

Dear Friends,

While on our pilgrimage to Italy, we stopped in Florence. While Florence is not a usual stop on a pilgrimage, it is on the top of the list for tourists because of the beautiful art and architecture that fill the city. I had the opportunity to live in Florence for three months as a student at Edmonds Community College on a study abroad program. Each day, there would be something new to see. I delighted in walking the streets and taking in the sights. I would walk different routes regularly to see more of the beauty hidden in this great city.

The only reason (other than the great sights and delicious food) that we stopped in Florence for our pilgrimage, was to visit the church of San Marco and the adjoining convent of the Dominican Friars that is now a museum. In the old convent are the original frescoes of Blessed Fra Angelico. Fra Angelico was a Dominican priest that lived in the convent for a time and painted beautiful frescoes in each of the rooms, where the friars would pray, study, and sleep. Each one is a masterpiece of fresco painting, but the grandest of them all is the Annunciation that is painted on the wall in the hallway. I remember the first time I visited the convent as a student on a field trip while I was living there. I ascended the stairs and then at the top was greeted by one of the most beautiful and breathtaking images I had ever seen. I had to stop and take it in for quite some time before I moved on.

As we prepare to celebrate this beautiful day on March 25th, I encourage you to ponder this first Joyful Mystery of the Rosary. When I pray the rosary, I often have this image in my head. Mary is in the convent garden, prayerfully receiving the message of the angel. God wants to speak to us in these days. He wants to send Jesus to abide in us, just as He did in the womb of Mary. This is what happens when we receive Jesus in the Eucharist. Are we ready, as was our Blessed Mother? Have we prepared our hearts to receive Him?

This week, we also invite you to join in our Spiritual Adoption prayer. Venerable Fulton Sheen wrote a simple prayer to pray daily over the course of nine months to spiritually adopt a child that is in danger of abortion. We name the child and pray the simple prayer each day. We will have holy cards with the prayer on it for you to take home to pray individually or as a family. At the end of the nine months, we will celebrate the birth of these little ones on the Feast of the Holy Innocents with a baby shower at which we will collect items to help new mothers in need. Please pick up a holy card and join us in this beautiful devotion.

Sincerely yours in Jesus Christ,



Fr. Jack D. Shrum

Pastor

