



The Holy See

RECITATION OF THE HOLY ROSARY **ADDRESS OF HIS HOLINESS BENEDICT XVI** Basilica of Saint Mary Major

Saturday, 3 May 2008 Dear Brothers and Sisters, At the conclusion of this moment of Marian prayer, I would like to address my cordial greeting to all of you and thank you for your participation. In particular I greet Cardinal Bernard Francis Law, Archpriest of this stupendous Basilica of St Mary Major. In Rome this is the Marian temple par excellence, in which the people of the City venerate the icon of Mary *Salus Populi Romani* with great affection. I gladly welcomed the invitation addressed to me to lead the Holy Rosary on the First Saturday of the month of May, according to the beautiful tradition that I have had since my childhood. In fact, in my generation's experience, the evenings of May evoke sweet memories linked to the vespertine gatherings to honour the Blessed Mother. Indeed, how is it possible to forget praying the Rosary in the parish or rather in the courtyards of the houses and in the country lanes? Today, together we confirm that the Holy Rosary is not a pious practice banished to the past, like prayers of other times thought of with nostalgia. Instead, the Rosary is experiencing a new Springtime. Without a doubt, this is one of the most eloquent signs of love that the young generation nourish for Jesus and his Mother, Mary. In the current world, so dispersive, this prayer helps to put Christ at the centre, as the Virgin did, who meditated within all that was said about her Son, and also what he did and said. When reciting the Rosary, the important and meaningful moments of salvation history are relived. The various steps of Christ's mission are traced. With Mary the heart is oriented toward the mystery of Jesus. Christ is put at the centre of our life, of our time, of our city, through the contemplation and meditation of his holy mysteries of joy, light, sorrow and glory. May Mary help us to welcome within ourselves the grace emanating from these mysteries, so that through us we can "water" society, beginning with our daily relationships, and purifying them from so many negative forces, thus opening them to the newness of God. The Rosary, when it is prayed in an authentic way, not mechanical and superficial but profoundly, it brings, in fact, peace and reconciliation. It contains within itself the healing power of the Most Holy Name of Jesus, invoked with faith and love at the centre of each "Hail Mary". Dear brothers and sisters, let us thank God who has allowed us to live such a beautiful hour this evening, and in the following evenings of this Marian month, even if we will be far away, each in their own family and community, may we, just the same, feel close and united in prayer. Especially in these days that prepare us for the Solemnity of Pentecost, let us remain united with Mary, invoking for the Church a renewed effusion of the Holy Spirit. As at the origins, Mary Most Holy helps the faithful of every Christian community to form one heart and soul.

I entrust to you the most urgent intentions of my ministry, the needs of the Church, the grave problems of humanity: peace in the world, unity among Christians, dialogue between all cultures. And thinking of Rome and Italy, I invite you to pray for the pastoral goals of the Diocese, and for the united development of this beloved Country. To the new Mayor of Rome, Honourable Gianni Alemanno, who I see present here, I address the wish of a fruitful service for the good of the city's entire community. To all of you gathered here and to those who are linked to us by radio and television, in particular the sick and the infirm, I gladly impart the Apostolic Blessing.

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