

# FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

## PRAY THE ROSARY FOR PEACE!

*This past Holy Week and Easter marred by two events that happened thousands of miles away from each other. On Monday, April 15th a large fire enveloped the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris, France. This Cathedral, one of the oldest and revered in Christendom dates back to the 1100's.*

*Thank God, the Church was saved but with an incredible amount of damage to her structure. The French government has vowed to rebuild Notre Dame and restore it to its former glory-but this will take a long time.*

*The second event was much more tragic since it involved the loss of many lives-350 as of this writing. I refer, of course, to the horrible terrorist attacks in the country of Sri Lanka on Easter Sunday morning at churches and hotels in the city of Colombo.*

*A very chilling but poignant image was of a church, like Notre Dame, without a ceiling and with statues splattered with the blood of the deceased. This was a holocaust offered to the Lord on the Feast of His Resurrection. Those who perished in churches praying to the Lord are really modern Christian Martyrs.*

*The terrorist attack in Sri Lanka was brought about by radical Islamic terrorists. One of the tenets of fundamentalist of Islam is either to "convert or die." It sounds so barbaric in our modern twenty-first century world. Such a dangerous strain within that religion must be condemned and crushed out.*

*Reading our history, we discover that Islamic terrorism began in the seventh century. The crusades were fought by the Christians later on to reclaim the sacred places of the Holy Land which had been taken by the Muslims. In time, Islamic forces threatened Europe as well. Their aim expressed by one Muslim Sultan was that "The Empire of the world must be one, one faith and one kingdom."*

*It was a great Pope, Saint Pius V, who explicitly recognized the Muslim threat in Europe although people ignored it at the time. When the Muslims threatened Spain, Christian forces were badly outnumbered. The Holy Father asked all of Europe to pray the rosary for their success.*

*The Battle of Lepanto was fought on October 7, 1571 against the Turks and was a decisive victory for Christianity. The Muslim forces were defeated by the intercession of Our Lady on that fateful day. Pope Pius instituted then the Feast of Our Lady of Victory (Our Lady of the Rosary) to commemorate that decisive victory against the Muslim threat.*

*Who would have thought that such a threat would resurface in our times, with the horror of 9/11 here in our own city and many other terrifying attacks across the world,-the latest in Sri Lanka on a peaceful Easter Sunday morning?*

*How does a Catholic fight terrorism? Not with guns, mortars and bombs! Rather by the more powerful and convincing weapons of the spirit. Unfortunately, as we assess the state of the Church today in our country and in Europe in particular, we are a church in a state of collapse much like the Notre Dame Cathedral last week. The Church is just a shell of what it once was. Many Catholics don't follow its teachings or doctrines. For instance, I am told that in France, just four percent of people attend Mass on Sundays. The tourists far outnumber the residents who go to church! It's a little bit better here in the United States.*

*The threat from Islamic extremism cannot be underestimated. It can be met if we truly live as Catholics and not just have the name. One powerful way for us to crush evil is to take up our "weapon" as Catholics. That weapon is the Holy Rosary. We have entered the month of May and this is Mary's month. Let us make it our aim to pray that rosary each day especially for world peace. Let's pray that "Notre Dame" (Our Lady) will confer a special blessing on the Martyrs of Sri Lanka!*

*Sincerely in Christ,  
Father Jerome*