

“Do not be afraid of holiness. It will take away none of your energy, vitality or joy. On the contrary, you will become what the Father had in mind when he created you”.

Pope Francis, apostolic letter *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 32.

*Rosaries
in the hands of children –
teaching them holiness.*

Dear Friends,

October as the month of the Rosary and November as the month of All Saints and All Souls' Day present us with the call to holiness. The Rosary is a school of prayer: and without prayer there is no holiness. According to Saint John Paul II, contemplating the mysteries of Christ in the Holy Rosary is a true “training in holiness”. And as Saint Bonaventure said, “Never have I read of a saint who did not have a particular devotion to Mary!” With Mary, millions of holy souls in heaven accompany us on our path of life, and we celebrate their feast day on 1st November. They all desire one thing, and one thing only, for us – that one day we too may be holy, that one day we may be united with them in heaven.

And then there are all the Holy Souls, whom we especially remember on 2nd November; the faithful departed, who must still pass “as through fire” in order to attain holiness. They need our prayers and our firm resolve to strive for holiness, so that they in turn can help us when they reach heaven. The French Catholic writer Léon Bloy once said, “There is only one truly tragic thing in the world:

not to be holy”. And holy Mother Teresa of Calcutta once responded to a journalist: “Holiness is not a luxury for the few, but a simple duty for every one of us.”

Marking the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Pope Saint John Paul II, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI writes, “A saint is a person who



***“Fulfilling the Father’s will
in all things, whether great
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sanctity.”***

is open to God and permeated by God. The holy person is the one who directs us away from ourselves and enables us to see and recognise God.” God comes to us in his Son, and so we can say, Jesus is our holiness! To be holy means to let God dwell in us as Mary did, to believe in Jesus, adore him, love him, trust in him. It means to let Jesus live, reign, work and love in me.

We can learn holiness from the Virgin of Nazareth, who in every situation repeated: “Fiat voluntas tua” (“Thy will be done”). Fulfilling the Father’s will in all things, whether great or small, is the secret of sanctity. That is why Saint Maximilian Kolbe

always taught his brothers this simple formula for holiness: “lowercase w = uppercase W”. Or in other words, our will must always be conformed to the Will of God. This was something Saint Faustina also experienced one day as she was walking along reciting the Rosary, and came to a cemetery. She prayed there a while for the departed souls, then she asked them inwardly, “You are happy, aren’t you?” Whereupon she heard inwardly, “We are happy to the extent that we have done God’s will.”

Dear friends, let us use the time and the grace that God gives us during the months of October and November to “straighten out” our lives: as Saint Josemaría Escrivá puts it, every day we “straighten out” just a little bit more. “This is a never ending task, if we truly wish to be holy.” All heaven is helping us in this, and above all our heavenly Mother, the holiest of all God’s creatures.

My grateful blessing on you all,

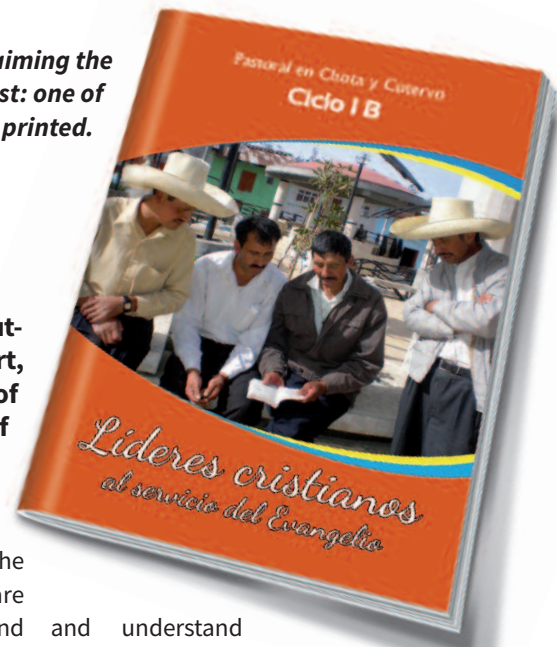
P. Martin M. Barta

Father Martin Maria Barta
Ecclesiastical Assistant



The “greatest project in the world”

Proclaiming the Kingdom of Christ: one of the five volumes to be printed.



The Prelature of Chota in Peru has its own special “recipe” for its mission outreach on the slopes of the Andes: 60 percent love, 20 percent work and effort, ten percent imagination, five percent experience, five percent patience. All of this, seasoned with humour, is placed in the fiery oven of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and then served up with great generosity.

This is a recipe that works. It can be found in the “Instructions for the Training of Christian Leaders in the Service of the Gospel”. Since these courses began almost 50 years ago, around 1,900 “chefs” – or catechists to be precise – have used this recipe to prepare the Catholic faithful for eternal life. Most of the catechists are farmers. They travel to remote, isolated villages which it is rare for priests to be able to visit. The 300,000 or so Catholics of the prelate benefit from their work, espe-

cially those who cannot read, including children, who make up a good third of the population, and also those adults who are illiterate as they were not able to attend school (about one in five). It is for all of these people that the catechists undertake a training course, involving a total of six five-day sessions, during which they learn how to conduct the Liturgy of the Word, how God intervenes in human history, how to pray, what the Sacraments are, and how to read

and understand the Bible. Catechists have to work their way through five course books, but it is well worth the effort, because it makes these farmers into co-workers in what the Introduction to the course describes as “the greatest project in the world – the Kingdom of Jesus Christ”. And it continues: to be a co-worker in this Kingdom is “the greatest honour that we can be given”.



Bible study session for trainee catechists – before the coronavirus.

The prelate has revised and re-edited the course materials, so the teaching material for the courses and the books that the catechists take with them to the villages and remote parishes must be reprinted. 33,000 copies are needed. But despite their love and hard work, the cost far exceeds the meagre financial resources of this impoverished prelate. So we have promised a subsidy of £7,600 towards the printing costs, so that the “recipe” for the mission can continue to provide food for the faithful.

Philippines

A programme for peace

In Basilan the Church’s mission is to promote peace, especially among children and young people.

Almost half of the Territorial Prelature of Isabela de Basilan’s inhabitants are aged under 24. Most of them have lived their childhood under the shadow of war and violence. Their island home forms part of the Mindanao archipelago, which for decades has been terrorised by fundamentalist Islamist groups. Roughly a quarter of the 400,000 inhabitants

are Christians. Their spiritual leader, Bishop Leo Magdugo Dalmao has launched a three-year programme in the 10 parishes and 87 outstations of the prelate to spread the spirit of the Gospel in even the smallest of communities. Thus they are bringing the Fruits of the Holy Spirit: Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-Control (cf. Gal 5:22). Some of the young people are being trained by the priests and Sisters to be group leaders, so they can go into the villages and work in



Preparing for mission, despite the crisis: Sisters at work.

the same spirit, spreading peace. This year we have promised £7,700 towards the cost.



The Lifeblood of Christians



Chad: Father Klamadjibé, praying with patients in the hospital.



The Holy Mass is the foundation of Christianity – in every place and age. “You never cease to gather a people to yourself, so that from the rising of the sun to its setting a pure sacrifice may be offered to your name”, as the priest prays prior to the consecration in the Third Eucharistic Prayer. So supporting our priests touches the heart of our very existence as Christians.

This applies all the more in these times of coronavirus. In many countries, especially in Africa, people can no longer come together for Mass. They have to follow the “pure sacrifice” on the radio. And in such cases there is no longer a Sunday collection in the church, which, as Bishop Filbert Mhasi of the diocese of Tunduru-Masasi in **Tanzania** tells us, “was the sole source of income for most of our priests”. And from what little they had, the priests helped their sick and elderly brother priests. Now this source of support has dried up completely. Other priests depended on the faithful bringing them a share of the fruits of the harvest in order to survive. But this year the harvest has been exceptionally poor, and heavy rains have washed away large parts of



Tanzania: Father Gabriel, celebrating alone, yet united with the whole world.

the crops. So Bishop Filbert has turned to us, to ask for Mass stipends for himself and his 34 priests.

The situation is similar in **Kenya**, where the apostolic administrator of the diocese of Lodwar has also requested Mass stipends for the 39 priests. Lodwar is the largest of the 26 dioceses and often suffers from drought and famine. Most of the priests live from hand to mouth, relying on whatever offerings the faithful bring to daily Mass. But now, because of the pandemic, the priests celebrate Mass alone.

We receive requests of this kind not only from many African countries, but also from Latin America. Here not only is the coronavirus raging but also, as in **Venezuela**, the political and economic situation has plunged the priests and their pastoral ministry into a deep crisis.

In the first five months of this year alone we provided Mass stipends to the value of **£5,951,400** – in 34 African nations and in 50 other countries around the world.

The patron saint of priests, Saint Jean-Marie Vianney, the holy Curé of Ars, urged his faithful to pray, telling them, “God loves to be pestered by us”. So let us pester God with our petitions. And there is no better way of doing this than through the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.



Kenya: God dwells with us. And from here the Lord goes out to the sick and elderly.



Learning the Faith in the kindergarten

For Saint Dominic, teaching everyone the Catholic Faith, even the simplest of souls, was the main reason he established his Order of Preachers, the Dominicans. In many paintings Dominic is shown receiving the rosary from the hands of Our Lady. Indeed, as Pope Saint John Paul II has written, the Rosary is the “summary of the Gospel”.

For Christians in the Middle East there is an additional reason why it is important to learn about the Faith, as without this knowledge they cannot survive as Christians in an Islamic society. Now, after years as refugees, tens of thousands have already returned to their homes and villages on the Nineveh Plains, northern Iraq. Their houses have been renovated, thanks to your generosity. The ruins of the past have largely disappeared. But now the future of the children and of their education is at stake. Without opportunities for their children to get an education, no one will return. In Qaraqosh, the largest Christian town in Iraq, the secondary school is being extended and in the smaller towns they are setting up kindergartens to prepare Catholic children for their school. And again it is the Dominicans, this time the Sisters, who are forming these young Christians in their Faith.

In Batnaya, where Chaldean Catholics lived for 270 years until they were forced to flee by the terrorists of the Islamic State six years

ago, 75 families have now returned. The parish priest of their small community is expecting another 150 families to arrive in the next few months. Today essential infrastructure is arising from the ruins – an outpatient clinic has been built, they have running water and electricity and, very soon, it is hoped, they will hear the happy voices of children in the kindergarten. The building that housed the kindergarten was utterly destroyed, but for the returning refugees it is a sign that their Church is present and will be staying there. Batnaya lives. It is time for the exiles to return.

Without the help of their brothers and sisters in Christ around the world, it would be impossible for the local Christians to rebuild the nursery school after it was utterly destroyed by Daesh (ISIS). ACN has already promised **£194,300**. Projects like this one are the cornerstone upon which the future of the Christians in Iraq will be built. Here their children will learn more about Jesus, and get to know



Sister Nazek (left) and Sister Luma: waiting eagerly for the children to come back.



When children played at the kindergarten: Elias and Antony before the destruction.

their faith and how to live it, for example, to say grace before meals and also the Rosary. Already, the Sisters are planning to get the older children involved next year with the worldwide initiative “One Million Children praying the Rosary”. And there are many more such proud traditions of our faith that will survive and thrive, despite all wars and diseases. ●



The Batnaya kindergarten, before and after its destruction, and the site cleared and ready for rebuilding.

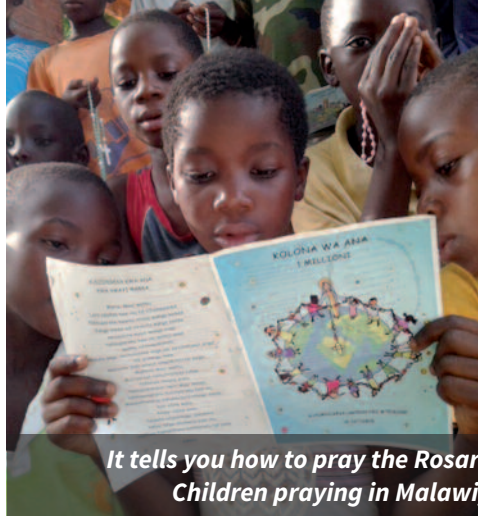


Pray for peace in the world

Pope St John Paul II wrote to bishops, priests, religious and especially to parents giving them sound advice for the Catholic life: “To pray the Rosary for children, and even more, with children... is admittedly not the solution to every problem, but it is a spiritual aid which should not be underestimated.”

In his apostolic letter on the Holy Rosary *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* he quotes the words of Blessed Bartolo Longo: “Whoever prays the Rosary is saved!” And Pope St John Paul II himself was a living example of this. Not only was the Rosary his favourite prayer, he also announced a Year of the Rosary, promulgated the Luminous Mysteries, entrusted his entire pontificate to the protection of the Mother of God, and repeatedly recommended the Rosary as a prayer for peace. And indeed, if there is a spiritual way to obtain peace in the world, then it is this prayer. For, as John Paul II said, to pray the Rosary means “to immerse ourselves in contemplation of the mystery of Christ who ‘is our peace’”. And the shepherd children of Fatima in 1917 heard Our Lady tell them: “Pray the Rosary daily, to obtain peace in the world.”

World peace – this is what a handful of children in **Venezuela** gathered together 14 years ago to pray for. From this small circle with their rosaries in their hands, a great initiative has sprung up, which today spans the world. On 18 October every year, children and families in 80 countries gather to



It tells you how to pray the Rosary... And that's just what they're doing. Children praying in Malawi, as part of last year's campaign.

pray the Rosary for peace. ACN helps them by covering various costs (printing, shipping, rosaries, a total cost of **£54,200**). This year the children will also be praying especially for the containment of the coronavirus pandemic. Here too, the Rosary is a source of strength in times of need, especially in Latin America, where there have been more than 265,000 deaths from the COVID-19 virus.

Even in **Uruguay**, a starkly secular state, like republican France, the Rosary is witnessing a small renaissance. But young people need to learn how to pray it. Cardinal Daniel Fernando Sturla, the archbishop of Montevideo, has asked us for 3,000 copies of our little booklet “Children praying the Rosary” for distribution in the Catholic schools which want to take part in this year’s campaign, “One Million Children praying the Rosary”, and Cardinal Sturla wants to

prepare the children before the event by teaching them how to pray it. Here, as elsewhere, we have promised to pay the costs of **£1,200**. Each Mystery of the Rosary will provide a window through which all the million children can, as Pope Saint John XXIII said, “contemplate the world in the light of the Lord”.



The Rosary transcends all frontiers: Ukrainian children joining in.



Uruguay: with the Rosary, our prayers ascend to heaven...



Meeting the Saints – online

“The Saints, our brothers and sisters, loved Jesus and his life. Be their friends, and they will accompany you throughout your life.” With these few short words Pope Francis introduces the book *Online with Saints*.

This new multimedia book is supported by an app which can be read on your PC or smartphone. The counsels of the saints are arranged into categories from fashion to faith, vocation to relationship, prayer to doubt – in fact these categories address every sphere of our lives. In the space of two short pages, the saints give brief, but profound answers to the questions life so often sets before us.

Doctor of the Church, Edith Stein answers the question, “How can I know that God really exists?” And Mother Teresa responds to the question, “Isn’t it just a waste of time spending hours in prayer?” Saints Perpetua and Felicity look at whether there is a Catholic way of dressing, and Saint Cecilia

considers whether modern music is evil. Saint Ignatius of Loyola answers whether Catholics are allowed to have tattoos and piercings, while St Thomas More tells us whether Christians should always follow the law of the land, and Blessed Charles, Emperor of Austria, whether today’s politicians can lead a life pleasing to God. St Martin of Tours considers how sinful it is to waste food and water and Saint Joan of Arc explains how one can also become holy as a soldier. St Peter, the first Pope, shows us why saints are also sinners and Saint Joseph explains how Christians can cope with stress.

The book offers plenty of food for thought, even for young people who are far from the Church. Around 200 questions of the kind



that young people ask are answered in these virtual encounters with the saints of every age. The book has a predecessor, “Tweeting with God”, written by the same author, Father Michel Remery, and is already available in five languages (English, French, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese). Now it is about to be translated and printed in Albanian to help their youth apostolate.

Up until 1990, Albania was called the “first atheist state in the world” and Christians were brutally persecuted. Now Christianity is flourishing again. Around one third of the 3.4 million Albanians in the country profess the Faith, but the Church is desperately poor. The archbishop of Shkoder has asked our translating, printing and setting up the website, and we have promised him **£8,600** – trusting in your charity. ●

The English version of *Online with the Saints* is available from ACN’s Shop at £14.95.





God sees the good you do

The bishop of Gizo and his 16 priests on the Solomon Islands in the South Pacific say “Thank you,” both for the Mass stipends and for the outboard motor you funded. An unusual combination, but with the same goal in view. The priests aim to bring God to the people, even in this remote corner of the world. They bring the Mass, which unites us with God, with one another and with the universal Church. And the outboard motor helps the priests to overcome more quickly the isolation of the many island parishes and bring the sacraments to the people more often. Meeting together for their recent spiritual retreat, all 17 clerics assured us that they pray daily for “your (our) benefactors”. “You may not see all the good you do”, they add, “but God sees, and we see, and we are profoundly grateful to you.”



Thomas Heine-Geldern,
Executive President,
ACN (International)

Dear Friends,

Recently, just a few weeks before his death, the 90-year-old Catholic priest and noted liturgist Philipp Harnoncourt asked his bishop for permission to be dispensed from the recitation of the Divine Office, but promised at the same time to continue, despite his frailty, to pray the Rosary every day.

Surely this is a resounding affirmation of the importance of the Rosary, which enables us to contemplate the mysteries of our Faith through the eyes of the Mother of God? Indeed, we are strengthened by the knowledge that this prayer unites us as Catholics around the world. It helps us to find inner peace and focus on what really matters.

Whenever I succeed in praying the Rosary with real devotion, I experience a sense of being enfolded in God's love, and joy in being brought, together with many others, closer to Jesus with the assistance of Mary. We do not want to become like a badly fatigued athlete, burnt out by overstriving in prayer, but we should always seek security and serenity in God's presence.

May the next generation also find this peace and serenity – and to this end I would ask you to support the initiative “One Million Children praying the Rosary” with your own prayers, and at the same time to spread the word about this wonderful campaign!

With my grateful good wishes to you all,

Need, love and thanks – your letters

My mission of prayer and love

My heart goes out to people in need, people who are persecuted for the Catholic Faith. My mission at 91 is praying for and loving my brothers and sisters in Christ. I am enclosing a cheque now, and from time to time, if my memory is still on track, will do the same.

A religious Sister in Australia

Thanking all priests

Please thank all the priests around the world for responding to their vocation. I want them to know that we really need them and that we always pray for them.

A benefactor in Mexico

Saving deposit bottles for ACN

When we go out for a walk we often find deposit bottles. We decided to return the bottles and give the money we collected to a charity. After five years of collecting, the time has now come to find a cause. Last weekend we visited our parents and found your “Mirror”

magazine there. We read it and were very impressed, so we want to give the money we have saved to your organisation.

A couple in the Netherlands

Thank you for your tireless work

Many thanks for your tireless work and for the way in which you are supporting so many Christians in the East who are being persecuted, and for drawing attention to their plight. May God continue to shower his love and blessings on your work.

A supporter in Germany

Hope and dignity for those in need

We want to say how much we admire the wonderful work you are doing, and we pray that the Lord may bless it with strength and wisdom, so that you will continue to bring fresh hope and dignity to the lives of those in need. We are happy to play our part by supporting you.

A married couple in Belgium

Where to send your contribution for the Church in Need

Our address: Aid to the Church in Need, 12–14 Benhill Avenue, Sutton, Surrey SM1 4DA. Please use the Freepost envelope – it saves you money and helps us. If you give by standing order or direct debit or have sent a donation recently, please accept our sincere thanks. This Mirror is for your interest and information.

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