

A row of lit candles in dark holders, with a white text box overlaid on the right side. The candles are lit, and their flames are visible. The background is dark, and the text box is white with a decorative border of small white dots.

# *Prayers for the Week Ahead*

WEEK BEGINNING 7<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER

*Monday 7<sup>th</sup> October*



*The Feast of  
Our Lady  
of the Rosary*

The feast of Our Lady of the Rosary on October 7, also known as Our Lady of Victory, began as a celebration of the victory of the Battle of Lepanto – securing European Christendom against a Turkish invasion on October 7, 1571. It is an example of victory and the power of the Blessed Mother to shore us up. She nursed Jesus in a manger, stood at the foot of His Cross at the Crucifixion, and now comforts and strengthens us in our trials.

Pope St. Pius V attributed the victory at Lepanto – one of the most decisive in all of naval history according to historians – to the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary through a campaign to pray the Rosary throughout Europe.

Pope Pius V called for prayer and action. He pleaded with every man, woman, and child to pray the Rosary. He also put together the Holy League – a coalition of Catholic powers which included Genoa, Spain, and the Papal States.

*Today, let us reflect on the Blessed Virgin Mary's love for us and the power of the Rosary. Why not take some time to say a Rosary today?*

*Hail Mary ...*

*Tuesday 8th October*



*Saint Pelagia*

Pelagia, more often called Margaret, on account of the magnificence of the pearls for which she had so often sold herself, was an actress of Antioch, equally celebrated for her beauty, her wealth and the disorder of her life. During a synod at Antioch, she passed Bishop St. Nonnus of Edessa, who was struck with her beauty; the next day she went to hear him preach and was so moved by his sermon that she asked him to baptise her which he did. She gave her wealth to Nonnus to aid the poor and left Antioch dressed in men's clothing. She became a hermitess in a cave on Mount of Olivette in Jerusalem, where she lived in great austerity, performing penances and known as "the beardless monk" until her sex was discovered at her death. Though a young girl of fifteen did exist and suffer martyrdom at Antioch in the fourth century, the story heretold is a pious fiction, which gave rise to a whole set of similar stories under different names.

*Hail Mary...*

*Wednesday 9th October*

*Saints Denis and his  
Companions* 50 OF SAINTS

**Saint Denis** was a legendary 3rd-century Christian martyr. According to his hagiographies, he was bishop of Paris in the third century and, together with his companions Rusticus and Eleutherius, was martyred for his faith by decapitation. Denis and his companions were so effective in converting people that the non-Christian priests became alarmed over their loss of followers. At their instigation, Roman Governor arrested the missionaries. After a long imprisonment, Denis and two of his clergy were executed by beheading on the highest hill in Paris (now Montmartre) After his head was cut off, Denis is said to have picked it up and walked several miles from the summit of the hill, preaching a sermon the entire way, making him one of many cephalophores in hagiology.

*Hail Mary ...*

Thursday 10th October



Saint Francis  
Borgia

Francis was a young nobleman at the court of the King of Spain. He became a Duke when he was only thirty-three and lived a happy, peaceful life with his wife Eleanor and their eight children. But unlike so many other powerful nobles, Francis was a perfect Christian gentleman, a true man of God and his great joy was to receive Holy Communion often. This happy life ended when his beloved wife died.

Francis did something that astonished all the nobles of Spain; he gave up his Dukedom to his son Charles and became a Jesuit priest. So many people came to his first Mass that they had to set up an altar outdoors, but his Superior tested him by treating him in exactly the opposite way he had been used to all his forty-one years of life. He who had once been a Duke had to help the cook, carrying wood for the fire and sweeping the kitchen. When he served food to the priests and brothers, he had to kneel down in front of them all and beg them to forgive him for being so clumsy!

Still he never once complained or grumbled. The only time he became angry was when anyone treated him with respect as if he was still a Duke. It was not too long before the humble priest accomplished wonderful works for God's glory as he preached everywhere and advised many important people. He spread the Society of Jesus all over Spain and in Portugal. When he was made Superior General of the Jesuits, he sent missionaries all over the world. Under his guidance, the Jesuits grew to be a very great help to the Church in many lands.

*Hail Mary ...*

*Friday 14th October*



*Saint Pope John XXIII*

The firstborn son of a farming family in Sotto il Monte, near Bergamo in northern Italy, Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was always proud of his down-to-earth roots. In Bergamo's diocesan seminary, he joined the Secular Franciscan Order.

After his ordination in 1904, Fr. Roncalli returned to Rome for canon law studies. He soon worked as his bishop's secretary, Church history teacher in the seminary, and as publisher of the diocesan paper.

His service as a stretcher-bearer for the Italian army during World War I gave him a firsthand knowledge of war. In 1921, Fr. Roncalli was made national director in Italy of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith. He also found time to teach patristics at a seminary in the Eternal City. Named a cardinal and appointed patriarch of Venice in 1953, he was finally a residential bishop. A month short of entering his 78th year, Cardinal Roncalli was elected pope, taking the name John after his father and the two patrons of Rome's cathedral, St. John Lateran. Pope John took his work very seriously but not himself. His wit soon became proverbial, and he began meeting with political and religious leaders from around the world. In 1962, he was deeply involved in efforts to resolve the Cuban missile crisis. On his deathbed, Pope John said: "It is not that the gospel has changed; it is that we have begun to understand it better.

*Hail Mary...*