

Personal Notes
050424 Fifth Sunday of Easter 52A
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Do the Faithful identify themselves as members of the Household of God? According to the Lectionary John 14:2 says, “in my Father’s house are many dwelling places,” continuing, “as the number of disciples continued to grow” (Acts 6:1). At the end of the reading, “the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly” (Acts 6:7). In Jerusalem, Luke has a focus on Jerusalem, where Mary may have lived out her days in the earthly Household of God.

Besides *dwelling places*, another age-old translation for John 14:2 is “in the house of the Lord are many mansions,” following Saint Jerome.

John 14:2	
<u>Lectionary</u> (1998):	dwelling places
<u>The Vulgate</u> (circa 410):	mansions
<u>Douay-Rheims</u> (1582-1610):	mansions
<u>King James</u> (1611):	mansions
<u>Jerusalem</u> (1966):	rooms
<u>New American</u> (1970):	dwelling places
<u>New Jerusalem</u> (1985):	places to live in

A better translation is “in the household of the Lord are many mansions.”¹

This verse does deal with family values, though without there being a word for *family* in the Bible. In the Middle East, families were organized along family lines, in the sense of extended families rather than in the sense of primary family groups. The Holy Thursday foot washing, thereby becomes a welcoming into the extended Household of God.²

Jesus tells the Faithful not to be afraid, because he is preparing a place for them and he is truthful, “the Way, the Truth, and the Life” (John 14:6). Not only is Jesus himself a sign, but he is a sign that effects what he signifies.³ The Lectionary presents this as the Alleluia verse, just before the Gospel. In the first reading from the Acts of the Apostles, Jesus promises that the Apostles will do greater deeds than he has. Acts also shows that Christianity comes in many perspectives. First

¹ Mary L. Coloe, P.B.V.M., “Welcome into the Household of God: The Foot Washing in John 13,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No 3 (July 2004) .411-412.

² Mary L. Coloe, P.B.V.M., “Welcome into the Household of God: The Foot Washing in John 13,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 66, No 3 (July 2004) .403, 412.

³ Douglas K. Clark, “Signs in Wisdom and John,” the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 45, No. 2 (April 1983) 205.

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Thomas asks Jesus how the Faithful can follow him without knowing where he is going (John 14:5).

Jesus is going to the Father, having initiated the Faithful into the Household of God. As the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, Jesus is going on to his Trinitarian but monotheistic self. In other words, to see Jesus is to see the Father.

The presence of Jesus must have been overwhelming, because Thomas stops asking, as Philip begins. Jesus becomes exasperated, "How long have you known me, Philip" (John 14:9). The point is that as members of the Household of God, the Faithful need to get on with their lives and stop questioning whether they belong. They belong.

Belonging includes belonging to the mercy of God, as Psalm 33:22, the Responsorial antiphon proclaims, "Lord, let your mercy be on us, as we place our trust in you." This request for mercy means that belonging to the Household of God does not exempt one from sin. In order to avoid self-destructive self-righteousness, the Faithful must always recognize sin as an option, albeit an option to be rejected.

Acts 6:1 writes about widows "neglected in the daily distribution." The point is that Deacons officially represent the institutional Church, not simply in menial tasks, but also in preaching and the distribution of Communion.⁴ In the Household of God, Deacons are special.

In 1 Peter 2:4-5, *Rocky* first identifies Christ as "a living stone," Peter then urges the Faithful to come to Jesus "like living stones ... built into a spiritual house." 1 Peter 2:6 goes on, referring to "laying a stone in Zion, a cornerstone." 1 Peter 2:7-8 mentions "the stone that the builders rejected ... the cornerstone, a stone ... a rock." 1 Peter 2:9 recognizes the need to avoid tripping on the stone that is Jesus, who is calling the Faithful "out of Darkness into his wonderful light."

Do the Faithful identify themselves as members of the Household of God? Do the Faithful have a sense of the power emanating from the Risen Christ, from the petition of Psalm 33, from the rock or stone of Saint Peter, and from the promises of Jesus, himself? In many different ways, the Faithful do have this realization.

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Scriptural references to the Lectionary follow. Since the main purpose of these Notes is annotating the scriptural references in the index at www.western-civilization.com, references pertinent, but not fitting the flow imposed above, are

⁴ Warren Carter, "Getting Martha out of the Kitchen: Luke 10:38-42 Again," the Catholic Biblical Quarterly, Vol. 58, No. 2 (April 1996) 269-271.

included below. I do not assume that the reader is following the readings cited either in the Lectionary or in the Bible. Like the footnotes, the citations are for reference purposes for anyone interested. The large, bold letters facilitate locating exactly what the Lectionary presents for these Notes.

Acts 6:1-7

Psalm 33:1-2, 4-5, 19-19

E:\Microsoft Office\Word\Letters\OLMC\Bible Study1 2004\Bible Study040808_Nineteenth Sunday in Ordinary Time_117C.doc

and

E:\Microsoft Office\Word\Letters\OLMC\Bible Study2 2003\Bible Study031019_Twenty-ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time_146B.doc

also treat this Psalm.

The Lectionary also uses Psalm 33 as follows:

<u>Readings</u>	<u>Page in Lectionary</u>	<u>Verses used</u>	<u>Responsorial Sunday</u>
25A	159	4-5, 18-19, 20, 22	(22) Lent 2
41B	319	4-5, 6-7, 12-13, 20-22	(5b) Easter Vigil
52A	403	1-2, 4-5, 18-19	(22) Easter 5
117C	763	1, 12, 18-19, 20-22	(12b) Ordinary 19
146B	908	4-5, 18-19, 20, 22	(22) Ordinary 29

This is the only Sunday using verse 2, “give thanks to the LORD ...” for including the Faithful in the Household of God.

1 Peter 2:4-9

John 14:6

John 14:1-12

Funerals uses this Gospel twice⁵ and Pastoral Care of the Sick⁶ once.

Pope John Paul II used John 14:6 in the Introduction to *Rosarium Virginiae Mariae*.⁷

ROSARIUM VIRGINIS MARIAE

Pope John Paul II

APOSTOLIC LETTER OF THE SUPREME PONTIFF TO THE BISHOPS, CLERGY AND FAITHFUL **ON THE MOST HOLY ROSARY**

INTRODUCTION

1. 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,

⁵ International Commission on English in the Liturgy: A Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences, The Roman Ritual: Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and published by Authority of Pope Paul IV: Order of Christian Funerals: Including Appendix 2: Cremation: Approved for use in the Dioceses of the United States of America by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and Confirmed by the Apostolic See (New Jersey: Catholic Book Publishing Co., 1998) 41, 245.

⁶ The Roman Ritual: Revised by Decree of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council and Published by Authority of Pope Paul VI: Pastoral Care of the Sick: Rites of Anointing and Viaticum: Approved for use in the dioceses of the United States of America by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops and Confirmed by the Apostolic See: Prepared by International Commission on English in the Liturgy: a Joint Commission of Catholic Bishops' Conferences (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Co. 1983) 178.

⁷ Pope John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginiae Mariae*, at <http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/JP2ROSAR.HTM>, 10/16/02, paragraph 1-8, pages 1-4 of 26.

before the world that Jesus Christ is Lord and Saviour, “the way, 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.”⁸

The Rosary, though clearly Marian in character, is at heart of Christocentric 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.⁹ It is an echo of the prayer of Mary, her perennial *Magnificat* for the work of the redemptive Incarnation which began in her virginal womb. With the Rosary, the Christian people *sits at the school of Mary* and is 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.

The Popes and the Rosary

2. Numerous predecessors of mine attributed great importance to this prayer. Worthy of special note in this regard is Pope Leo XIII who on 1 September 1883 promulgated the encyclical Supremi Apostolatus Officio,¹⁰ a document of great worth, the first of his many statements about this prayer, in which he proposed the Rosary as an effective spiritual weapon against the evils afflicting society. Among the more recent Popes who, from the time of the Second Vatican Council, have distinguished themselves in promoting the Rosary I would mention Blessed John XXIII¹¹ AND ABOVE ALL Pope Paul VI, who in his Apostolic Exhortation Marialis Cultus emphasized, in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, the Rosary’s evangelical character and its Christocentric inspiration. I myself have often encouraged the frequent recitation of the Rosary. From my youthful years this prayer has held an important place in my spiritual life. I was powerfully reminded of this during my recent visit to Poland, and in particular at the Shrine of Kalwaria. The Rosary has accompanied me in moments of joy and in moments of difficulty. To it I have entrusted any number of concerns; in it I have always found comfort. Twenty-four years ago, on 29

⁸ Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World *gaudium et spes*, 45.

⁹ Pope Paul VI, Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis Cultus* (2 February 1974), 42: AAS 66 (1974), 153.

¹⁰ Cf. *Acta Leonis XIII*, 3 (1884), 280-289.

¹¹ Particularly worthy of note is his Apostolic Epistle on the Rosary *Il religioso convegno* (29 September 1961): AAS 53 (1961), 641-647.

October 1978, scarcely two weeks after my election to the See of Peter, I frankly admitted: “The Rosary is my favorite prayer. A marvelous prayer! Marvelous in its simplicity and its depth. [...]. It can be said that the Rosary is, in some sense, a prayer-commentary on the final chapter of the Vatican II Constitution *Lumen Gentium*, a chapter which discusses the wondrous presence of the Mother of God in the mystery of Christ and the Church. Against the background of the words *Ave Maria* the principal events of the life of Jesus Christ pass before the eyes of the soul. They take shape in the complete series of the joyful, sorrowful and glorious mysteries, and they put us in living communion with Jesus through—we might say—the heart of his Mother. At the same time our heart can embrace in the decades of the Rosary all the events that make up the lives of individuals, families, nations, the Church, and all mankind. Our personal concerns and those of our neighbor, especially those who are closest to us, who are dearest to us. Thus the simple prayer of the Rosary marks the rhythm of human life.”¹²

With these words, dear brothers and sisters, I set *the first year of my Pontificate* within the daily rhythm of the Rosary. Today, *as I begin the twenty-fifth year of my service as the Successor of Peter*, I wish to do the same. How many graces have I received in these years from the Blessed Virgin through the Rosary: *Magnificat anima mea Dominum!* I wish to lift up my thanks to the Lord in the words of his Most Holy Mother, under whose protection I have placed my Petrine ministry: *Totus Tuus!*

October 2002—October 2003: The Year of the Rosary

3. Therefore, in continuity with my reflection in the Apostolic letter *Novo Millennio Ineunte* in which, after the experience of the Jubilee, I invited the people of God to “start afresh from Christ,”¹³ I have felt drawn to offer a reflection on the Rosary, as a kind of Marian complement to that Letter and an exhortation to contemplate the face of Christ in union with, and at the School of, his Most Holy Mother. To recite the Rosary is nothing other than to *contemplate with Mary the face of Christ*. As a way of highlighting this invitation, prompted by the forthcoming 120th anniversary of the aforementioned Encyclical of Leo XIII, I desire that during the course of this year the Rosary should be especially emphasized and promoted in the various Christian

¹² Angelus: *Insegnamenti di Giovanni Paolo II*, I (1978): 75-76.

¹³ AAS 93 (2001), 285.

communities. I therefore proclaim the year from October 2002 to October 2003 *The Year of the Rosary*.

I leave this pastoral proposal to the initiative of each ecclesial community. It is not my intention to encumber but rather to complete and consolidate pastoral programs of the Particular Churches. I am confident that the proposal will find a ready and generous reception. The Rosary, reclaimed in its full meaning, goes to the very heart of Christian life; it offers a familiar yet fruitful spiritual and educational opportunity for personal contemplation the formation of the People of God, and the new evangelization. I am pleased to reaffirm this also in the joyful remembrance of another anniversary: the fortieth anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council on October 11, 1962, the “great grace’ disposed by the Spirit of God for the Church in our time.¹⁴

Objections to the Rosary

4. The timeliness of this proposal is evident from a number of considerations. First, the urgent need to counter a certain crisis of the Rosary, which in the present historical and theological context can risk being wrongly devalued, and therefore no longer taught to the younger generation. There are some who think that the centrality of the Liturgy, rightly stressed by the Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, necessarily entails giving lesser importance to the Rosary. Yet, as Pope Paul VI made clear, not only does this prayer not conflict with the Liturgy, *it sustains it*, since it serves as an excellent introduction and a faithful echo of the Liturgy, enabling people to participate fully and interiorly in it and to reap its fruits in their daily lives.

Perhaps too, there are some who fear that the Rosary is somehow unecumenical because of its distinctly Marian character. Yet the Rosary clearly belongs to the kind of veneration of the Mother of God described by the Council: a devotion directed to the Christological centre of the Christian faith, in such a way that “when the Mother is honored, the Son...is duly known, loved and glorified.”¹⁵ If properly

¹⁴ During the years of preparation for the Council, Pope John XXIII did not fail to encourage the Christian community to recite the Rosary for the success of this ecclesial event: cf. Letter to the Cardinal Vicar (28 September 1960): AAS 52 (1960), 814-816.

¹⁵ Dogmatic Constitution on the Church *Lumen Gentium*, 66.

revitalized, the Rosary is an aid and certainly not a hindrance to ecumenism!

A path of contemplation

5. 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*.”¹⁶ 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.”¹⁷

The Rosary belongs among the finest and most praiseworthy traditions of Christian contemplation. Developed in the West, it is a typically meditative prayer, corresponding in some way to the “prayer of the heart” or “Jesus prayer” which took root in the soil of the Christian East.

Prayer for peace and for the family

6. A number of historical circumstances also make a revival of the Rosary quite timely. First of all, the need to implore from God *the gift of peace*. The Rosary has many times been proposed by my predecessors and myself as a prayer for peace. At the start of a millennium which began with the terrifying attacks of 11 September 2001, a millennium which witnesses every day innumerable parts of the world fresh scenes of bloodshed and violence, to rediscover the Rosary means to immerse oneself in contemplation of the mystery of Christ who “is our peace,” since he made “the two of us one, and broke down the dividing wall of hostility” (Eph 2:14). Consequently, one cannot recite the rosary without feeling caught up in a clear commitment to advancing peace, especially in the land of Jesus, still so sorely afflicted and so close to the heart of every Christian.

¹⁶ No. 32: AAS 93 (2001), 288.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 33: loc. Cit., 289.

A similar need for commitment and prayer arises in relation to another critical contemporary issue: *the family*, the primary cell of society, increasingly menaced by forces of disintegration on both the ideological and practical planes, so as to make us fear for the future of this fundamental and indispensable institution and, with it, for the future of society as a whole. The revival of the rosary in Christian families, within the context of a broader pastoral ministry to the family, will be an effective aid to countering the devastating effects of this crisis typical of our age.

“Behold, your Mother!” (Jn 19:27)

7. 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 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, on account 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;¹⁸ these shrines continue to be visited by great numbers of pilgrims seeking comfort and hope.

Following the witnesses

8. It would be impossible to name all the many Saints who discovered in the Rosary a genuine path to growth in holiness. We need but mention Saint Louis Marie Grignon de Montfort, the author of an excellent work on the Rosary,¹⁹ and, closer to ourselves, Padre Pio of Pietrelcina, whom I recently had the joy of canonizing. As a true apostle of the Rosary, Blessed Bartolo Longo had a special charism. His path to holiness rested on an inspiration heard in the depths of his heart: “Whoever spreads the Rosary is saved!”²⁰ As a result, he felt

¹⁸ It is well-known and bears repeating that private revelations are not the same as public revelation, which is binding on the whole Church. It is the task of the Magisterium to discern and recognize the authenticity and value of private revelations for the piety of the faithful.

¹⁹ *The Secret of the Rosary*.

²⁰ Blessed Bartolo Longo, *Storia del Santuario di Pompei*, Pompei, 1990, 59.

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called to build a Church dedicated to Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Pompei, against the background of the ruins of the ancient city, which scarcely heard the proclamation of Christ before being buried in 79 A.D. during an eruption of Mount Vesuvius, only to emerge centuries later from its ashes as a witness to the lights and shadows of classical civilization. By his whole life's work and especially by the practice of the "Fifteen Saturdays," Bartolo Longo promoted the Christocentric and contemplative heart of the Rosary, and received great encouragement and support from Leo XIII, the "Pope of the Rosary."

The letter continues through:

<u>Paragraphs</u>	<u>Readings where Paragraphs already Used</u>
9	25A
10-11	17B
12-13	8B to be inserted at the Third Sunday in Advent this fall.

For more on sources see the Appendix file.