

# THE PASTOR'S DESK

October 11, 2009 - The Blessed Mother and the Rosary



## Dear Parishioners,

October is the month of the Rosary, because the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary occurs on the seventh. Here are some passages from Pope John Paul II's Apostolic Letter "The Rosary of the Virgin Mary", issued for the year of the Rosary 2002 to 2003:

The Rosary of the Virgin Mary, which gradually took form in the second millennium under the guidance of the Spirit of God, is a prayer loved by countless Saints and encouraged by the Magisterium. Simple yet profound, it still remains, at the dawn of this third millennium, a prayer of great significance, destined to bring forth a harvest of holiness. It blends easily into the spiritual journey of the Christian life, which, after two thousand years, has lost none of the freshness of its beginnings and feels drawn by the Spirit of God to 'set out into the deep' (*duc in altum!*) in order once more to proclaim, and even cry out, before the world that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior, 'the way, and the truth and the life' (*Jn 14:6*), 'the goal of human history and the point on which the desires of history and civilization turn'.

The Rosary, though clearly Marian in character, is at heart a Christocentric [Christ-centered] prayer. In the sobriety of its elements, it has all the *depth of the Gospel message in its entirety*, of which it can be said to be a compendium. It is an echo of the prayer of Mary, her perennial *Magnificat* for the work of the redemptive Incarnation that began in her virginal womb. With the Rosary, the Christian people *sit at the school of Mary* and are led to contemplate the beauty on the face of Christ and to experience the depths of His love. Through the Rosary the faithful receive abundant grace, as though from the very hands of the Mother of the Redeemer.

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Many signs indicate that still today the Blessed Virgin desires to exercise through this same prayer that maternal concern to which the dying Redeemer entrusted, in the person of the beloved disciple, all the sons and daughters of the Church: 'Woman, behold your son!' (*Jn 19:26*). Well-known are the occasions in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries on which the Mother of Christ made her presence felt and her voice heard, in order to exhort the People of God to this form of contemplative prayer. I would mention in particular, because of their great influence on the lives of Christians and the authoritative recognition they have received from the Church, the apparitions of Lourdes and of Fatima; these shrines continue to be visited by great numbers of pilgrims seeking comfort and hope.

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The contemplation of Christ has an *incomparable model* in Mary. In a unique way the face of the Son

belongs to Mary. It was in her womb that Christ was formed, receiving from her a human resemblance, which points to an even greater spiritual closeness. No one has ever devoted himself to the contemplation of the face of Christ as faithfully as Mary. The eyes of her heart already turned to Him at the Annunciation, when she conceived Him by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the months that followed she began to sense His presence and to picture His features. When at last she gave birth to Him in Bethlehem, her eyes were able to gaze tenderly on the face of her Son, as she 'wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger' (*Lk 2:7*).

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 (cf. *Acts 1:14*).

Mary lived with her eyes fixed on Christ, treasuring His every word: 'She kept 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' that she recited uninterruptedly throughout her earthly life.

Even now, amid the joyful songs of the heavenly Jerusalem, the reasons for her thanksgiving and praise remain unchanged. They inspire her maternal concern for the pilgrim Church, in which she continues to relate her personal account of the Gospel. *Mary constantly sets before the faithful the 'mysteries' of her Son*, with the desire that the contemplation of those mysteries will release all their saving power. In the recitation of the Rosary, the Christian community enters into contact with the memories and the contemplative gaze of Mary.

I encourage everyone to pray the Rosary every day. It will bring peace to you and to your families

**God bless,  
Fr. LaHood**