



Battle of Lepanto—On October 7, 1571, a great victory over the Turkish fleet was won by Catholic naval forces primarily from Spain, Venice, and Genoa under the command of Don Juan of Austria. It was the last battle at sea between "oared" ships, which featured the most powerful navy in the world, a Moslem force with between 12,000 to 15,000 Christian slaves as rowers. The patchwork team of Catholic ships was powered by the Holy Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Knowing that the Christian forces were at a distinct disadvantage, the holy pontiff, St. Pope Pius V called for all of Europe to pray the Rosary for victory. We know today that the victory was decisive, prevented the Islamic invasion of Europe, and evidenced the Hand

of God working through Our Lady. At the hour of victory, St. Pope Pius V, who was hundreds of miles away at the Vatican, is said to have gotten up from a meeting, went over to a window, and exclaimed with supernatural radiance: "The Christian fleet is victorious!" and shed tears of thanksgiving to God

The Rosary

At Lepanto, the victory over the Moslems was won by the faithful praying the Rosary. Even though they had superior numbers, the Turks really were overmatched. The Battle of Lepanto was at first celebrated liturgically as "Our Lady of Victory." Later, the feast of October 7th was renamed "Our Lady of the Rosary" and extended throughout the Universal Church by Pope Clement XI in 1716.