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# Rosary Prayer as a Catalyst for Solidarity among Urban Catholic Parishioners

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**Abstract:** This article focuses on examining and discussing the practice of the Rosary as a form of solidarity among Catholic communities in urban parishes. The research background stems from the increasingly distant relationship with God and fellow parishioners within the lives of urban dwellers. Through an analysis of the role of the Rosary, this study aims to enhance social and spiritual bonds among parish members. The research methodology includes observation, interviews, and literature review on the Rosary. The findings illustrate the significance of the Rosary for Catholics in fostering a strong sense of connection amidst the complexities of urban life, providing a deep spiritual experience and strengthening solidarity among them. This research provides insights into the role of the Rosary in sustaining solidarity and faith among diverse Catholic communities in urban environments.

### INTRODUCTION

Recently, pastoral representation of Rosary prayer in urban parishes has become intriguing. The Rosary, a Catholic prayer tradition, has long been a significant part of the spiritual life of Catholics worldwide, expressing beliefs, devotions, and solidarity in various contexts. In urban parish environments, the Rosary holds specific meaning and plays a unique role in fostering solidarity among Catholic communities. This research theme, "Rosary Prayer as Solidarity among Urban Catholic Parishioners," aims to explore how this prayer practice connects Catholics in dynamic urban contexts.

The theme is compelling as it delves into how Catholics in urban parishes, especially in urban settings, confront challenges of modernization and urbanization while maintaining their relationships and solidarity through communal Rosary prayer. The Rosary may offer a unique way to strengthen communities and forge spiritual closeness amidst the fast-paced urban life. For believers, prayer is a source of strength in their life journey. Prayer is crucial in their lives and spiritual growth. Catholics have a communal prayer habit, such as the Rosary, which is a powerful devotional practice for facing various life challenges and needs (John Paul, 2002). This prayer is integral to the Catholic tradition and has been used for centuries, becoming familiar to the faithful. The Rosary, as an integral part of Catholic practice, has deeply rooted itself in the hearts and souls of Catholics for centuries (Musi et al., 2021). In the midst of rapid urban development, the role of the Rosary has become increasingly significant in shaping solidarity among urban parishioners. Urban life, with its unique dynamics, often presents significant challenges in building strong social bonds. Urban dwellers are constantly busy with demanding routines, involving work, education, and various activities that consume time and energy (Hermawati et al., 2021). Such a lifestyle affects the faith of parishioners and their relationships with fellow believers.

For Catholics, Mother Mary holds a crucial role in their faith journey, serving as a mediator that brings believers closer to Christ (Hasiman & Anom, 2020). Through the devotion or Rosary prayer, believers strengthen solidarity among themselves and deepen their spiritual connection with Mother Mary. When recited collectively in urban communities, the Rosary creates a strong emotional bond among individuals who may be separated by their daily busyness. It helps them feel a shared presence in prayer, building solidarity among them.

Collective Rosary prayer in urban environments becomes a moment of connection to strengthen relationships among urban parishioners from various areas. Through communal prayer, urban parishioners express respect and gratitude to Mother Mary, seizing an opportunity to deepen strong spiritual ties with God (Hermawati et al., 2022). The mysteries focused on significant events in the history of salvation also contribute to reinforcing faith in urban communities. It serves as a way to remember and celebrate the great stories of faith, inspiring Catholics to face challenges in urban life.

Amidst competition and pressure in the urban environment, the Rosary can be a source of hope and strength, helping to maintain solidarity in their faith. The main research question is: How is the Rosary practiced and interpreted by Catholics in urban parishes, and what role does this practice play in strengthening solidarity among them? While previous research has identified the importance of religious practices in maintaining community identity in urban environments, there has been limited focus on the Rosary as a tool for solidarity in urban parishes. Previous studies often emphasize elements such as rituals, symbols, and prayers in religious experiences, which can aid in understanding the context of this research. This study aims to bridge the knowledge gap by delving deeper into and understanding the role of the Rosary in fostering solidarity among Catholics in dynamic urban parish environments.

#### METHOD

Methodology used in this research is a qualitative descriptive approach. Qualitative descriptive approach is a research method employed to understand, explain, and depict phenomena through the analysis of data in the form of words and texts (Sugiyono, 2020). This approach aims to reveal the meanings, contexts, and perspectives contained within the researched phenomenon. In qualitative descriptive approach, researchers collect data through direct interview techniques with the subjects. The subjects to be interviewed are individuals actively involved in communal Rosary prayer within the community or in a cave setting. In

this study, the researcher also utilizes a literature review with sources such as books and journals related to the theme under investigation.

The research is conducted at St. Emmanuel Ngadireso Station, Tumpang-Malang Parish. The subjects interviewed consist of 7 individuals actively participating in Rosary prayer at Ngadireso Station. The subjects are as follows: S1 (Ms. Titin), S2 (Ms. Santi), S3 (Ms. Lusi), S4 (Ms. Tumiyem), S5 (Mr. Arya), S6 (Ms. Caca), S7 (Ms. Aura). The data collection technique used to observe Catholic believers at St. Emmanuel Ngadireso Station - Tumpang-Malang Parish is interviews during the communal Rosary prayer as a fellowship of Christian believers. The research will be conducted by gathering several believers for interviews, and some participants or respondents will be given questionnaires. Conclusions will be drawn from the results of interviews and questionnaires. Steps in the qualitative descriptive approach include collecting rich and in-depth data, systematic and reflective analysis, and presenting results in the form of narratives or descriptions that depict the phenomenon in detail (Sugiyono, 2020). Additionally, relevant books related to the research theme will be used in this study.

#### **RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The Rosary prayer is a significant practice in the Catholic Church tradition. This prayer is a form of devotion based on the repetition of specific prayers and meditation on important events in the lives of Jesus Christ and Mother Mary. The name "Rosary" comes from the Latin word "rosarium," meaning rose garden (Widodo, 2021). This prayer is often considered as a rose garden of prayers dedicated to Mother Mary. The Rosary consists of a series of prayers repeated in a specific order. Its main components include the Hail Mary (Ave Maria), the Judgment of the Father (Salve Regina), and the Glory (Gloria), recited repeatedly in various sequences (Musi et al., 2021). In addition, during each mystery or event mentioned, Catholic believers meditate on events in the lives of Jesus and Mary, such as the Birth of Jesus, His Passion, Death, and Resurrection.

The Rosary is closely associated with Mother Mary, often referred to as the Mother of the Rosary. This devotion honors Mary as a strong mediator between humanity and Jesus Christ. In the Rosary, Catholics hope that Mary will support them in prayer and advocate for their interests to Jesus. An essential aspect of the Rosary is meditation. Through the repetition of prayers, Catholics contemplate the grace, signs of love, and salvation offered by Christ. This prayer also helps individuals reflect on the obedience, suffering, and sacrifices of Mother Mary in accepting and following the Lord's plan. The Rosary has become a significant symbol in the Catholic tradition, often used in various occasions such as Mass, celebrations of Mary's month, or at home. Believers believe that the Rosary brings peace and comfort to their daily lives and strengthens their connection to the Catholic faith.

The month of Mary is an important time in the Catholic tradition when Catholics focus on devotion to Mary. The Rosary plays a central role in Mary's month, with many Catholics gathering to pray this prayer as a sign of honor to Mother Mary. The Rosary also has a rich history in the Catholic Church, evolving over centuries and becoming an integral part of Catholic devotion. Popes and Catholic religious figures often endorse the use of the Rosary in various contexts. In the Catholic Church, the Rosary holds deep spiritual significance, helping Catholics deepen their understanding of the Church's teachings and Mary's role in salvation. It enriches the experience of faith and assists individuals in growing spiritually. Overall, the Rosary is a crucial prayer in the Catholic Church tradition, involving the repetition of prayers and meditation on significant events in the lives of Jesus and Mary. It serves as a powerful and meaningful tool in the spiritual growth and religious practice of Catholic believers.

Below are the results of interviews with individuals actively involved in the Rosary prayer in the St. Emmanuel-Ngadireso station, Tumpang parish.

Q: What is your view on the practice of the Rosary as a foundation for building solidarity among Catholic believers? S1: The Rosary is seen as an expression of faith to God. It is considered a prayer of the Church, prayed both individually and collectively. It serves as a strong foundation for building solidarity within their community. S2: The Rosary is a devotional practice carried out for a whole month in May and October in their station. It started as an obligation but transformed into a need and longing. The routine has strengthened their community, fostering sharing, mutual support, and prayers. S3: The Rosary is a way to get closer to God through Mother Mary. It builds an intimate relationship with Mother Mary, creating an emotional and spiritual connection. Praying the Rosary together strengthens the community and fosters good relations among the members. S4: The Rosary is seen as an expression of faith in Jesus Christ through Mother Mary. It involves reflecting on various events in Jesus's life, from birth to resurrection. It is considered a way for the community to pray to Christ through Mother Mary. S5: Personally, the Rosary is viewed as a prayer while reflecting on the events of Jesus's life. It is a communal prayer, and during Rosary gatherings, believers share life experiences and spiritual insights, fostering unity. S7: The Rosary is seen as a powerful prayer where Catholics come to devote or novena to Mother Mary, seeking help in their life journeys. It is believed to be very effective when done regularly.

Q: What is your understanding of the meaning and purpose of the Rosary in your community? S1: The Rosary holds the meaning of getting closer to God through the prayers dedicated to Mother Mary. The purpose is to deeply contemplate the mysteries of faith in the lives, death, and resurrection of Christ. S2: Initially an obligation, the purpose evolved into a need and longing. Many prayer requests have been fulfilled through the Rosary, strengthening their faith. The goal is to faithfully contemplate and strengthen their commitment to the practice. S3: The Rosary is seen as a meditative prayer, contemplating the events of faith with Mother Mary as an intercessor. The goal is to strengthen the relationship with Mother Mary and fulfill Catholic obligations in May and October. S4: The meaning of the Rosary is expressing salutations to Mother Mary, honoring her as the Mother of Jesus. The purpose is to join together in prayer to honor Christ and strengthen unity in faith. S5: The Rosary is personally perceived as a prayer of petition through Mary, seeking her protection. It is a communal prayer that fosters unity and allows for the sharing of life and faith experiences. S7: The Rosary serves as a means to ask Mother Mary for continuous protection in life's journeys. It is believed to be very powerful and effective when done regularly.

Q: Do you think the Rosary can be a means to unite and strengthen solidarity amidst the diversity of believers? S1: Yes, by praying the Rosary together, they feel united in one faith. Despite believers coming from various regions and ethnicities, the unity is built on respect, understanding, and support for one another. S2: Yes, the desire to gather for the Rosary fosters unity. It is a shared commitment, and the diversity in their community is celebrated as they come together to pray. S3: Absolutely. The Rosary is a shared prayer, and the unity is seen in their commitment to attend and participate in the devotion. It strengthens the sense of community. S4: Yes, the Rosary is a shared expression of faith that brings people together. It serves as a common ground for believers to unite despite their diversity. S5: Yes, the Rosary fosters unity by bringing people together for a common purpose. It transcends differences and allows for a shared expression of faith. S7: Yes, the Rosary is a powerful means to unite believers. Despite differences, when they gather for the Rosary, they feel a strong sense of unity and support.

Q: How has the practice of the Rosary influenced your personal faith and the faith of your community members? S1: Personally, the Rosary has deepened her faith in God and strengthened her relationship with Mother Mary. In the community, the Rosary has become a shared expression of faith, bringing believers closer to God. S2: The Rosary has become a way of life, influencing personal faith positively. In the community, it has strengthened the faith of many, leading to fulfilled prayer requests and a sense of belonging. S3: Personally, the Rosary has deepened her faith, and the practice has influenced the faith of community members positively. It has become an essential aspect of their Catholic identity. S4: Personally, the Rosary is a source of strength and solace. In the community, it has positively impacted faith by providing a shared space for believers to express their devotion. S5: Personally, the Rosary is a source of spiritual growth. In the community, it has positively influenced faith by creating a space for shared prayer and reflection on faith. S7: Personally, the Rosary has strengthened her faith in Mother Mary. In the community, it has positively influenced the faith of believers, providing a powerful means of prayer.

Q: How do you envision the role of the Rosary in the future of your community's faith life? S1: The Rosary will continue to be a significant part of their faith life, fostering unity and deepening their relationship with God. It will be passed on to future generations as a cherished tradition. S2: The Rosary will play a central role in the future, fostering a sense of community and strengthening the faith of believers. It will be a practice passed down through generations. S3: The Rosary will continue to be a vital aspect of their faith life, passing down through generations. It will remain a practice that unites believers and strengthens their commitment to God. S4: The Rosary will continue to be a central practice, nurturing faith and unity in the community. It will be a tradition passed on to future generations as a source of spiritual strength. S5: The Rosary will play a crucial role in the future, fostering unity and spiritual growth. It will continue to be a shared practice that strengthens the faith of believers. S7: The Rosary will continue to be a powerful means of prayer in the future, influencing the faith of believers positively. It will be a practice passed down to future generations.

These interview responses provide insights into the perspectives and experiences of individuals actively involved in the Rosary prayer in the St. Emmanuel-Ngadireso station, Tumpang parish. The Rosary is viewed as a powerful prayer that fosters unity, strengthens faith, and serves as a significant aspect of the Catholic identity in the community. Participants express a deep connection to the Rosary, both personally and communally, highlighting its positive impact on their spiritual lives.

Q: How has the Rosary prayer influenced your spiritual life as a Catholic member in the urban community?

S1: Being actively involved in praying the Rosary together in this community has brought about new experiences that can change my mindset, way of thinking, and relationships with others, especially my relationship with God. Praying the Rosary deepens my spiritual life with God, helping me reflect on the mysteries of faith and strengthen my spiritual life as a child of God. Mrs. Titin mentioned that active participation in communal prayer has transformed her spiritual life, fostering growth in various aspects.

S2: Praying the Rosary makes me strong, resilient, and calm in facing all situations. I am grateful for the many blessings I receive through the Rosary. There seems to be a lot of ease when I start with the Rosary beads. This has made me love the Rosary even more. I want to share these blessings by inviting the community, the school where I work, and close friends to participate in devotions, especially during the months of Mary and the Rosary. This, of course, strengthens my faith. The most beautiful thing is that even those who are not Catholics admire the Rosary prayer. I feel touched and thankful to be able to share these blessings. According to Mrs. Santi, praying the Rosary has made her resilient and calm, and she finds joy in sharing these blessings with others.

S3: As a busy homemaker juggling household chores, taking care of children and a husband, I make time in the afternoon to pray together in our community. Initially, I felt ordinary, but there were moments that made me more enthusiastic about praying the Rosary together in the community. Lately, I feel that my spirit is growing when hearing others pray the Rosary. I sense some unusual changes in myself. I used to get angry with my children if they misbehaved or disobeyed house rules, even scolding my husband for annoying things. Now I am more into advising them with gentle words rather than getting angry. Mrs. Lusi shared that being part of communal Rosary prayer has brought about a renewed enthusiasm and positive changes in her behavior.

S4: The Rosary prayer significantly influences the lives of Catholic believers. Based on my personal experience, devotion to Mother Mary through the 9-day novena has been impactful. I engaged in this devotion for reasons that made me realize devotion to Mary never disappoints if done sincerely and regularly. The habit of novena has led me to a deeper spiritual life and a closer connection with God. Despite the busyness of my activities and work in a bustling place with no room for silence, and even prayer seems impossible, I still make an effort to find time to pray. According to Mrs. Tumiyem, the novena experience brought about remarkable changes, enhancing her closeness to God.

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S5: The hustle and bustle of urban life make me take time to be with God in silence. Admittedly, city life makes me forget my duties as a baptized Catholic. Amid the noisy life of the world, people tend to forget their spiritual lives. Personally, I try to take time in the midst of my busyness to actively participate in communal Rosary prayer. After attending communal Rosary prayer in the neighborhood from the first to the fifth day, I already feel a peaceful inner atmosphere. I feel joyful because I can experience this atmosphere again after decades of not being involved in communal Rosary prayer like this. This atmosphere makes me more diligent and earnest in praying the Rosary, both personally and together. Arya shared that after participating in communal Rosary prayer for the first five days, she felt a peaceful inner atmosphere and regained joy after decades of not being involved in such communal prayer.

S7: Living a life of prayer in my family has been ingrained since we were young, significantly influencing the development and growth of my faith in understanding the events of Jesus' life. So far, I continue to nurture my spiritual life through prayer and devotion to Mary. For Aura, the Rosary prayer holds significant meaning as her prayer experience helps her grow in faith, and she emphasizes the importance of continuously nurturing her spiritual life through prayer.

Q: Can you share your personal experience regarding the Rosary prayer during active participation in the neighborhood?

S1: For me, participating in devotions with the station community is like finding a new family that strongly supports me in the process of growing in faith. Despite my busy schedule, I return home at 6:00 every day and immediately join the Rosary prayer. If I think about it, isn't it tiring? Why do I force myself? Actually, I could avoid it, ask for permission, or even not participate without notice. But, when I truly cannot join due to unavoidable tasks, there is guilt and a sense of loss. That's why, no matter how busy, I will still try to participate, and my heart feels at peace. Mrs. Titin shared that communal devotion has created a sense of family and support, leading to inner peace.

S2: In my experience of joining communal Rosary prayer in my neighborhood, I discovered a new nuance in praying the Rosary. Usually, I pray the Rosary alone. In communal prayer, I can relate to other Catholics. Besides praying together, we can share and discuss our life experiences, be it work, relationships with others, family, or our spiritual lives. This togetherness makes me more enthusiastic about joining communal Rosary prayer. Because I can share experiences with fellow believers, and we mutually strengthen each other. My previous habit was to come home tired from work and sleep immediately without sharing experiences with my family. But my involvement in communal prayer has made me more open with my family and others. Mrs. Santi highlighted the newfound sense of community and mutual support in communal Rosary prayer.

S3: It is true that the Rosary prayer has changed my way of life, especially in my spiritual life. I have an interesting experience. When I was in school until college, I rarely prayed and went to church. After graduating from college, I stayed at home for years looking for work and working, but I was quickly fired from my job. I entered dozens of jobs but was

always rejected, and if accepted, I was quickly fired. During the Rosary month, my mother invited me to join communal Rosary prayer in the neighborhood, but initially, I refused. Later, I decided to join the communal prayer. Initially, I felt ordinary, and because I often joined communal Rosary prayer in the peaceful atmosphere of the Maria cave, I began to feel something unusual in my heart. I felt extremely peaceful. I told this to my mother, and she asked me to pray the Rosary meditating on sad events. One by one, the events meditated in silence entered a sad and regretful atmosphere, and unconsciously tears flowed from my cheeks. After the event, I became more diligent in praying the Rosary and regularly going to church. Thank God, now I have a stable job until today. Mrs. Lusi shared a transformative experience of finding peace and solace through communal Rosary prayer, leading to increased devotion and regular church attendance.

These personal experiences reflect the transformative impact of the Rosary prayer on the spiritual lives of individuals actively involved in the St. Emmanuel-Ngadireso station community. The communal aspect of the Rosary brings a sense of family,

The document "Rosarium Virginis Mariae" is an apostolic letter issued by Pope John Paul II in 2002. This letter discusses the role of the Rosary prayer in the lives of Catholic believers and invites people to deepen their understanding of this prayer. In this document, Pope John Paul II outlines the views and teachings of the Catholic Church on the Rosary prayer, detailing the spiritual values contained in the practice of this prayer (John Paul II, 2002).

The "Rosarium Virginis Mariae" begins with an introduction to the Rosary prayer as one of the most important prayers in the Catholic tradition. Pope John Paul II expresses his admiration for this prayer and explains that the Rosary is one of the most personal prayers closest to the heart of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. The history of the Rosary in the Church is traced back to ancient traditions and has evolved over centuries. The document illustrates how the Rosary prayer has developed from the repetition of the Angelus and Hail Mary to the form we know today. The Pope emphasizes the meaning of the Rosary as a prayer centered on Christ, not only to commemorate the life and work of Jesus but also to understand the role of Mother Mary in salvation history (Kleden, 2018). The "Rosarium Virginis Mariae" states that the Rosary is focused on the mysteries of salvation, the significant events in the life of Jesus Christ, allowing Catholic believers to contemplate and absorb these mysteries.

The encyclical elaborates on the influence of the Rosary prayer in the daily lives of Catholic believers. The Pope emphasizes that the Rosary prayer can provide peace, hope, and sanctity in everyday life. In the context of the lives of Catholic believers in the city, the Rosary becomes crucial in their spiritual lives. In essence, the Rosary prayer leads believers to be closer to God through Mother Mary. The document also discusses the role of the Rosary in shaping solidarity and peace in the world. This prayer can be a tool to implore global peace and understand the interconnectedness of all humanity (Widodo, 2021). Additionally, the Rosary helps Catholic believers relate to fellow believers, strengthening solidarity within the community. In the "Rosarium Virginis Mariae," Pope John Paul II emphasizes the importance of developing the practice of the Rosary within families. The family is identified as the primary

place where parents can introduce and teach the Rosary to their children as the young generation and successors of faith in Christ. This highlights that the Rosary is a prayer for both individuals and groups. The Rosary is not just about repeating words or phrases but goes beyond that, leading believers to silence or meditation. This motivates Catholic communities and parishes to celebrate the Rosary together, form prayer groups, and experience the strength of united prayer. The document "Rosarium Virginis Mariae" also outlines Pope John Paul II's proposals to enrich the Rosary prayer by adding the luminous mysteries or the mysteries of light (Pasi, 1995). This effort aims to make the Rosary more relevant in the context of the present time.

In a situation filled with various issues and challenges, humans are challenged to build solidarity with each other. Solidarity refers to the unity or close relationship between individuals or groups in society, where they support and are responsible for each other (Leba & Watunglawar, 2023). It includes loyalty, empathy, and social involvement to achieve common goals or assist those in need. Solidarity can manifest in various forms, including social, economic, or political solidarity, and is a crucial principle in building a just and sustainable society (Yan Olla, 2022). In this situation, solidarity emphasizes a sense of interdependence, mutual need, sharing, caring, and responsibility towards others.

As one of the core values lived by the Catholic Church, solidarity with the community or environment is essential. Every believer is called to share, serve, strengthen one another, and bring the love of God into the world. The Church as the people of God is called to collaborate and build solidarity with others in the midst of the world (Leba & Watunglawar, 2023). The importance of solidarity among Church members is carried out to realize and control the development of life together. This is clearly stated in Gaudium et Spes, emphasizing that solidarity stems from the lived experience and commitment of faith to respond to and seek solutions to concrete problems in human life for the development of life together (Leba & Watunglawar, 2023). Solidarity is closely related to efforts to defend human dignity and realize God's salvation work that is just, peaceful, full of brotherhood, mutual respect, and love in living together.

#### CONCLUSION

The Rosary prayer plays a significant role in strengthening the solidarity of the Catholic community in the urban parish environment. This prayer practice is not merely a habit of Catholic believers but also serves as a means to build and reinforce social and spiritual bonds among Catholics residing in urban areas. In the engagement of the faithful in Ngaderiso as an active community in praying the Rosary, their perspectives vary based on their experiences. Therefore, in joint interviews with the community, they share their views on the Rosary prayer and how it influences the spiritual life of the community.

The Rosary prayer is more than just a series of prayers; it is also a symbol of deep solidarity among Catholics in the urban parish. This prayer practice plays a crucial role in strengthening relationships among parishioners, considering the social and economic diversity that may exist in urban areas. In the context of the urban parish, the Rosary creates a spiritual space that embraces all layers of society. Regardless of economic or social backgrounds, Catholic believers come together through this prayer as a form of unity in faith and respect for religious values. The solidarity generated by the Rosary forms a more resilient and responsive community to the challenges in its surroundings. Catholic believers support each other in spiritual life and face social issues that may arise in urban areas.

The Rosary prayer also serves as a tool for spiritual guidance among Catholic believers, providing encouragement to live in accordance with religious teachings. It establishes a strong moral foundation for daily life amid the dynamics of urban living. This prayer practice is not only focused on ritual aspects but also teaches the values of solidarity and compassion for others. Social initiatives and humanitarian projects often emerge as a result of shared awareness within the community. The Rosary, as a symbol of solidarity among urban parish Catholics, reflects diversity and inclusivity. All believers, regardless of social or economic status, feel accepted and equal within the framework of their shared faith. Thus, the Rosary is not just a religious practice but also a strong foundation for the formation of a resilient and caring community amidst the complexities of urban life. This solidarity, strengthened by communal prayer, forms a deep spiritual foundation and gives profound meaning to the lives of Catholic believers in the urban parish.

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