

Leading the FLOCK

BY BISHOP DANIEL E. THOMAS

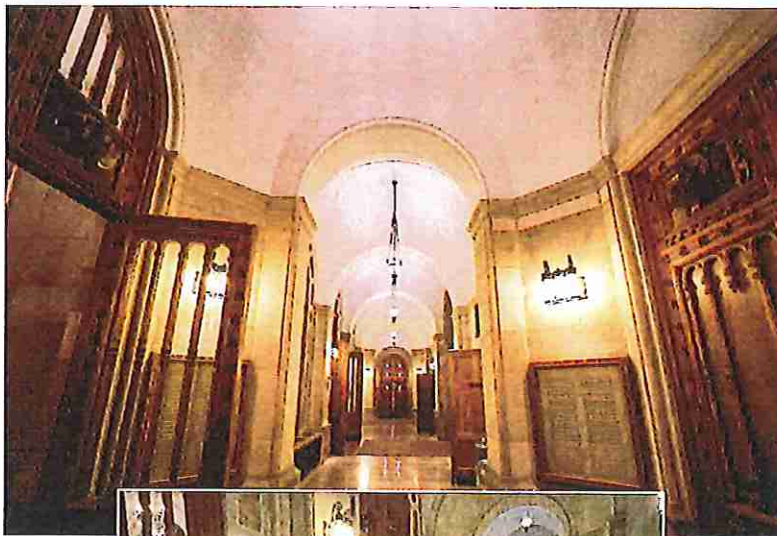


“Luminous!”

“Praised be Jesus Christ! Now and forever!” I begin with this familiar phrase, used by Pope Saint John Paul II, whenever he began a presentation, discourse, or homily. And I highlight this phrase for two reasons: first, because Pope Saint John Paul II wanted always to begin and concentrate whatever he was saying around the Lord Jesus Christ, and to offer him praise and honor! And second, because the catalyst for our efforts is that it was Pope Saint John Paul II who, in 2002, in his Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, gave the Church five new mysteries of the Rosary: the Baptism of the Lord in the Jordan, the Wedding Feast of Cana, the Proclamation of the Kingdom, the Transfiguration, and the Last Supper or Institution of the Eucharist.

What we are about to do is “luminous,” because it is all about Christ Jesus! And we offer him praise and honor that we’ve arrived at this historic moment! The moment of which I speak of course is that we are now able formally to commence work on adding the Luminous Mysteries to the five empty vaults in the narthex of our splendid Rosary Cathedral! This very exciting project will complete the depiction of all 20 of the Mysteries of the

Rosary at Rosary Cathedral, including the already existing Joyful, Sorrowful, and Glorious Mysteries, depicted in the vaults of the side aisles.

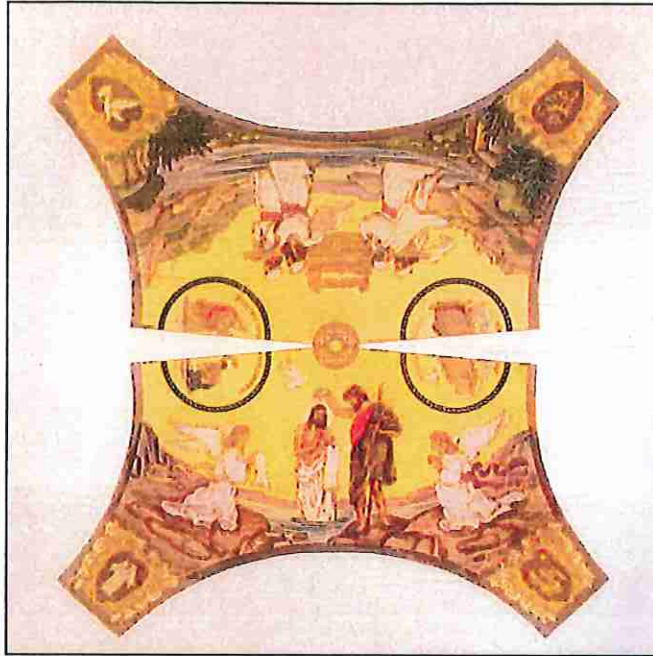


On March 27th, we publicly announced that, following upon the success of the diocesan-wide *Living Christ* capital campaign and the extraordinary generosity of so many donors, the Diocese of Toledo is now able to begin three major initiatives to restore and enhance the mother church of our Catholic diocese, Our Lady, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Cathedral. And on April

16th, we held a press event in the narthex formally to announce that one of those initiatives, the realization of the Luminous Mysteries, is now poised to begin. Gathered with the members of our Cathedral Restoration Committee and others, we welcomed the overall project manager of our Cathedral restoration, Mr. Louis DiCocco of St.

Jude Liturgical Arts Studio; we introduced the artist, Mr. David LaFleur whose studio is in Avon Lake, Ohio; we acknowledged and thanked the Luminous Foundation of the Delp family whose generous gift for this purpose to the *Living Christ* campaign makes possible this installation; and we displayed several of the renderings and images which will soon grace those undecorated vaults!

In giving the Luminous Mysteries to the universal Church, Pope Saint John Paul II wrote: "I believe that to bring out fully the Christological depth of the Rosary, it would be suitable to make an addition to the traditional pattern which...could broaden it to include *the mysteries of Christ's public ministry between his Baptism and his Passion*. In the course of those mysteries we contemplate important aspects of the person of Christ as the definitive revelation of God. Declared the beloved Son of the Father at the Baptism in the Jordan, Christ is the one who announces the coming of the Kingdom, bears witness to it in his works and proclaims its demands. It is during the years of his public ministry that *the mystery of Christ is most evidently a mystery of light*. "While I am in the world, I am the Light of the world" (Jn 9:5)" [Rosarium Virginis Mariae 19].



Once the work is complete, it will "bring out fully the Christological depth of the Rosary" for every parishioner and visitor to our Cathedral. There is no doubt that, as one of the only Cathedrals in North America to so depict all twenty mysteries of the Rosary, Rosary Cathedral will become even more a place of pilgrimage.

Many of you will wonder what artistic form or style the new Luminous Mysteries will take. Every effort from the beginning has been made to envision and ensure that the depiction of the five new mysteries will follow upon and be seen as complementary to the elements and classic style of Jan Henryk de Rosen, the original artist who depicted the 15 mysteries of the Rosary in time for the dedication of the Cathedral in 1940. Thus the images of the Luminous Mysteries will present the New Testament scene of each mystery with its corresponding Old Testament prefiguration, there will be roundels or *tondi* which harken to related scriptural scenes, and escutcheons which bear imagery or iconography which elucidate the mystery. Just as in the great medieval Cathedrals the art was to serve a catechetical purpose, so too our new Luminous Mysteries will, we trust, appear seamlessly harmonious with the other mysteries of the rosary depicted in the vaults of the side aisles. This project will hopefully be completed within six to eight months.

Pope Saint John Paul also wrote: "This addition of these new mysteries, without prejudice to any essential aspect of the

prayer's traditional format, is meant to give it fresh life and to enkindle renewed interest in the Rosary's place within Christian spirituality as a true doorway to the depths of the Heart of Christ, ocean of joy and light, suffering and of glory" [Rosarium Virginis Mariae 19].

How striking that adding the Luminous Mysteries to our Cathedral should give fresh life and renewed interest in the Rosary, and how very appropriate that they be depicted above the narthex doors of our Cathedral, underscoring the Rosary "as a true doorway to the depths of the Heart of Christ."

In concluding his Apostolic Letter in which he gave us the Luminous Mysteries, Pope Saint John Paul reiterated the efficacy of entrusting to the Rosary our most difficult problems, noting: "At times when Christianity itself seemed under threat, its deliverance was attributed to the

power of this prayer, and Our Lady of the Rosary was acclaimed as the one whose intercession brought salvation." He added "Today I willingly entrust to the power of this prayer...the cause of peace in the world and the cause of the family" [Rosarium Virginis Mariae 19]. How poignant then that we should complete the depiction of the mysteries of the Rosary here in our Cathedral named for Our Lady of the Rosary, and how timely to entrust to the power of this prayer the cause of peace in the world and the cause of the family!

Many of you will recall that, in the homily on the day I was installed as your bishop, I expressed the hope that one day, here in Rosary Cathedral, we would be able to depict the Luminous Mysteries. It was especially moving then, because the date of my Installation, October 22, 2014, was the first time the Church celebrated the Feast Day of Pope John Paul II as a Saint. Often in these intervening years, several of you have asked "Bishop, when are you going to fulfill your hope to add the Luminous Mysteries to our Cathedral?" The answer to that question is: the time has come. How blessed we are to move forward with this exciting initiative to enhance our Rosary Cathedral artistically, historically and spiritually! "Praised be Jesus Christ! Now and forever!"

+ Daniel E. Thomas

Most Rev. Daniel E. Thomas
Bishop of Toledo
April 17, 2026