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Message of the Holy Father on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the arrival of the Image of Our Lady of the Rosary in Pompei

The following is the Message sent by the Holy Father Francis to Archbishop Tommaso Caputo, prelate of Pompei, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the arrival of the arrival of the Image of Our Lady of the Rosary in Pompei:

Message

Dear Brother
Archbishop Tommaso Caputo
Prelate of Pompei
Pontifical Delegate for the Shrine of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Holy Rosary

I have learned with pleasure that the ecclesial community in Pompei is about to celebrate, with appropriate pastoral initiatives, a Jubilee Year, to commemorate 150 years since the arrival of the venerated image of Our Lady of the Rosary. I am glad to join spiritually with those who will celebrate the significant anniversary and support it in prayerful contemplation at the Pompeian Marian temple, to find comfort and hope in the gentle face of the heavenly Mother.

When the image arrived there on 13 November 1975, the lawyer Bartolo Longo, founder of the Shrine, had only a few years earlier rediscovered his faith, lost during the years of his university studies. A voice heard in the depths of his soul was like lightning in the night, rescuing him from a bitter struggle, and making a saying linked to the devout tradition of the Rosary resound with new strength in his heart: "If you seek salvation, spread the Rosary". That motto, well known to him, now took on within his heart, as often happens in mystical experiences, the sense of a promise and, in some way, a mandate.

Indeed, from that moment he became an apostle of the Rosary and, with countless initiatives and writings, and especially with "The Fifteen Saturdays", he was one of the great interpreters of this Marian devotion, of which a

long series of interventions by my Venerable Predecessors, especially from Leo XIII onwards, up to the Apostolic Letter *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* of Saint John Paul II, who relaunched it at the dawn of the third millennium by proclaiming a Year of the Rosary.

It is providential that the jubilee of the image of Our Lady of Pompei coincides with the imminent Jubilee Year, focused on Jesus our hope, and with the seventeenth centenary of the Council of Nicaea (325), which gave particular prominence to the divine-human mystery of Christ, in the light of the Trinity. It is good to rediscover the Rosary, in this perspective, in order to assimilate the mysteries of the Saviour's life, contemplating them through the gaze of Mary. The Rosary, a simple instrument within everyone's reach, can support the renewed evangelization to which the Church is called today.

We are aware of how it is necessary to rediscover the beauty of the Rosary in families and in homes. This prayer is of aid in building peace, and it is important to propose it to the young so that they do not hear it as repetitive and monotonous, but as an act of love that never tires of being poured out. The Rosary is also a source of consolation to the sick and the suffering, "sweet chain that binds us to God", but also a chain of love that becomes an embrace for the least and the marginalized, as were, in Bartolo Longo's eyes, especially orphans and the children of prisoners. Therefore, I encourage you to continue with renewed commitment, through the many initiatives of the Shrine, the great history of charity that he began: it is the most beautiful spiritual legacy that the Blessed Founder left behind.

May the Lord speak again today, to humanity in need of rediscovering the path of concord and fraternity, through the message of Our Lady of Pompei. It is my hope that her numerous devotees scattered throughout the world will adhere ever more faithfully to the Lord, bearing witness to their brothers and sisters, especially those most in need.

With these vows, as I recall with gratitude the manifestations of faith experienced in this Marian oasis on 21 March 2015 on the occasion of my pilgrimage, I invoke every grace for the land of Campania, especially for those who experience situations of hardship, while I cordially send my Blessing to you, dear Brother, and to all those who will take part in the evocative events.

Fraternally,

FRANCIS

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 7 October 2024

Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary of the Rosary
