



Aid to the
Church in Need

ACN INTERNATIONAL

One million children praying the Rosary 2020

Rome, 01. August, 2020

Dear Friends,

The year 2020 – and perhaps even the whole decade – will go down in history as the „time of the coronavirus“. Never before in history has there been such a worldwide healthcare and existential crisis. A crisis in which the entire world has been and continues to be exposed to an invisible virus that has brought death to hundreds of thousands of people and devastating, and as yet unforeseeable, economic and social consequences. Our world is no longer the same world, and what was taken for granted until now will no longer be so. With brutal clarity, the virus has brought home to us our vulnerability, frailty and mortality. Despite all the protective measures introduced and the social distancing regulations, a general sense of fear, insecurity and helplessness has spread everywhere. Although the pandemic has prompted a spirit of great solidarity, selfless service and remarkable social resilience among many, the virus has nonetheless tended to distance and isolate us from one another. We are being led to regard our neighbours, not as the image of God, but as a danger, as potential virus carriers. The longer this healthcare crisis and its effects continue – and no doubt there will be no lack of other catastrophes and wars in the future – the more the true face of our humanity will show. Humanity without God is inevitably condemned to defeat. It would be fatal to our future to think that God has nothing to say about the virus, or about our sickness and our need, and can ultimately do nothing about it.

For God has sent His own Son into the world, to take upon His shoulders all our sufferings and our sicknesses (cf. Matthew 8:17). He has taken upon Himself the worst virus of all, namely sin, though without sin Himself. Hence He himself has become the ultimate „antidote“ to all the ills and evils of this world. He gives us the gift of a universal „medicine“ that can heal us from the sin that afflicts our world when it turns away from God. Jesus gives us courage and hope to believe that God will heal us all, even if we still have to bear our crosses. And the harder the times become, the more powerful His grace. He is leading us





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during these times along the path of salvation, especially through His saints, and is urging us to pray constantly and to trust in Him in all circumstances. In our times especially, which are seen by many holy persons as apocalyptic times, He has sent us His Mother to help us in our greatest need. Saint John Paul II, the centenary of whose birth we celebrated earlier this year, spoke the following words to the assembled American bishops in 1972, while still Cardinal Karol Wojtyła:

„We are currently facing the greatest confrontation that mankind has ever experienced in its history. We are standing before the final battle between the Church and the anti-church, the Gospel and the anti-gospel, between Christ and the Antichrist.“

If we are to confront this battle with courage, we need the Mother of God as never before. It is through her Immaculate Heart that God will lead us to victory over Satan. During the past 200 years the Mother of God has appeared in so many places and on every continent, so that we can truly call the current age the „Marian Era“. Contrary to the predictions of the scientists, Our Lady is announcing to us in her messages a future filled with joy and peace – though at the same time she does not hide the fact that humanity is in need of purification and that there are painful times ahead. Above all she is reminding us of the powerful remedies every one of us already has at hand – living in the grace of god, holy confession, love for the Holy Eucharist, reading the Scriptures, consecration to her Immaculate maternal Heart, faithfully praying the Rosary and wearing a blessed medal.

That is why we are inviting you once again this year to take part in our worldwide prayer initiative „A Million Children Praying the Rosary“, **on 18 October – or alternatively if you wish to pray the Rosary with the children in your school or kindergarten, on Monday 19 October** (since 18 October falls on a Sunday this year). May this joint worldwide Rosary prayer initiative fill us all with new courage and confidence in God's loving protection, which He wishes to bestow on us through His Holy Mother.

In our letter to the children we also recall the beginning of the Marian Era, in 1830, in the Rue du Bac in Paris. It was here that Our Lady first appeared to Saint Catherine Labouré as the Immaculate One, a full 28 years before the promulgation of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception. She spoke to her of the painful events that were about to befall France and the whole





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world: „The whole world will be thrown into confusion by evils of every kind... Men will believe that all is lost... The Cross will be despised, men will throw it to the ground.“ But at the same time Our Lady held the globe of the world, representing every individual human being, securely in her hands and promised Sister Catherine her protection and help, provided people trusted in God, prayed faithfully and lived in love. And she also showed her an image, which she requested be struck as a medal, together with a short prayer, to be repeated often. The image depicts Our Lady, treading the serpent underfoot and with outstretched arms from which are issued graces for the whole world. She is our Mother, and Mediatrix of all Graces, who has crushed the serpent's head and will defeat Satan, the evil one. And so, in order to be victorious in the current worldwide spiritual battle, we must consecrate ourselves totally to her and seek refuge beneath her mantle through the prayer of the Rosary.

We thank you for bringing these children under the protective mantle of the Mother of God. When we teach them to come to know Mary as their own Mother and to pray the Rosary, we are giving them the most important protection of all and equipping them with the best possible „protective armour“ for their future path in life.

Mauro Card. Piacenza
President

Fr. Martin M. Barta
Ecclesiastical Assistant

