

OF THREE THINGS

The Rosary has been a popular way of praying among Roman Catholics for many years. According to tradition, Saint Dominic was the first to promote the rosary. Both Popes Leo XIII and John Paul II wrote an encyclical about the rosary as a form of prayer. The latter named five other events in our Lord's life, on which we ought to meditate. The rosary is essentially a meditative form of prayer. It takes as an example the Blessed Lady, who must have reflected deeply on the life of her divine Son.

October is considered as "the month of the Rosary," with October 7 being a special day of liturgical commemoration. Several major religions use meditation beads. The combination of fingering beads, reciting the same words, and meditating can have a very calming effect on an individual. We need that so much today, especially our youth. Thus, in the calm of our spirit, we are able to be more effective in our communications with God. Please consider giving a gift of the rosary to the young people whom you know.

Seminarians were the topic of an article in the July issue of *Catholic World Report*. It was a study relative to the ratio of those studying for the priesthood to the number of Faithful in the various dioceses of our nation. Out of 176 dioceses noted in the article, the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown was listed as having the 47th highest ratio. One of the statements made in the article is the following: "Bishops Adamec and Trautman lead the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown (47th) and Erie (53rd), by far the most vocation-rich dioceses in the northeastern US."

While it is wonderful to be recognized as doing well in providing priests for the future, this Diocesan Church (along with many others) needs to do much better. The Church cannot be authentic without being Eucharistic. For that, we need priests. Those priests come from the Faithful that they are called to serve. Have you spoken lately to a young man that you know about the possibility of his being called to the ordained ministry?

Reporting accurately on the part of the mass media has been an issue with me. A case in point is the planned visitation of our seminaries. One is led to believe by the reports of the news media that the Holy See has decided to investigate our seminaries because of the sex-abuse scandal and is sending over several delegations to do the job. The fact of the matter is that seminary visitations are part of a regular routine. While the "working paper" to guide those making the visits comes from the Holy See, the visitations will be conducted by teams of our own bishops and seminary personnel. Furthermore, these particular visitations were requested by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, as is stated in the very beginning of the document from the Holy See.

Many would like us to think that there is some sort of a chasm between the Holy See and the Church in the United States. That is not the case. It has not been the case; and, it may never be the case. Later on in the document, it states that the "... visit is a service to the American bishops, and the Holy See offers it to them as a help." In my 18 years as a Diocesan Bishop, I have experienced the Bishop of Rome (as the Pope) to be of support and encouragement to me. Most of the Cardinal Prefects of the various Congregations at the Vatican consider themselves in that role. Their assistance with the current visitation of our seminaries is one of those times.