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The Rosary

A practical means to contemplate Christ's life

By Lee Strong, Senior staff writer

Every morning, students in June Brown's second-grade class at Geneva's St. Francis/St. Stephen's School encircle a statue of Mary to take part in a centuries-old tradition one hears little mention of these days.

They recite the rosary.

"I've been doing this for 15 years," noted Brown, who prior to teaching at St. Francis/St. Stephen's School, taught at the former St. Francis DeSales School in Geneva, and at St. Patrick's School in Seneca Falls.

"Most of them take to it right away," Brown said of the children, although she acknowledged a periodic need to teach students the prayers. Indeed, after school vacations, she said, students often approach her to report, "Miss Brown, I said the rosary."

In addition to teaching the prayers, she discusses the 15 mysteries of the rosary with the children (see related story), and reads them relevant Scripture passages. Brown has the children make lists of intentions for which to pray, and of blessings for which to thank God, "So the kids know you don't have to go to God just to ask for things."

Parents also have contacted Brown. "I've had requests from parents who are non-Catholics who want information on the rosary. I've had Catholic parents ask about it."

And as for the students, "Once

we get it established, I think it gets to be soothing for them. I think it's a soothing prayer."

Unfortunately, the rosary also is a form of prayer that has gotten a sometimes bad — and unfair — rap since Vatican II, noted Father J. Patrick Gaffney, SMM, superior of the Montfort Missionaries in Litchfield, Conn., and author of a series of articles compiled into *The Rosary: A Gospel Prayer*.

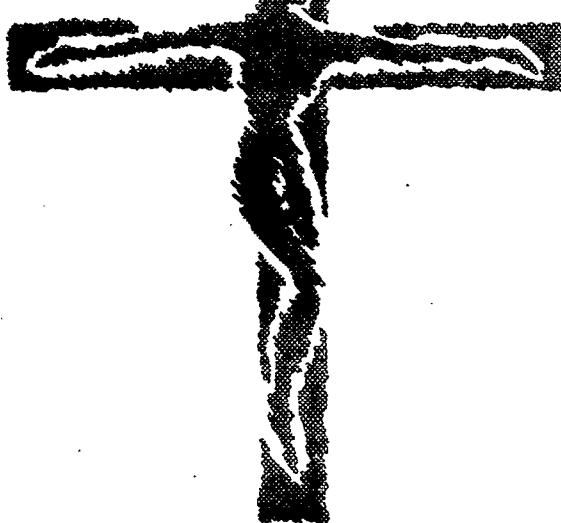
"Somebody must have misunderstood the rosary," Father Gaffney speculated. "After Vatican II, people wanted to do more contemplative prayer. There's nothing more contemplative than the rosary."

Nor more convenient, noted Monsignor Joseph Cirrincione, who in 1950 started "The Family Rosary for Peace," a program still broadcast by radio and cable television stations in Rochester, Hornell, Corning, Horseheads, Seneca Falls, Auburn, Buffalo, Niagara Fall, Syracuse and Binghamton.

"The rosary is something that everybody can say," Monsignor Cirrincione said. "You don't have to be a theologian, but you do go over the whole life of the Lord — from birth to resurrection. It has the potential to keep the faith alive."

The rosary sustains faith by reflecting on the Lord's life through the mysteries contemplated while saying the prayers. These mysteries begin with the Annunciation of Jesus's birth to Mary, go through events in the life and death of Jesus, and conclude

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