

Paul VI
The rosary
ASQ 9720

The Rosary

-DURING OCTOBER

AN URGENT APPEAL

For Peace

by

Pope Paul VI

September 15, 1966

1966

National Catholic Welfare Conference
1312 MASSACHUSETTS AVE., N. W. WASHINGTON, D. C. 20005



VENERABLE BROTHERS: PATRIARCHS, PRIMATES,
ARCHBISHOPS, BISHOPS, AND OTHER LOCAL ORDINARIES
WHO ARE IN PEACE AND COMMUNION WITH
THE APOSTOLIC SEE:

THE ROSARY DURING OCTOBER AN URGENT APPEAL FOR PEACE

Pope Paul VI

VENERABLE BROTHERS, HEALTH AND
APOSTOLIC BLESSING.

It is a solemn custom of the faithful during the month of October to weave with the prayers of the Rosary a spiritual garland to the Mother of Christ. This we heartily approve, following the example of our predecessors, and this year we call

upon all the children of the Church to perform these special exercises of devotion to the same Most Blessed Virgin.

For we are threatened by a more extensive and more disastrous calamity that endangers the human family, even as a bloody and difficult war is raging, particularly in areas of East Asia. So, we are urged to continue working even more intensely, to the extent of our power, for peace.

Similarly, the souls of men are deeply disturbed by things which all know are taking place in other parts of the world. For instance there are the increasing race for nuclear weapons, the unscrupulous efforts for the expansion of one's nation, the excessive glorification of one's race, the obsession for revolution, the segregations enforced on citizens, the iniquitous plotting, the murder of the innocent. All of these are potential material for the greatest possible tragedy.

It seems to us, as it seemed to our more recent predecessors, that a very provident God has committed to us a special task, namely that we labor with patient and persevering effort for the preservation and the strengthening of the peace. This task, as is evident, arises from the fact that we have been entrusted with the governing of the whole Church, which as a "sign raised to the nations" (Cfr. Is. 11:12) does not serve political ends but should convey to the human race the truth and grace of Jesus Christ, its divine author.

Actually, from the very beginning of our apostolic ministry, we have neglected no opportunity to use our prayers, entreaties and exhortations for the cause of world peace. In fact, as you well remember, last year we flew to North America in order to speak about the need for peace in the presence of the General Assembly of the United Nations, before that selected body of representatives of almost all the nations. We then counselled all peoples that they should not tolerate some to remain inferior to others, that no one should attack others, but rather that all should unite their zeal and their efforts towards establishing peace.

And after this, moved by a deep, apostolic concern for men, we did not cease to urge those who had the responsibility for such a momentous task to ward off from men the monstrous catastrophe which perhaps was about to overwhelm them.

Now again, therefore, we lift up our voice "with piercing cry and with tears" (Heb. 5:7), very earnestly beseeching those who have charge of the public welfare to strive with every means available to prevent the further spread of the conflagration and even to extinguish it entirely. For we do not doubt that all men who sincerely seek what is right and what is just—no matter what their race, color, religion or social status may be—feel the same way we do.

Therefore, let all those responsible strive to bring about those necessary conditions which will lead men to lay down their arms at last, before it becomes too late to do so owing to the mounting pressure of events. Those in whose hands rests the safety of the human family should realize that at this critical moment their consciences are bound by the gravest obligation. With their own country, with the world, God and history before their minds, they should carefully examine their moral record and obligations, remembering that men will esteem their memory if they will have followed this exhortation with wisdom.

We cry to them in God's name to stop.

Men must come together and work out concrete plans and terms in all sincerity. A settlement should be reached now, even at the expense of some inconveniences or loss; for it may have to be made later in the train of bitter slaughter and involve great loss.

But this peace must rest on justice and the liberty of mankind, and take into account the rights of individuals and communities. Otherwise it will be shifting and unstable.

At the same time as we are moved to make this anxious declaration, our high responsibility as a pastor indicates to us that we

must ask help from on high, since peace, whose "benefits are so great that even in earthly mortal affairs no more pleasing name is heard, nothing is desired with greater longing, nothing better can be found" (St. Aug., *De Civ. Dei*, 19, 11; P.L. 41, 637), must be asked from Him who is the Prince of Peace. As the Church in uncertain and troubled times used to turn for refuge to His Mother Mary, a most ready intercessor, it is right for us to direct our attention, yours, venerable brothers, and that of all the faithful to her who, as St. Irenaeus says, "was made the cause of salvation for the whole human race" (*Adv. Haer.* 3, 22; P.G. 7, 959).

We can see nothing more appropriate or efficacious than for the whole Christian family to raise its voice amid its many stresses and difficulties to pray the Mother of God, whom we also address as Queen of Peace, to be generous, as a good mother, with her gifts. During the Second Vatican Council we gave our confirmation to a point of traditional doctrine when we gave her the title of Mother of the Church, a title acclaimed by the council Fathers and the Catholic world.

We must pray earnestly and unceasingly to her, for she is the mother of Our Saviour, and "clearly the mother of his members," as St. Augustine teaches (*De Sanct. Virg.*, 6; P.L. 40, 399). St. Anselm, to mention no others, agrees with him: "Can you ever have a greater dignity than to be the mother of those whose father and brother Christ deigns to be?" (Or. 47; P.L. 158, 945). In fact, from our predecessor Leo XIII she received the same title: "Truly the Mother of the Church" (epist. enc. *Adiutricem Populi Christiani*, 5 Sept. 1895, *Acta Leon.* 15, 1896, p. 302). Hence in our distress at this terrifying upheaval we do not hope in her in vain.

If misfortunes increase, the dedication of the people of God should also increase. And for that reason we are anxious for you, venerable brothers, to give a lead and urge by exhortation a more persevering prayer to the gracious Virgin Mary by the

devout recitation of the Rosary during the month of October, as we have already indicated. This prayer is well suited to God's people, acceptable to the Mother of God and powerful in obtaining gifts from heaven.

The Second Vatican Ecumenical Council clearly referred to the Rosary, though not in express terms, when it reminded all the faithful that "practices and exercises of devotion towards her (Mary), recommended by the teaching authority of the Church in the course of the centuries, are to be held in high esteem" (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, N. 67).

As the history of the Church so frequently testifies, this duty of prayer, so abundant in its fruits, is efficacious in averting evils and calamities and greatly fosters Christian living. "Above all, it nourishes the Catholic faith which, by timely meditation on the sacred mysteries, gains new strength, and it lifts the mind to the contemplation of divinely revealed truths" (Pius XI, encyclical letter *Ingravescentibus Malis*, 29 Sept., 1937; A.A.S. ser. II, 4, 1937, p. 378).

And so during the month of October, dedicated to Our Lady of the Holy Rosary, our prayers and supplications should be redoubled, in order that through her intercession there may dawn for all men the light of true peace, of true religious peace also, for unfortunately at the present day not all are permitted to profess their religion freely.

We especially desire that this year October 4, the anniversary, as we have already said, of our visit to the United Nations in the cause of peace, be set aside by Catholics throughout the world as a day of prayer for peace. It will be your task, venerable brothers, in keeping with your commendable religious zeal and your realization of the importance of this appeal, to prescribe the observances through which priests, Religious and laity—and especially the innocent in the flower of youth and the sick in the midst of their sufferings—may be joined together in generous prayer to her who is the Mother of God and of the Church.

On the same day, in St. Peter's basilica, at the tomb of the Apostle, we also will hold a special ceremony of supplication in honor of the Virgin Mother of God, the protector of Christians and our intercessor for peace. In this way, the one voice of the Church will resound on all the continents of the earth and reach the very gates of heaven. For as St. Augustine states, "amid the various languages of men, the faith of the heart speaks one tongue" (Enarr. in Ps. 54, 11; P.L. 36, 636).

Look upon all your sons with motherly love, O Blessed Virgin. Consider the anxieties of the bishops who fear the assaults of evil on their flocks; consider the anguish of so many men, fathers and mothers of families who are worried about their lot and that of their families and who are assailed with agonizing responsibilities. Calm the hearts of men at war and inspire them with "thoughts of peace." Through your intercession may the demands of God's justice, which have been caused by sin, be turned into mercy; may He bring mankind back to the peace it longs for; may He lead men to true and lasting prosperity.

Encouraged by the firm hope that the most high Mother of God will in her kindness grant our humble prayer, we lovingly grant to you, venerable brothers, to the clergy and to the people entrusted to the care of each of you, the apostolic blessing.