MIRROR

Aid to the Church in Need

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October 2013, Fatima in Rome: We fly to Thy Protection...

"In the Rosary we turn to the Virgin Mary so that she may guide us to an ever closer union with her Son Jesus to bring us into conformity with Him, to have His sentiments and to behave like Him."

Pope Francis,
Message to young Lithuanians, June 2013

Dear Friends,

"Pray the Rosary daily!" This was the last request of Our Lady on 13 May 1917 in Fatima, where she revealed herself as Queen of the Holy Rosary. Indeed, there is scarcely any Church-recognised apparition of the Mother of God in which she does not urge us to pray the Rosary. So why is this prayer so important?



Let us be assured by the power of the Rosary!

More than we can possibly imagine, we are all in the midst of a mighty spiritual battle, of which Saint Paul says: "For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world-rulers of this darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places." (Eph 6:12). We all sense this, whether in everyday life or in the realm of global politics. The one who emerges victorious in this spiritual battle will be Mary, for God has chosen her to crush the serpent's head. We will not come through this battle on our own. Only as children of Mary, held by her hand and held in her heart, will we be able to emerge from it victorious. And the "weapon" she has placed in our hands for this is precisely the Rosary. The month of October should be an impetus for us to once more take up the Rosary into our hands and to pray it with still greater faith, greater zeal and greater fidelity in our families. And so we are inviting you once again this year to take part in the great prayer initiative: "One million children praying the Rosary", which takes place every year on 18 October. At 9 o'clock in the morning, wherever they happen to be – whether in the kindergartens, schools, hospitals or at home – children on every continent will gather together spiritually to pray the Rosary for peace in the world. How much these pure and simple hearts can gain from God, if we only teach them to pray with faith and trust! Let us strive to be a good example to them and show them, from their earliest years the right means to use to arrive at a peaceful and happy future. In his apostolic letter on the Holy Rosary, Pope Saint John Paul II assures us: "The Rosary is by its nature a prayer for peace, since it consists in the contemplation of Christ, the Prince of Peace, the one who is 'our peace'. The Rosary is also a prayer for peace because of the fruits of charity which it produces. The Rosary allows us to hope that, even today, the difficult 'battle' for peace can be won."

Dear Friends, let us have no doubt as to the power of the Rosary. In this "school of Mary" we learn to direct our gaze towards Jesus. Thus we are also made capable of gazing upon one another, face to face, each time anew, of speaking to one another and being there for one another in time of need.

My grateful blessing upon you all

P. Martin M. Barta

Fr Martin M. Barta
Ecclesiastical Assistant

Vital support for the Church



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Mass intentions are of vital importance. This fact was so self-evident to Father Werenfried that in his last will and testament he stated: "Any financial means remaining to me I hereby bequeath to our section for Mass intentions."

Saint Paul says ...

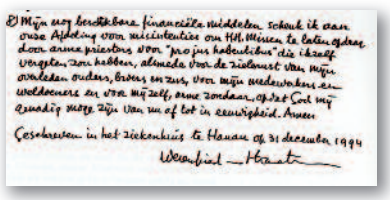
"Do you not know ... that those who serve at the altar share in the sacrificial offerings?" (1 Cor 9:13). He says this not only to the Corinthians, but also to us. Your Mass offerings are a part of this. Of course we cannot "buy" the spiritual graces of the Mass. But the offering made to the priest unites the giver, by virtue of his intention, more intimately with the Holy Sacrifice. Every 26 seconds, somewhere in the world, Mass is offered for the intentions of our benefactors, and one priest in every nine is supported in his priestly ministry. Last year you gave 1.2 million Mass intentions. Yet the need is still great, above all for priests in the Islamic countries. We could even distribute 2 million intentions, if we had them...

As a priest himself, the founder of ACN was always conscious of the words of his friend, Pope Saint John Paul II, who wrote: "The Church draws her life from the Eucharist", and likewise of the words of Vatican II which describe the Eucharist as the "source and summit of the Christian life" (Lumen Gentium, 11). So he understood that Mass intentions were a vital aid, that has unfathomable depth. For the Church is both divine and human, and her priests must live, both spiritually and physically. Often Mass offerings are their sole material support. Without this support, those who raise up the Lord with their hands would have no bread, no roof, no clothing. Without it some might be tempted to seek paid work and would then have less time for ministering to souls.



The Christ the King care home in Lebanon: elderly priests celebrate Mass for your intentions.

But it is not only the priests who benefit from these offerings. As Bishop Wilfredo of the diocese of Guantánamo-Baracoa in **Cuba** informs us, his 15 priests also use the Mass intentions you give them to help the poor, with food for the elderly and catechesis for children – and even to buy medicines for his frail predecessor, Bishop Carlos Baladron Valdes. In **Bangladesh**, one of the poorest countries in the world, the Catholic faithful cannot support their priests, for they themselves have nothing. Some are unemployed, others mere day labourers. And legal barriers in this Islamic country prevent them getting help from neighbouring India. Your Mass intentions are helping 24 priests in the diocese of Khulna to care for and provide instruction to the poor, and another 18 in the diocese of Sylhet to do the same. In **Ukraine**, where during the Soviet era the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was almost liquidated, you are, for example, helping priests staffing the seminary in Kiev provide pastoral and academic training to 53 seminarians.



Father Werenfried's last will: he always thought of other priests.

Without the consecrated hands of the priest, there can be no Eucharist. Yet thousands of priests live close to the bread line – and often in great solitude as well. The chance to meet together with other priests offers an oasis of spiritual and fraternal renewal. This again is where your Mass intentions come in. In Patagonia, in remotest **Argentina**, over 100 priests are meeting together this year, having saved up the travel costs from these Mass offerings. Now they can meet to discuss the situation in their parishes, in light of the apostolic letter *Evangelii Gaudium*, and also celebrate Holy Mass together. Father Werenfried would have been delighted. ●

The Holy Rosary

weapon of love and peace

On October 18 this year, in Europe, North and South America, Australia, Asia and Africa, millions of children's hands will join together to pray the Rosary for world peace. So they hope to change the world – with Our Lady's help.

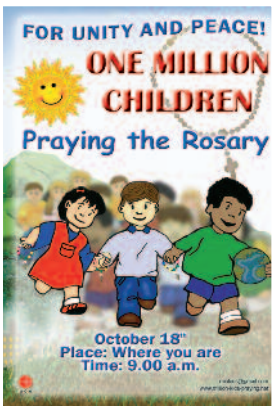


Also taking part: schoolchildren in India reading their "instructions".

It began 11 years ago in **Venezuela**, with a small group of children. Since then the idea has spread across the globe. If millions of children join together to ask her, then surely the Mother of Our Lord cannot refuse their plea for unity and peace among mankind! Back then Venezuela was a prosperous country – compared to now. So Venezuela desperately needs more prayers – as do so many places in the world. In many countries, such as Argentina, the website for this initiative is one of the most frequently visited in the country. Sandra Liliana tells us frankly: "It was the first time I have ever prayed the Rosary from beginning to end with my daughters. It was a wonderful experience! We prayed fervently for peace." In Hannover, in Germany a parish priest speaks words of gratitude for the initiative of "rediscovering the Rosary as a means of the new evangelisation". In Miami, USA, teacher Yamileth Rivera has been inspired by the idea and is asking for rosaries for her pupils. She wants to share this initiative "with all my friends and acquaintances who have children. We want to be a part of it!"



Part of a rather special worldwide community: young people praying the Rosary in Asuncion, Paraguay.



To join this campaign and to download this poster please go to www.million-kids-praying.net

In thousands of places around the world they are creating special "rosaries" in readiness for the day of prayer. In Paraguay, they are using 50 oranges and five grapefruits; others are using the children themselves – with five groups of 10 children wearing coloured T-shirts: red, white, blue, green and yellow. So they are explaining and living the Rosary in a very practical manner – for many parents, and especially grandmothers, it is a rare opportunity to share this treasure with the children. For many great saints this was the prayer of all prayers, after Holy Mass. Saint Francis of Sales, for example, says, "The Rosary is the best of all prayers", and Pope Saint Pius IX famously declared, "Give me an army saying the Rosary, and I will conquer the world." It is the weapon of love, a weapon that brings peace. But mobilising, instructing and organising this "army" demands not only time and effort, but also money. We have promised **€38,600** for this year's campaign.

The frontiers of the Gospel


© Aid to the Church in Need/Magdalena Wolnik

Loving the Gospel:
Father Wilhelmus in Indonesia,
a child of the missions.

"You shall be my witnesses… to the end of the earth." So says Jesus in the Acts 1:8. And in St Mark he says: "Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation." (16:15).

Reaching the end of the earth today is not so much a question of distance, as of resources. In the diocese of Ruteng, in **Indonesia**, 100 years after the first baptisms, 90% of the population are Catholic. But the influence of Muslims and of the sects, and the advance of a consumer society, is making it necessary to expand and deepen the work of evangelisation. A seminar for 600 people – priests, religious, catechists and ordinary lay folk – is being organised to study the first apostolic letter of Pope Francis (*Evangelii Gaudium*) and will be an opportunity to take stock and explore new ways of evangelisation. The cost will be **€16,500**, and it will give a new impetus to the mission of Christian witness. In Sanggau, in Indonesian Borneo, the Catholics are hoping for something similar from the renovation of their "Wisma Tabor" retreat house and the construction of a dignified chapel. Each year somewhere between 12,000 and 15,000 catechists, women's groups, parish leaders, pastoral ministry teams, young people, altar servers and others follow the courses and retreats held here. Thanks to this high usage, they are able to cover the running costs of the centre. But now the floor and roof are becoming rotten and unsafe. Mosquitoes and beetles are invading, and the rain is coming in. The retreat house can be renovated, but the chapel must be completely rebuilt. Most of the Catholics – who make up half the population – are members of the Dayak tribe, the original inhabitants of Borneo. They live mainly by rice farming and latex collecting. They give what they can – but they are still short by **€21,500**.

The missionary call applies to all!

In the diocese of Diphu, in **India**, the situation is different again. Here it is partly a matter of primary evangelisation (among the Garo tribe, for example), and partly of consolidating and deepening the faith (among the Karbi people). But only very few priests and religious sisters know and understand the languages, songs, dances and customs of these different tribes well enough to be able to make the Good News known to them across the cultural barriers. But hearts are open. The few missionaries who are here go from village to village, organising Bible study and prayer groups and providing catechetical instruction. What they need above all is help with travel costs, accommodation and catechetical materials (**€20,800**).

Christ's missionary command applies to everyone, ourselves included. But there is necessarily a division of labour – which is surely best expressed by Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, Doctor of the Church and Patroness of the Missions: "Since I cannot be a missionary in deeds, I wanted to be so through love and penance." That is something we can all imitate her in. ●



Learning the Gospel:
Summer camp for families of the Garo tribe in India.

Any donation you kindly give will go to support these, or similar

Kibeho – a wellspring of graces for Africa



A place of healing: the "Mother of the Word" and her children.

Father Pawlowski often kneels before Our Lady of Kibeho. Then, as he admits somewhat hesitantly, "I entrust myself to her tender maternal care. I ask her to help me be still more faithful to my vocation here, so that Kibeho can grow and Mary can lead all these people along the path of reconciliation."

Kibeho in southern **Rwanda** is the first Marian apparition site in Africa to have been officially recognised by the Church, by the Holy See. Pallotine Father Zbigniew Pawlowski is the rector of the shrine. It was here, between 1981 and 1989 that Our Lady appeared to three local girls. Two of the three are still alive today. One visionary, Alphonsine, now lives in a convent in Italy, another, Nathalie, lives at the shrine itself. The third seer, Marie-Claire, was murdered during the massacres in 1994, which Our Lady had already prophesied with tears. The killing did not spare Kibeho either, but today it is a place of healing for wounded souls. By now the shrine sees more than 600,000 pilgrims each year, Father Pawlowski tells us. They come from many different countries, including even Europe and the Americas. And there are more and more of them each year. Even now the infrastructure is inadequate to receive them all. "But they must all be able to come, for there are miracles of reconciliation and conversion that happen here."

Many of the pilgrim groups include former murderers, "who have been released from jail and now stand together with others who only just escaped the massacres at the time. Now they stand together before Our Lady and pray for reconciliation." Kibeho is a wellspring of graces for a traumatised society.

"Our Lady comforts them all." There was even a bishop who came from Mexico, crushed by the murderous drug wars in his diocese, to beg Our Lady of Sorrows for help. Soon afterwards, the biggest drug boss was captured. And just as in Lourdes, Fatima, Czestochowa and other renowned shrines, again and again there are healings of the sick. More and more families are coming too. Many childless couples come, asking for the grace of fertility, and not infrequently "we afterwards get messages about the birth". Our Lady also predicted that the family as an institution would suffer. Yet the charism of Kibeho is also "the message of perseverance. The world is in a bad way – that is what Mary told us during those eight years, through the three girls. And the suffering is not over yet. That is why we must pray still more."

A place of reconciliation and forgiveness

And this is exactly what Father Pawlowski has been doing, for twelve years now, together with the other Pallottine Fathers and religious sisters. And that is what they also say to the growing throng of pilgrims.

The Blessed Virgin introduced herself to the three girls as "Nyina wa Jambo", as "Mother of the Word". She told Nathalie, "Stay close to me. People and things pass away. But as for you, pray. Pray much, so that you can stand firm." Her words apply to us all. As for Father Pawlowski, his "fervent wish" is that he can welcome more pilgrims "in this place of reconciliation and forgiveness". But to do this the facilities of the shrine need to be extended and the number of guest rooms increased. "Prayer needs more space". This is where we can help. ●



Grace for life: Father Pawlowski baptising a child in Kibeho.

We will redouble our prayers for you



Their charism is to joyfully carry the Easter message into the world. The Missionary Sisters of the Cross of Chavanod are active in 16 different countries and, faithful to their founding charism, they live and work above all among women and the poor. For the younger women this is not always easy. They need a thorough training. In India you have enabled 31 of them to attend a seminar in order to gain a deeper awareness of their mission. Sister Mary Pinto is writing on behalf of them all: "This good news that you have agreed to help for the younger sisters has caused me to glow with greater zeal and enthusiasm to continue the work for our Mother Church with still greater fervour. Be assured that we the Sisters of the Cross, and especially the younger sisters, will redouble our prayers for our benefactors and for the success of all your projects."

Need, love and thanks – your letters

For peace and human dignity

I am enclosing a donation for the support of our persecuted sisters and brothers. We are three retired religious, and we closely follow the dramatic events in the world. When one member suffers, the whole body suffers. We love to receive the Mirror. *We turn to our heavenly Father in prayer, and we remain close to all who work for peace and human dignity.*

A religious sister in France

Making the impossible possible

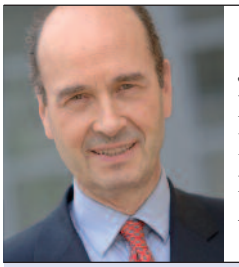
Today I received your birthday wishes. I was very touched since I still remember, as a young girl, seeing the Bacon Priest standing in the pulpit. I am always delighted to receive your Mirror *and greatly admire all your initiatives. By staying true in faith and love, you have made the impossible possible. ACN has enriched my life and in difficult times strengthened my faith and my trust.*

A benefactress in Belgium

Easing the pain

Every morning when I get up I thank God for electricity and gas, for the heating, cooking and running hot water for my shower. It pains me greatly to imagine the suffering my sisters and brothers in Syria and Iraq are enduring. I pray the enclosed will ease some of the pain.

A benefactress in Australia



Johannes Freiherr Heereman,
Executive President, ACN (International)

Dear Friends,

History can tell of numerous incidents that confirm the intercessory power of the Rosary, and many popes have attributed defining historical events to the intervention of the Mother of God, in response to the prayer of the Rosary. Among the most renowned, to this day, is the battle of Lepanto on 7 October 1571.

For me personally, it was a relatively insignificant experience that has burned itself indelibly on my memory. I was in year six (age 11) at school and on the point of failing in my English class, with the risk of failing the whole year and not moving up to the next class. So ahead of the next, crucial assessment I decided to pray the Rosary every evening – and also to study, of course. To the astonishment of my teacher and of my mother, my assessment was good. And I remain convinced that my prayers helped me more than the study. Ever since then I have always trusted to the power of the Rosary.

Saint Francis of Assisi once said: "Hell trembles at just one Hail Mary". How much more so, then, at the entire Rosary! It is impossible to number the many minor and major marvels the prayer of the Rosary has worked throughout the world. We must pass this experience on to others.



Where to send your contribution for the Church in Need

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Pass this leaflet on to your neighbours, friends or leave it at the Parish Church for others to review.

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