

The Rosary and Contemplation

The Compendium of the Gospel
in St. John Paul II's Rosarium Virginis Mariae



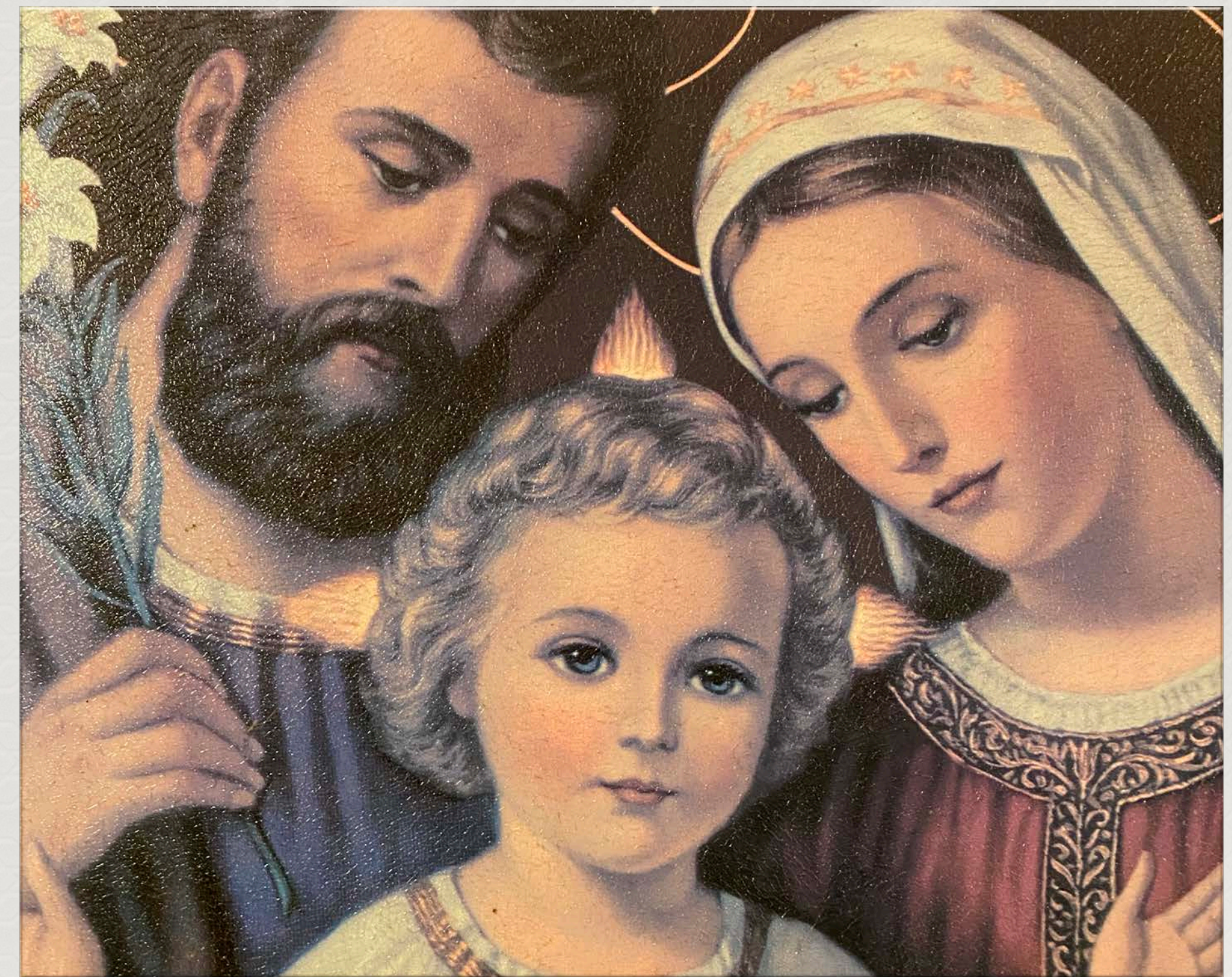
POPE ST.
JOHN PAUL II

October 22th

St. John Paul II, Mary and the New Millennium
The Maternal Dimension of the Church's Contemplation of Christ

The Rosary and Contemplation

- ✦ **The Rosary belongs among the finest and most praiseworthy traditions of Christian contemplation. RVM #5**



What is Contemplation?

Contemplation is a gaze of faith, fixed on Jesus. This focus on Jesus is a renunciation of self. His gaze purifies the heart; the light of the continuance of Jesus illumines the eyes of our heart and teaches us to see everything in the light of his truth and his compassion for all men. Contemplation also turns its gaze on the mysteries of Christ's life. Thus it learns the "interior knowledge of our Lord," the more to love him and follow him.

CCC 2715



Contemplation

Task, Mystery, and Transformation

- * To look upon the face of Christ... **“is the task of every follower of Christ and therefore the task of each one of us.”**
- * In contemplating Christ's face we become **open to receiving the mystery of Trinitarian life**, experiencing ever anew the love of the Father and delighting in the joy of the Holy Spirit.
- * **“Beholding the glory of the Lord, we are being changed into his likeness, from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit”** (2 Cor 3:18). RM #9

The Rosary: A Contemplation of Shared Memories

- * The memories of Jesus, impressed upon [Mary's] 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.
- * In the recitation of the Rosary, the Christian community enters into contact with the memories and the contemplative gaze of Mary. RVM #11
- * The Rosary mystically transports us to Mary's side ... This enables her to train us and to mold us with the same care. RVM 15



The Rosary Petitions and Proclaims

Both meditation and supplication...
based on confidence that her maternal
intercession can obtain all things from
the heart of her Son. ...the Rosary is
also a path of proclamation and
increasing knowledge. RVM 16-17



Contemplation as an Obedient Listening

- * The only way to approach the contemplation of Christ's face is by listening in the Spirit to the Father's voice... What is needed, then, is a revelation from above. In order to receive that revelation, attentive listening is indispensable: “Only the experience of silence and prayer offers the proper setting for the growth and development of a true, faithful and consistent knowledge of that mystery” (citing *Novo Millennio Ineunte* (6 January 2001). RVM #18



Contemplation as “hearing the Word” in an obedient attentiveness

- * Contemplative prayer is *hearing* the Word of God. Far from being passive, such attentiveness is the obedience of faith, the unconditional acceptance of a servant, and the loving commitment of a child. It participates in the “Yes” of the Son become servant and the *Fiat* of God’s lowly handmaid. CCC #2716

Contemplative Prayer is silence ... silent love

- * Contemplative prayer is silence, *the symbol of the world to come*, or *silent love*. Words in this kind of prayer are not speeches; they are like kindling that feeds the fire of love. In this silence, unbearable to the *outer* man, the Father speaks to us his incarnate Word, who suffered, died and rose; in this silence the Spirit of adoption enables us to share in the prayer of Jesus. CCC 2717.

A traditional path...A Rhythm of Contemplation

- * The Rosary is one of the traditional paths of Christian prayer directed to the contemplation of Christ's face ...
- * The Rosary's most characteristic element, in fact, the litany - like succession of Hail Mary's, becomes in itself an unceasing praise of Christ.
- * The successions of Hail Mary's constitutes the warp on which is woven the contemplation of the mysteries.
- * The Jesus that each Hail Mary recalls is the same Jesus whom the succession of mysteries proposes now as the Son of God, now as the Son of the Virgin. RVM #18



A Proposed Addition ...

- * I believe, however, that to bring out fully the Christological depth of the Rosary it would be suitable to make an addition to the traditional pattern which, while left to the freedom of individuals and communities, could broaden it to include the mysteries of Christ's public ministry between his Baptism and his Passion.
- * In the course of those mysteries we contemplate important aspects of the person of Christ as the definitive revelation of God. Declared the beloved Son of the Father at the Baptism in the Jordan, Christ is the one who announces the coming of the Kingdom, bears witness to it in his works and proclaims its demands.
- * It is during the years of his public ministry that the mystery of Christ is most evidently a mystery of light: "While I am in the world, I am the light of the world" (Jn 9:5) RVM #19



More fully a Compendium of the Gospel, an Ocean of Joy and Light, Suffering and Glory

- * Consequently, for the Rosary to become more fully a “compendium of the Gospel”, it is fitting to add, following reflection on the Incarnation and the hidden life of Christ (the joyful mysteries) and before focusing on the sufferings of his Passion (the sorrowful mysteries) and the triumph of his Resurrection (the glorious mysteries), a meditation on certain particularly significant moments in his public ministry (the mysteries of light).
- * This addition of these new mysteries, without prejudice to any essential aspect of the prayer's traditional format, is meant **to give it fresh life and to enkindle renewed interest in the Rosary's place within Christian spirituality as a true doorway to the depths of the Heart of Christ**, ocean of joy and of light, of suffering and of glory. RVM #19



The Traditional Mysteries of the Rosary

- * Joyful: Annunciation, Visitation, Nativity, Presentation, Finding in the Temple
- * Sorrowful: Agony, Scourging, Crowning, Carrying of the Cross, Crucifixion
- * Glorious: Resurrection, Ascension, Descent, Assumption, Crowning of Mary
- * Proposed Luminous Mysteries: Baptism, Wedding at Cana, Proclamation, Transfiguration and Eucharist.

The Rosary Sheds Light on the Mystery of Christ and the Mystery of Man

- * **Anyone who contemplates Christ through the various stages of his life cannot fail to perceive in him the truth about man...: “it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man is seen in its true light”. The Rosary helps to open up the way to this light. Following in the path of Christ, in whom man's path is recapitulated, revealed and redeemed, believers come face to face with the image of the true man.**



See Life, Family, God's Kingdom, Salvific Suffering, and the Goal

- * Contemplating Christ's birth, they **learn of the sanctity of life**; seeing the household of Nazareth, they **learn the original truth of the family** according to God's plan; listening to the Master in the mysteries of his public ministry, they **find the light which leads them to enter the Kingdom of God**; and following him on the way to Calvary, they **learn the meaning of salvific suffering**.
- * Finally, contemplating Christ and his Blessed Mother in glory, they **see the goal towards which each of us is called, if we allow ourselves to be healed and transformed by the Holy Spirit**.

The Rosary Brings Human Life into Rhythm with God's own Life

- * Bring to this encounter with the sacred humanity of the Redeemer all the problems, anxieties, labours and endeavours which go to make up our lives. “Cast your burden on the Lord and he will sustain you” (Ps 55:23).
- * Hand over our burdens to the merciful hearts of Christ and his Mother.
- * The Rosary does indeed “mark the rhythm of human life”, bringing it into harmony with the “rhythm” of God's own life, in the joyful communion of the Holy Trinity, our life's destiny and deepest longing.



The Rhythm of the
Rosary helps us
remember the Truth of
who we are ... our
identity before God.

Each mystery of the Rosary,
carefully meditated,
sheds light
on the mystery of man.

For next week:
For Me, To Live is Christ
RVM 26-38