

## **The Rosary is Experiencing a New Springtime**

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Staff Writer

(May 5, 2008) Pope Benedict XVI said the rosary is a powerful form of prayer that does not belong to the past but to the present where it can bring peace, reconciliation and all the healing power of the Most Holy Name of Jesus to mankind.

The pope made these statements on Saturday, May 3, while presiding over the praying of the Rosary in the Roman basilica of St. Mary Major in Rome.

“In the experience of my generation, May evenings evoke pleasant memories of vespertine appointments to pay homage to the Virgin Mary,” he said. “Today we together confirm that the holy Rosary is not some pious practice relegated to the past, a prayer of distant times to be thought of nostalgically. Indeed, the Rosary is experiencing what is almost a new springtime.”

The Rosary helps us to remain centered on Christ in a dispersive world, he said, much like Mary who meditated upon everything Her Son said and did. “When we recite the Rosary we relive important monuments of the history of salvation, we again go over the various stages of Christ's mission. With Mary we turn our hearts to the mystery of Jesus.”

When it is prayed profoundly, this prayer brings peace and reconciliation he said. “It contains the healing power of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, invoked with faith and love at the heart of each Hail Mary.”

Pope Benedict has always associated the rosary with consolation and healing, once telling author Peter Seewald that for a “restless spirit” like his, the rosary “allows the soul to settle into tranquility. . . (makes it) calm and free and grant(s) it a vision of God.”

He told Seewald that he prays the rosary “when I want to get away from work and free myself a bit . . . when I want to be quiet and clear my head.” He prays it “quite simply, just as my parents used to pray,” he said.

Pope Benedict has also emphasized the importance of praying the rosary for peace in families and the world. “This is something that Mary has also offered in various apparitions,” he said on the 2007 World Day of the Rosary.

“I am thinking especially of her appearance at Fatima which took place 90 years ago. To the three little shepherds, Lucia, Jacinta and Francisco, presenting herself as ‘the Madonna of the Rosary,’ she insistently recommended praying the rosary every day to bring an end to the war. We also desire to welcome the Virgin’s maternal request, committing ourselves to saying the rosary with faith for peace in our families, in countries, and in the whole world.”

Fr. Johann G. Roten, S.M., of the University of Dayton, says that the pope is also deeply aware of the theological meaning of the rosary. “As he said during a General Audience on May 4, the

rosary takes people 'out of themselves' to experience Mary's feminine and motherly closeness, and makes the soul become 'one with the words,' those words which convey closeness with the Lord," Fr. Roten writes. "From the very first days of his pontificate the Pope urged his many and varied visitors to 'enter the school of Mary to learn to love and follow Christ above all else.'"

He is still issuing the same call to believers to come to Mary through the Rosary in order to save the world.

"May Mary help us to welcome within ourselves the grace that emanates from these mysteries," he said on Saturday, "so that through us this grace can 'irrigate' society, starting with our everyday relationships, purifying it from many negative forces and opening it to the novelty of God."

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Women of Grace Study Questions:

1) Why does Pope John Paul II refer to the rosary as "the school of Mary"? (See No. 14 in *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, available in its entirety on-line at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP2ROSAR.HTML>)

2) Many New Age forms of prayer rely on the use of repetitive words. Why is the Rosary different and how is it meant to be prayed? (See Nos. 28-38 in *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*)