

A Message from Fr. Fragomeni...

The Shrine of Our Lady of Pompeii

April 3, 2020

Vol. 7, No. 1

The Color Purple

Dear Friends of the Shrine,

Not only is the color purple the title of a novel and award-winning film, but the color purple is predominant during the Lenten Season. Purple is what a priest wears every Sunday (if we were having Mass) during the Lenten Season. Statues around the Shrine are veiled in purple. This year, our color purple in the Shrine is virtual.

So, what does the color purple mean for us?

Traditionally, purple was the color of an emperor - the royal color; the rich color that symbolized the extraordinary power and respect that was due to a monarch. Kings and queens wear purple to accentuate their position and their respect that is warranted within an empire.

In Christianity, the usage of the color purple at one level could mean penance. This is the color by which we are entering into the important need we all have of being transformed into the royal people that we are called to be - the holy people that we are invited to be in baptism.

I believe there is another significance to all this purple during Lent. The royal purple color is used to describe the rich and dark blood of Jesus Christ that was shed on the cross for us. The rich color of his blood is the royal blood of God poured out in mercy and healing. Our Lenten penance, our Lenten sacrifices, are not so much something we do in order to gain heaven, but the Lenten purple, the purple in our stained glass windows, is a reminder that all of our work is really a gift that comes through the blood of Christ. In essence, all our ability to be transformed, all our lives as Christians, all the gifts that we receive in our lives, they come to us from the sovereign Christ. His throne is a cross. His crown is made of thorns. His royal purple blood heals and covers us with mercy.



After this quarantine, the next time you are at the Shrine, take a look at all the purple in our stained glass windows and think about all the saints - all those bathed in the color purple, are really bathed in the blood of Christ. Even in this pandemic, He can save us and the whole world, and make of us an empire of love and communion.

Blessings to you,

Father Richard