

# **Pope initiates a spiritual pilgrimage to the Shrine of Pompei**

“On October 7,” said John Paul II, “I count on going, please God, to the Shrine of Pompei. It will be a particularly significant moment in the Year of the Rosary, inaugurated last 16 October with the signing in St Peter's Square of my Apostolic Letter Rosarium Virginis Mariae.”

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“Today I would like to begin a pilgrimage in spirit to that famous Marian shrine, the centre of the spirituality of the Rosary, contemplating with Mary the face of Christ in his joyful, ‘luminous’, sorrowful and glorious mysteries. The liturgical feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin that occurs tomorrow, 8 September, is an especially favourable one for setting out on this spiritual itinerary,” said the Pope.

Regarding the birth of the Virgin Mary, he added: “Her birth, in fact, is a sort of ‘prologue’ to the Incarnation: Mary, like the dawn, ushers in the sun of the ‘new day’, foretelling the joy of the Redeemer.”

“May the Virgin Mary help the Christian people to rediscover the Holy Rosary as a simple yet very profound prayer,” said the Pope. “Properly recited, it is an

introduction into the living experience of the divine mystery and procures for hearts, families and the whole community that peace which we so greatly need.”

The sanctuary of the Virgin of the Rosary of Pompeii, located near Naples, is one of the most-visited sites of Marian devotion in Italy.

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