



# The Holy See

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ROSARY WITH THE EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS OF ROME

***ADDRESS OF JOHN PAUL II***

*Saturday, 2 March 2002*

*Dear Young University Students,*

1. I greet you with great joy at the end of this period of reflection and Marian prayer on the first Saturday of March. As I thank you who have come in large numbers to the Paul VI Hall, I think of those who are hooked-up with us in several European cities, thanks to the radio and television. I greet in particular the university students of Athens, Moscow, Strasbourg, Budapest, Valencia and Vienna. I thank very much the choirs and the orchestra for their contribution, and Vatican Radio and the Television Centre that cooperated in bringing about this important and inspiring event.
2. Dear young university students of Athens and Strasbourg who have prayed the rosary with us, I greet you warmly. Ask Mary to help you acquire deep understanding of the mystery of her Son, so that he may be your joy and strength. Remember that by following his example you will overcome all difficulties and find true happiness! I look forward to seeing you in Toronto.
3. I warmly greet you, dear students of the universities of Budapest and Vienna. This moment of common prayer gives us the joyful experience that our faith crosses boundaries and unites peoples. Let us be guided on the journey of a true Christian life by Mary, Mother of Jesus and Mother of the Church! In this way we will be ready witnesses for God, the Father of all humanity. I am glad that I will be able to meet many of you on the occasion of the World Youth Day in Toronto.
4. I cordially greet the university students gathered in Immaculate Conception Cathedral, Moscow. Dear friends, I thank you for taking part in this moment of prayer in the name of the Virgin Mary. Let us remain united in faith and in the service of the Gospel! May the Lord bless you!

5. In greeting you, dear university students in Valencia, I think of all the teachers and students of the famous universities of Spain, especially those who day by day make their Christian identity concrete day after day in collaboration with the university delegates and chaplains make their Christian identity concrete. May our prayer with the Mother of the Lord this afternoon help you continue your task of evangelization and make shine through your life the Easter life that is Christ. I wait for you in Toronto!

6. The bond of common faith that unites young people from various European countries and different cultural traditions is a comforting reason for hope. So it has always been in the history of the evangelization of the "old" continent: *the Gospel and the cultures have walked side by side*. This is today the undertaking of the Church. Dear young people, I ask you at your universities to promote the dialogue between faith and culture, so that the Gospel leaven may stimulate and sustain the spiritual and moral quality of the research and studies. Best wishes, my very best wishes and courage!

The common starting point for this stimulating mission is *Baptism*, from which it is always necessary to set out afresh since it is the source of Christian life. Lent, which we are living, is the acceptable liturgical season to gain a renewed consciousness of our baptismal identity. Through Baptism we have been united with the Death and Resurrection of Christ; through Baptism, the Holy Spirit has made us witnesses of God's love, architects of communion, brotherhood and peace. In turn, the new life that flows from the baptismal fount, constantly regenerates human mentalities and choices, interpersonal and social relations, and human cultures.

7. *Only new men and women can renew history*. I expect to see many of you at the next World meeting in Toronto, and it will help you to understand even more this pressing apostolic challenge: to be, at the beginning of the third millennium "the salt of the earth and the light of the world" (Mt 5,13). I also make an appointment with the young people of Rome *in St Peter's Square on Thursday, 21 March*, for the traditional celebration and prayers to prepare for World Youth Day.

Dear young people, this evening the Blessed Virgin has gathered us from all the corners of Europe.

May our eyes converge on the image of *Our Lady of Loreto*, the Virgin of silence and listening, Mother of the Son of God made man. Let us always look to her, asking her for that same readiness for divine grace. Thus in each one of you the Almighty will also work great things.

With this wish I embrace you all, near and far - but for me, all of you are close! - as I warmly bless you and your families, your universities and young people all over the world.

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