



The Shrine of Our Lady of Pompeii

March 22, 2015

Inside the Shrine

Vol. 2, No. 11

Something is different at the Shrine – and it's the color purple!

Can you guess what?

The statues and images are covered!

This week, traditionally called *Passion Week*, begins a fourteen-day solemn preparation for Easter. During these days, the statues and images in the shrine church are covered with purple veils. They will be removed on Holy Saturday, as we ready for Pasqua!

When I first arrived at the Shrine, the custom of veiling the statues had ceased. It remains an option, which most churches no longer practice. However, as a historian of the Liturgy, for me, it remains a practice that deserves preserving.

I looked for the veils of the past, thinking that they were in storage... but to no avail. They were nowhere to be found.

So, I turned to one of our long-time affiliates and asked if he could find someone to create a set of veils for our Passiontide observance.

He was gracious and provided these veils, nearly 15 years ago, and we are still using them. Thank you.

And so, when you enter the Shrine church in the next few weeks, you will see purple, a color of passion, royalty, penance and great enlightenment.

These veils are placed on the statues and images on the Saturday morning before the 5th Sunday of Lent. I am so grateful to parents and children who volunteer. They are the faithful veilers that have done the actual work for many years, under the supervision of Carl, our pastoral associate. It is quite a job.

So you may be wondering: Why cover the statues and images at all?

Here is a list of answers I wrote out, when we re-introduced the practice here at the Shrine:

- It is an ancient custom of the Church to veil images during the time of the Lord's Passion. Many Churches in the world continue this custom today.
- It is an act of fasting - not from food or meat, but an act of fasting for our eyes. Our eyes are not given the pleasure of the sacred images for two weeks. At Easter, we again will feast our eyes on the beauty of the art that enhances the Shrine.
- It calls all who enter the Shrine to enter inward to the heart, contemplating the great gift of the Lord's Death and Resurrection. Without any other focus, we are called to remember the central mysteries of our redemption during this holy time.
- It creates an environment of penance and royal hope as we anticipate the reawakening of the Alleluia at the Easter Vigil.
- It can be a reminder that our lives are to be hidden in Christ, and find their only meaning in His Cross.

Visit us soon.

Fondly,

Fr. Richard