



STAY—St. Thomas Aquinas Youth

The Rosary (the Gospel of the Hand, the school of Mary)

Outline of Events:

6:30pm—Dinner with Rosary Quiz (20 people quizzed, 5 questions)

7:10pm—Announce Rosary Quiz results

7:20pm— Small Groups

8:00pm— Scriptural Rosary in the PAC

All information is from the Apostolic Letter, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* by Pope John Paul II

Gospel for the Hand and the School of Mary (Highlight film of the Gospel)

The Rosary, though clearly Marian in character, is at heart a 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.⁽²⁾ 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.

Rosary is the School of Mary, who better knows Christ than His Mother, whom perfectly connected herself to the life of her son.

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.

13. Mary's contemplation is above all a remembering. We need to understand this word in the biblical sense of remembrance (zakar) as a making present of the works brought about by God in the history of salvation. The Bible is an account of saving events culminating in Christ himself. These events not only belong to "yesterday"; they are also part of the "today" of salvation. This making present comes about above all in the Liturgy: what God accomplished centuries ago did not only affect the direct witnesses of those events; it continues to affect people in every age with its gift of grace. To some extent this is also true of every other devout approach to those events: to "remember" them in a spirit of faith and love is to be open to the grace which Christ won for us by the mysteries of his life, death and resurrection.

The purpose of this night is NOT:

- The History of the Rosary
- It is also not focus on the mysteries of the Rosary

Instead please focus on Why we need this prayer and how to explain the importance of the Rosaries to Catholic and Non-Catholics who might have objections. In the Gospel, the disciples asked Jesus, "Teach us to pray" Jesus taught us the Our Father! The Church who continues the mission of Christ continues to teach us how to pray, and one of the ways she teaches us is through the Rosary. WHY? Our Lady gave us the Rosary, the Church has recommended it to us and the Saints have prayed it, it is over 800 years old and one of the most recognizable Catholic symbols. So in the lesson we talk about why the Rosary is such a great tool in gaining Salvation and destroying evil. Padre Pio called it a weapon against satan.

Lesson Content

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The Rosary—What do the beads mean?

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.

In the Eastern Church (Byzantine Empire) the Jesus Prayer (Jesus Christ, Son of God, Have Mercy on me, a sinner) was prayed over and over again sometimes using beads.

What do you think is the purpose of the Rosary beads?

What do you think the beads and structure of the Rosary could symbolize?

36. The traditional aid used for the recitation of the Rosary is the set of beads. At the most superficial level, the beads often become a simple counting mechanism to mark the succession of Hail Marys. Yet they can also take on a symbolism which can give added depth to contemplation.

Here the first thing to note is the way the beads converge upon the Crucifix, which both opens and closes the unfolding sequence of prayer. The life and prayer of believers is centred upon Christ. Everything begins from him, everything leads towards him, everything, through him, in the Holy Spirit, attains to the Father.

As a counting mechanism, marking the progress of the prayer, the beads evoke the unending path of contemplation and of Christian perfection. Blessed Bartolo Longo saw them also as a “chain” which links us to God. A chain, yes, but a sweet chain; for sweet indeed is the bond to God who is also our Father. A “filial” chain which puts us in tune with Mary, the “handmaid of the Lord” (Lk 1:38) and, most of all, with Christ himself, who, though he was in the form of God, made himself a “servant” out of love for us (Phil 2:7).

A fine way to expand the symbolism of the beads is to let them remind us of our many relationships, of the bond of communion and fraternity which unites us all in Christ.

The family that prays together stays together. The Holy Rosary, by age-old tradition, has shown itself particularly effective as a prayer which brings the family together. Individual family members, in turning their eyes towards Jesus, also regain the ability to look one another in the eye, to communicate, to show solidarity, to forgive one another and to see their covenant of love renewed in the Spirit of God.

SIDE NOTE:

Read John Chapter 21:1-14—

This is one of the stories of Jesus appearing to the apostles after the Resurrection. They catch no fish, but when Jesus says cast the net over the right side of the boat they catch so many that they can not pull the net in. Jesus had already said to them come and follow me and I will make you fishers of men.

In John 21:11 it says, “So Simon Peter went over and dragged the net ashore full on one hundred fifty-three large fish. Even though there were so many, the net was not torn.”

Why the number 153. Aristotle said there were 153 known species of fish in the world and this was still believed to be the number of known species at the time of Jesus. The number represent of the nations of the world, all of mankind, that know one will be left out.

How many Hail Mary beads are on the Rosary?

153. If you were to pray the full traditional rosary with the Joyful, Sorrowful and Glorious mysteries you would have prayed 15 decades or 150 hail marys plus the three hail marys for Faith, Hope and Charity.

Mary’s role in Salvation is to bring ALL people to her Son, Jesus and the Rosary is one of the key instruments in bringing people to Christ. With every bead we can pray for our salvation and the salvation of the world.

The Rosary—Ecumensim (How to explain the Rosary to non-Catholics)

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 honoured, the Son ... is duly known, loved and glorified”.⁽⁸⁾ If properly revitalized, the Rosary is an aid and certainly not a hindrance to ecumenism!

What would turn a Protestant (Non-Catholic) off to the Rosary?

- The Rosary is not found in scripture
- The Rosary is just about Mary and has a bunch of Hail Mary’s in it
- The Rosary is just a repetition of prayers
- The Rosary is too structured

How can the Rosary be explained and prayed in order to better show the Christ-centered nature of the Rosary to a Non-Catholic?

Not found in scripture???

Of the 20 mysteries of the Rosary, 18 are completely centered on the Gospel (Christ’s Life) and can be found directly in scripture, 2 are centered on the life of Our Lady and can be found implied in scripture (Assumption and Crowning of Mary in Heaven)

Just a bunch of Hail Mary’s???

33. This is the most substantial element in the Rosary and also the one which makes it a Marian prayer par excellence. Yet when the Hail Mary is properly understood, we come to see clearly that its Marian character is not opposed to its Christological character, but that it actually emphasizes and increases it. The first part of the Hail Mary, drawn from the words spoken to Mary by the Angel Gabriel and by Saint Elizabeth, is a contemplation in adoration of the mystery accomplished in the Virgin of Nazareth. These words express, so to speak, the wonder of heaven and earth; they could be said to give us a glimpse of God’s own wonderment as he contemplates his “masterpiece” – the Incarnation of the Son in the womb of the Virgin Mary. If we recall how, in the Book of Genesis, God “saw all that he had made” (Gen 1:31), we can find here an echo of that “pathos with which God, at the dawn of creation, looked upon the work of his hands”.⁽³⁶⁾ The repetition of the Hail Mary in the Rosary gives us a share in God’s own wonder and pleasure: in jubilant amazement we acknowledge the greatest miracle of history. Mary’s prophecy here finds its fulfilment: “Henceforth all generations will call me blessed” (Lk 1:48).

The centre of gravity in the Hail Mary, the hinge as it were which joins its two parts, is the name of Jesus. Sometimes, in hurried recitation, this centre of gravity can be overlooked, and with it the connection to the mystery of Christ being contemplated. Yet it is precisely the emphasis given to the name of Jesus and to his mystery that is the sign of a meaningful and fruitful recitation of the Rosary. Pope Paul VI drew attention, in his Apostolic Exhortation *Marialis Cultus*, to the custom in certain regions of highlighting the name of Christ by the addition of a clause referring to the mystery being contemplated.⁽³⁷⁾ This is a praiseworthy custom, especially during public recitation. It gives forceful expression to our faith in Christ, directed to the different moments of the Redeemer’s life. It is at once a profession of faith and an aid in concentrating our meditation, since it facilitates the process of assimilation to the mystery of Christ inherent in the repetition of the Hail Mary. When we repeat the name of Jesus – the only name given to us by which we may hope for salvation (cf. Acts 4:12) – in close association with the name of his Blessed Mother, almost as if it were done at her suggestion, we set out on a path of assimilation meant to help us enter more deeply into the life of Christ.

From Mary’s uniquely privileged relationship with Christ, which makes her the Mother of God, *Theotókos*, derives the forcefulness of the appeal we make to her in the second half of the prayer, as we entrust to her maternal intercession our lives and the hour of our death.

The Rosary—Ecumensim (How to explain the Rosary to non-Catholics)

Repetition of Prayers (If only repetition the Rosary is a Body without the Soul)

The Rosary, precisely because it starts with Mary's own experience, is an exquisitely contemplative prayer. Without this contemplative dimension, it would lose its meaning, as Pope Paul VI clearly pointed out: "Without contemplation, the Rosary is a body without a soul, and its recitation runs the risk of becoming a mechanical repetition of formulas, in violation of the admonition of Christ: 'In praying do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think they will be heard for their many words' (Mt 6:7). By its nature the recitation of the Rosary calls for a quiet rhythm and a lingering pace, helping the individual to meditate on the mysteries of the Lord's life as seen through the eyes of her who was closest to the Lord. In this way the unfathomable riches of these mysteries are disclosed".⁽¹⁴⁾ It is worth pausing to consider this profound insight of Paul VI, in order to bring out certain aspects of the Rosary which show that it is really a form of Christocentric contemplation.

The Rosary is to structured

In the East, the most characteristic prayer of Christological meditation, centered on the words "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner"⁽³⁴⁾ is traditionally linked to the rhythm of breathing; while this practice favors perseverance in the prayer, it also in some way embodies the desire for Christ to become the breath, the soul and the "all" of one's life.

You could say, I guess, that breathing is to structured, or that the drum beat in a rock n roll band is to structured. To have freedom you have to have structure, a foundation a rule.

The Rosary is one of the traditional paths of Christian prayer directed to the contemplation of Christ's face. Pope Paul VI described it in these words: "As a Gospel prayer, centred on the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation, the Rosary is a prayer with a clearly Christological orientation. Its most characteristic element, in fact, the litany-like succession of *Hail Marys*, becomes in itself an unceasing praise of Christ, who is the ultimate object both of the Angel's announcement and of the greeting of the Mother of John the Baptist: 'Blessed is the fruit of your womb' (Lk 1:42). We would go further and say that the succession of *Hail Marys* 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 to us now as the Son of God, now as the Son of the Virgin".⁽²⁸⁾

Where is structure found in a rock band, where is freedom found?

Where is structure found in the Rosary, where is freedom found in the Rosary?

Does anyone know what a loom is? What is a warp that Pope John Paul II is talking about?

Weaving is done by intersecting the longitudinal threads, the **warp**, i.e. "that which is thrown across", with the transverse threads, the **woof** or **weft**, i.e. "that which is woven".

The warp are the hail marys the foundation of the rosary, The weft what is woven is our meditation on the mysteries.

What is the basic elements of a meal? What are the highlights of the meal?

If you are talking about Italian food, you have the pasta which is the basic element and then the sauce, the meat the vegetables or whatever. The pasta would be the hail marys the sauce, etc. are the mysteries and our contemplation of them. Imagine going to a Italian restaurant and only ordering the pasta, with nothing on it. Or even worst, what would happen if a Italian restaurant had only one thing on the menu, a bowl of plain pasta. That restaurant would be out of business. Catholics that pray the Rosary and just rattle the Hail Marys off with no meditation on the mysteries or meaning of the Hail Marys will also go out of business (at least in the prayer life).

The Rosary—Why the Rosary (Prayer, Silence, Peace)

Ask the group why we even have the Rosary, what can it do for us?

Why has the Rosary been with us for almost 800 years if it has no use?

Why the Rosary? We need to be trained in Holiness / Schools of Prayer

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”.⁽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⁾

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Why the Rosary? We need silent prayer to listen to the Father's voice.

18. The only way to approach the contemplation of Christ's face is by listening in the Spirit to the Father's voice, since “no one knows the Son except the Father” (Mt 11:27). In the region of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus responded to Peter's confession of faith by indicating the source of that clear intuition of his identity: “Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven” (Mt 16:17). 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”.⁽²⁷⁾

Why the Rosary? For Peace

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.

The Rosary—Why the Rosary (Reveals the mystery of Man, for the Family)

Why the Rosary? The Rosary reveals the mystery of Man and we need to know ourselves.

25. In my testimony of 1978 mentioned above, where I described the Rosary as my favourite prayer, I used an idea to which I would like to return. I said then that “the simple prayer of the Rosary marks the rhythm of human life”.⁽³¹⁾

In the light of what has been said so far on the mysteries of Christ, it is not difficult to go deeper into this anthropological significance of the Rosary, which is far deeper than may appear at first sight. Anyone who contemplates Christ through the various stages of his life cannot fail to perceive in him the truth about man. This is the great affirmation of the Second Vatican Council which I have so often discussed in my own teaching since the Encyclical Letter [Redemptor Hominis](#): “it is only in the mystery of the Word made flesh that the mystery of man is seen in its true light”.⁽³²⁾ The Rosary helps to open up the way to this light. Following in the path of Christ, in whom man's path is “recapitulated”,⁽³³⁾ revealed and redeemed, believers come face to face with the image of the true man. 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. It could be said that each mystery of the Rosary, carefully meditated, sheds light on the mystery of man.

Why the Rosary? The family that prays together stays together!

Many of the problems facing contemporary families, especially in economically developed societies, result from their increasing difficulty in communicating. Families seldom manage to come together, and the rare occasions when they do are often taken up with watching television. To return to the recitation of the family Rosary means filling daily life with very different images, images of the mystery of salvation: the image of the Redeemer, the image of his most Blessed Mother. The family that recites the Rosary together reproduces something of the atmosphere of the household of Nazareth: its members place Jesus at the centre, they share his joys and sorrows, they place their needs and their plans in his hands, they draw from him the hope and the strength to go on.

... and children

42. It is also beautiful and fruitful to entrust to this prayer the growth and development of children. Does the Rosary not follow the life of Christ, from his conception to his death, and then to his Resurrection and his glory? Parents are finding it ever more difficult to follow the lives of their children as they grow to maturity. In a society of advanced technology, of mass communications and globalization, everything has become hurried, and the cultural distance between generations is growing ever greater. The most diverse messages and the most unpredictable experiences rapidly make their way into the lives of children and adolescents, and parents can become quite anxious about the dangers their children face. At times parents suffer acute disappointment at the failure of their children to resist the seductions of the drug culture, the lure of an unbridled hedonism, the temptation to violence, and the manifold expressions of meaninglessness and despair.

To pray the Rosary for children, and even more, with children, training them from their earliest years to experience this daily “pause for prayer” with the family, is admittedly not the solution to every problem, but it is a spiritual aid which should not be underestimated. It could be objected that the Rosary seems hardly suited to the taste of children and young people of today. But perhaps the objection is directed to an impoverished method of praying it. Furthermore, without prejudice to the Rosary's basic structure, there is nothing to stop children and young people from praying it – either within the family or in groups – with appropriate symbolic and practical aids to understanding and appreciation. Why not try it? With God's help, a pastoral approach to youth which is positive, impassioned and creative – as shown by the World Youth Days! – is capable of achieving quite remarkable results. If the Rosary is well presented, I am sure that young people will once more surprise adults by the way they make this prayer their own and recite it with the enthusiasm typical of their age group.

Prayer: Supplication to the Queen of the Holy Rosary:

“O Blessed Rosary of Mary, sweet chain which unites us to God, bond of love which unites us to the angels, tower of salvation against the assaults of Hell, safe port in our universal shipwreck, we will never abandon you. You will be our comfort in the hour of death: yours our final kiss as life ebbs away. And the last word from our lips will be your sweet name, O Queen of the Rosary of Pompei, O dearest Mother, O Refuge of Sinners, O Sovereign Consoler of the Afflicted. May you be everywhere blessed, today and always, on earth and in heaven”.