

APOSTOLIC LETTER

ROSARIUM VIRGINIS MARIAE

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL GREAT -- OCT 16, 2002
the ADDITION OF THE LUMINOUS MYSTERIES

CRUCIAL QUOTES -- THE ROSARY INFORMS AND **FORMS** US
AS WE TREASURE AND PONDER THE GOSPELS IN OUR HEARTS

TO READ POPE ST. JOHN PAUL THE GREAT'S ENTIRE APOSTOLIC LETTER, PLEASE GO TO HEARTOFCATECHESIS.ORG ; CLICK ON "HOMEWORK" SCROLL DOWN TO [ROSARIUM VIRGINIS MARIAE](#), CLICK, DOWNLOAD, PRINT IT OUT, AND READ WITH JESUS IN THE BLESSED SACRAMENT WITH A **HIGHLIGHTER** IN YOUR HAND.

But the most important reason for strongly encouraging the practice of the Rosary is that it represents a most effective means of fostering among the faithful that *commitment to the contemplation of the Christian mystery* which I have proposed in the Apostolic Letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* as a genuine "training in holiness": "What is needed is a Christian life distinguished above all in the *art of prayer*".⁽⁹⁾ Inasmuch as contemporary culture, even amid so many indications to the contrary, has witnessed the flowering of a new call for spirituality, due also to the influence of other religions, it is more urgent than ever that our Christian communities should become "genuine schools of prayer".⁽¹⁰⁾ [5]

The cycles of meditation proposed by the Holy Rosary are by no means exhaustive... but they do bring to mind what is essential and they awaken in the soul a thirst for a knowledge of Christ continually nourished by the pure source of the Gospel. Every individual event in the life of Christ, as narrated by the Evangelists, is resplendent with the Mystery that surpasses all understanding (cf. *Eph 3:19*): the Mystery of the Word made flesh, in whom "all the fullness of God dwells bodily" (*Col 2:9*). [24]

The Rosary is also *a path of proclamation and increasing knowledge*, in which the mystery of Christ is presented again and again at different levels of the Christian experience. Its form is that of a prayerful and contemplative presentation, capable of forming Christians according to the heart of Christ. When the recitation of the Rosary combines all the elements needed for an effective meditation, especially in its communal celebration in parishes and shrines, it can present *a significant catechetical opportunity* which pastors should use to advantage. [17]

The Rosary, therefore, is no substitute for *lectio divina*; on the contrary, it presupposes and promotes it. **Yet, even though the mysteries contemplated in the Rosary, even with the addition of the *mysteria lucis*, do no more than outline the fundamental elements of the life of Christ, they easily draw the mind to a more expansive reflection on the rest of the Gospel**, especially when the Rosary is prayed in a setting of prolonged recollection. [29]

No other words can ever match the efficacy of the inspired word. As we listen, we are certain that this is the word of God, spoken for today and spoken for me." [30]

FRIENDSHIP WITH CHRIST

In the spiritual journey of the Rosary, based on the constant contemplation – in Mary's company – of the face of Christ, this demanding ideal of being conformed to him is pursued through an association which could be described in **terms of friendship**. We are thereby enabled to enter naturally into Christ's life and as it were to share his deepest feelings. In this regard Blessed Bartolo Longo has written: **“Just as two friends**, frequently in each other's company, tend to develop similar habits, so too, by holding familiar converse with Jesus and the Blessed Virgin, by meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary and by living the same life in Holy Communion, we can become, to the extent of our lowliness, similar to them and can learn from these supreme models a life of humility, poverty, hiddenness, patience and perfection”.⁽¹⁸⁾ [15]

MARY INCARNATION OF THE ROSARY...

Thereafter Mary's gaze, ever filled with adoration and wonder, would never leave him. At times it would be *a questioning look*, as in the episode of the finding in the Temple: “Son, why have you treated us so?” (*Lk 2:48*); it would always be a *penetrating gaze*, one capable of deeply understanding Jesus, even to the point of perceiving his hidden feelings and anticipating his decisions, as at Cana (cf. *Jn 2:5*). At other times it would be *a look of sorrow*, especially beneath the Cross, where her vision would still be that of a mother giving birth, for Mary not only shared the passion and death of her Son, she also received the new son given to her in the beloved disciple (cf. *Jn 19:26-27*). On the morning of Easter hers would be *a gaze radiant with the joy of the Resurrection*, and finally, on the day of Pentecost, *a gaze afire* with the outpouring of the Spirit (*Acts 1:14*). [10]

Mary lived with her eyes fixed on Christ, treasuring his every word: “She treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart” (*Lk 2:19*; cf. *2:51*). The memories of Jesus, impressed upon her heart, were always with her, leading her to reflect on the various moments of her life at her Son's side. In a way those memories were to be the “rosary” which she recited uninterruptedly throughout her earthly life. [11]

The “*duc in altum*” of the Church of the third millennium will be determined by the ability of Christians to enter into the “perfect knowledge of God's Mystery, of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (*Col 2:2*)

Rediscover the Rosary in the light of Scripture, in harmony with the Liturgy, and in the context of your daily lives. [43]

GOD LOVE AND BLESS YOU... FR. RILEY