



The Holy See

**MESSAGE OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS
ON THE OCCASION OF THE IV CENTENARY
OF THE DISCOVERY OF THE RELICS OF SAINT ROSALIA**

*To my dear Brother
Archbishop Corrado Lorefice
Metropolitan of Palermo*

The happy occasion of the Fourth Centenary of the discovery of the body of Saint Rosalia is a special occasion to unite myself spiritually with you, dear sons and daughters of the Church of Palermo, who wish to raise to the Heavenly Father, the source of all grace, praise for the gift of such a sublime figure of a woman and 'apostle', who did not hesitate to accept the trials of loneliness for love of her Lord. My deferential thoughts go out to you dear brother Corrado, to the civil and military Authorities, as I also greet with affection the priests, the nuns and religious, the members of the many Confraternities, the lay movements, and all those who in the course of this Jubilee Year have joined in prayer, learning from Saint Rosalia the passion for the poor and fidelity to the Good News.

“Per amore Domini mei” is the motto Saint Rosalia adopts by handing over her own existence and abandoning the wealth of the world. The life of the Christian, both in the times when our hermit Virgin lived and in our own, is constantly marked by the cross; Christians are those who always love, but often in circumstances in which love is not understood or is even refused. It remains a countercultural choice today, since those who follow Christ are called to adopt the logic of the Gospel, which is hope, deciding in their hearts to make room for love in order to give it to others, to sacrifice it for the sake of their brothers and sisters, to share it with those who have not experienced it because of the “plagues” that afflict humanity.

You, faithful and devotees of the “Santuzza”, as you filially address her, are the spiritual heirs who must translate her witness of faith and charity towards your neighbour into an evangelical style of life. Like her, you give a beautiful face to your territory, rich in culture, history and profound faith,

where great women and men have found the strength to spend themselves for the Gospel and social justice. In the school of Saint Rosalia, renouncing the superfluous, you do not hesitate to offer yourselves generously to others. Have the fortitude of spirit to confront the challenges that still hinder the rebirth of this city, whose path is burdened by so many problems, some of them very painful. Courageously look to Him who is Mercy, in whose eyes the sufferings of His people are not invisible, for "even the hairs of your head are all numbered" (*Mt* 10:30); He knows our sorrows and is ready to pour out the balm of consolation that heals and gives renewed impetus.

With *Rosalia, woman of hope*, I therefore urge you: Church of Palermo, rise up! Be a beacon of new hope, be a living community that, regenerated by the blood of the martyrs, bears true and luminous witness to Christ our Saviour. People of God in this blessed strip of land, do not lose hope and do not give in to discouragement. Rediscover the joy of wonder before the caress of a Father who calls you to Himself and leads you along the paths of life to savour the fruits of concord and peace.

I hope that this Rosalian Jubilee Year, which is coming to its conclusion, has promoted above all a spiritual rebirth as part of the journey set in motion by your ecclesial Community; therefore, I invite you to listen with docility to the Holy Spirit, so that you may produce a plentiful pastoral season, ready to spread the perfume of welcome and mercy.

I consign to your Patron Saint the wishes and aspirations you carry in your heart; ask Her, woman of prayerful silence, to dispel fears and overcome the resignations that suffocate the roots of goodness, so as to be bold disciples of the Master and builders of hope.

With these sentiments, as I invoke the intercession of the Saints who crown the Sicilian Church, I entrust you to the protection of the Virgin Mary, and willingly impart my Blessing, trusting in your prayer for me.

Fraternally,

Rome, from Saint John Lateran, 29 June 2024
Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul, Apostles

FRANCIS

