

## **Pope Leo XIV to pray Rosary for peace with hundreds of children at the Vatican**

*On 1 October, between 700 and 1,000 children from schools and parishes in Rome will join the Holy Father in the Vatican Gardens, marking the beginning of the ["One Million Children Praying the Rosary"](#) initiative promoted by Aid to the Church in Need (ACN).*

Pope Leo XIV will join hundreds of children in praying the Rosary for peace on 1 October at the Lourdes Grotto in the Vatican Gardens. The event will begin at 5:00 p.m., with the Pope joining the children later to pray the Rosary.

Between 700 and 1,000 children from schools and parishes in Rome are expected to attend. Together with the Holy Father, they will pray in spiritual union with children, families, schools and Christian communities around the world.

The gathering will mark the beginning of the worldwide week of prayer for the "One Million Children Praying the Rosary" initiative, promoted by the Pontifical Foundation Aid to the Church in Need (ACN) for more than 20 years. This year, for the first time, the campaign will take place over an entire week, from 1 to 7 October, allowing dioceses, parishes, schools, communities and families on different continents to choose the day best suited to their pastoral circumstances, while remaining united in the same intention of prayer for peace and unity.

The week will culminate on 7 October, the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary.

### **Children around the world united in prayer**

While children in Rome pray with Pope Leo XIV, similar initiatives are already being prepared in many countries, from indigenous communities in the Bolivian Amazon to parishes in Sudan, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Sierra Leone and many other places affected by war, poverty or instability.

In Sudan, where an ongoing war continues to cause immense suffering, Fr Franck Mandozi of the Pastoral Region of Kostî has confirmed that children from several parishes and schools will take part.

Thousands of kilometres away, in a Tsimané indigenous community in the Bolivian Amazon, Sister Patricia Alejandra Botello López says that children are already praying the Rosary in both Tsimané and Spanish.

In Zimbabwe, St Christopher's Parish in the Archdiocese of Bulawayo will gather children on Sunday, 4 October. In the weeks that follow, parish priest Fr Charles Mafurutu also intends to travel to remote communities and Mass centres scattered across the parish territory, some many kilometres away.



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In Paraguay, Radio Pa'i Puku plans to promote the initiative through its broadcasts and to transmit live the Rosary prayed by children at the parish of San Eugenio de Mazenod, inviting families, schools, parishes and catechists to join in prayer.

### **A prayer for a wounded world**

The 2026 campaign is inspired by the message of Fatima: "In the end, my Immaculate Heart will triumph."

In this year's invitation to participants, Cardinal Kurt Koch, President of ACN International and Prefect of the Dicastery for Promoting Christian Unity, recalls that the Immaculate Heart of Mary represents a life entirely open to the Holy Spirit and presents Mary as a model of faith, love and prayer.

The initiative takes on particular significance at a time when millions of people are facing war, violence, persecution, poverty and uncertainty.

In this context, the prayer of children is intended as a simple but universal sign of trust and hope: children of different languages, cultures and countries united in the same prayer for peace.

From a small group in Venezuela to a worldwide prayer movement

The "One Million Children Praying the Rosary" initiative began in Venezuela in 2005 and has gradually grown into a worldwide prayer movement involving children, families, parishes, schools and Church groups on every continent.

The campaign is inspired by the words attributed to Saint Padre Pio of Pietrelcina:  
"When one million children pray the Rosary, the world will change."

The invitation is not addressed only to children. ACN also encourages parents, teachers, priests, religious, catechists and families to pray with them. It is not necessary to pray the entire Rosary: even a single decade, prayed in faith, can become part of this worldwide chain of prayer.

[ACN provides prayer materials in several languages](#) and invites participants to register their participation, helping to make visible on a map the network of children joining the prayer in different countries.

The international initiative is organised in collaboration with the Shrine of Fatima, the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network and the World Apostolate of Fatima. This year, World Rosary Day is also joining the campaign for the first time.

### **For media enquiries and interview requests:**

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