**Growing the Pie Week 3**

**Vision Depends on Passion**

**Message Notes**

### The Bible’s vision for the future is one of GROWTH, and so is ours.

* *We strive to become a community growing in faith where everyone loves to belong.*

### But, sometimes, we can lose steam and become apathetic and even disinterested in Jesus’ command to grow the pie by making more disciples for God’s kingdom. To realize this vision for the future, we must have PASSION for the mission.

### The word for passion comes from the Latin to SUFFER. Passion is a kind of suffering love or a LABOR of LOVE.

### Church is a labor of love. We work and even suffer for God’s kingdom out of love. Without passion for faith, we become LUKEWARM (Revelation 3:16).

* *“I know your works. I know that you are neither cold nor hot”* (Revelation 3:15).

### Faith is supposed to be alive, dynamic, and intense, full of passion, and driven by love:

* *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength”* (Mark 12:30).
* *“You shall love your neighbor as yourself”* (Mark 12:31).

### Our vision is to become a church where “everyone LOVES to belong.” No matter who you are, you belong here in God’s church. Here, you will be valued, safe, empowered, supported, and affirmed.

### If you’re struggling with a loss of passion about life, turn to your faith.

### If you’re struggling with a LOSS of passion for faith, try taking these three steps this week:

* REMEMBER God’s goodness to you in the past.
* REPEAT the things you used to do to feel close to God.
* REACH DEEPER and take that next step in discipleship.

**Praying the Rosary**

*By Lisa Rosenlund*

For centuries, the Catholic Church has dedicated to Mary the months of May and October on the Church’s liturgical calendar. October 7 is the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary and the month of October is designated “rosary month” during which Catholics are encouraged to pray the rosary.

Since early Christian times, Mary has been considered our spiritual mother and a model of prayer. The Catechism of the Catholic Church (“CCC”) states, “When we pray to [Mary], we are adhering with her to the plan of the Father, who sends his Son to save all men” (CCC n. 2679). There are a number of prayers associated with Mary such as the Magnificat and the Memorare. However, there is something special about the Rosary. Pope Saint John Paul II wrote in his apostolic letter, *The Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, that “[t]he Rosary is an exquisitely contemplative prayer.”

The rosary is actually two forms of contemplative prayer rolled into one: a mantra and a meditation. Mantrum is the practice of repeating over and over in the mind certain syllables, words, or phrases that help unify our consciousness and counteract negative mental states. When praying the rosary, we repeat the “Hail Mary” prayer over and over touching the beads as we repeat it. This focuses our thinking mind and counteracts the damage done to both mind and body by thoughts that produce anxiety, agitation, and unhappiness. We reap these non-religious benefits along with added spiritual benefits from the special power of the words of the Hail Mary, the field of consciousness created by millions of people repeating them, and the power of Mary to intercede for us.

Praying the rosary is also a form of meditation. Meditation is directed concentration. As we pray each decade (group of ten beads), we meditate on the twenty mysteries of the rosary, which are short descriptions of the lives of Mary and Jesus. The mysteries are divided into four categories: Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful and Glorious. We recall the mysteries of the life of Christ through Mary’s own experience. Because she was closer to the Lord than anyone else, the recitation of the rosary helps us to meditate, through Mary’s eyes, on the birth, life, death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus, as well as her assumption into heaven and coronation as the Queen of Heaven.

Like all forms of meditation, praying the rosary requires regular, daily practice over a long period of time in order to deliver the greatest spiritual rewards. I have some beautiful rosaries including my grandmother’s rosary, a rosary made by Italian nuns out of seed pods, and a rosary made of rose petals. Nonetheless, it has been difficult for me to sustain praying the rosary daily. A friend suggested putting a rosary next to my favorite reading chair or leaving it under or on top of my pillow so that when I turn my bed down each night I will be reminded to pray. Another friend gave me a rosary bracelet handmade in the Philippines so that I could pray a decade here and there throughout the day.

The rosary is a type of contemplative prayer that would be perfect to try this week if you don’t already pray the rosary. For simple instructions on how to pray the rosary, go to <https://rosarycenter.org/how-to-pray-the-rosary>.

*Reflection Questions: (1) Who first taught you the Rosary? (2) What effect does the Rosary have on your life? (3) Mary pondered her experience of God through Jesus, how can you ponder God more fully?*