesus. And yes I am a part of this mission!

Speaking of the rosary, now I turn to Venerable Faustino (8/4/1946 - 3/3/1963) who was a young man who died at the early age of 16 due to cancer issues. He was an avid pray-er of the rosary. He mentioned during a retreat in October of 1959 that when he was in 5th grade he promised to pray the rosary every day until 1961. But he was concerned that he was missing days due to his playing too much during vacations and wanted to catch up. His spiritual director was impressed with the teenager's desire and fidelity to the rosary and invited Faustino not to worry about missing to pray the rosary. As long as he liked praying the rosary, his debt was paid and was asked to pray the rosary for the rest of his life whenever he could.

“From then on, Faustino always prayed the rosary. The times each day are noted in his diary, using similar phrases: ‘I prayed the rosary during the day . . . at midnight . . . while going to school this morning . . . while receiving radiation therapy.’ A few times he even wrote, ‘I forgot to pray the rosary.’” (Page 17, Salaverri, 2003)

Another entry in his diary says this: “Father told me that my dedication to praying the rosary since I was young might have led The Blessed Virgin to reward me was a religious vocation. How wonderful and good the Mother of Heaven has been to me! It is a reward that can’t be measured. It is a prize that is worth all the world’s goods put together. Thank you, Mother, for your wonderful goodness!” (page 18, Salaverri, 2003)

Praying the rosary for Venerable Faustino was a practice that deepened his relationship with his God and of course with Mary. It gave him comfort and perseverance especially during his treatment for cancer. His dedication to the rosary has been a sign of his holiness which was recognized by the Church. I invite you, then, to see Venerable Faustino as a witness to what praying the rosary can contribute to one’s spiritual life is seeking to deepen one’s relationship with Jesus, Son of God, become Son of Mary for the salvation of the world.

See:

Salaverri, SM, José María, (Trans. by Robert D. Woods, SM). *Maybe God Will Speak to Me: The Story of Faustino Pérez-Manglano*. Dayton, OH: North American Center for Marianist Studies, 2003.

Salaverri, SM, José María, (Trans. by Marie Cushmore). *Fifty Times I Love You: The Rosary With Faustino*. Dayton, OH: North American Center for Marianist Studies.