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Prot. MG 220/20

Re: celebration of a special “Month of Mary”

“Mary is our defence, because She is our sweetest Mother, she is our advocate, our hope. Mary is the one in whom we must place all our trust”¹.



Dear Sisters!

Many weeks have passed since the beginning of this quarantine that has been involving the whole world in one way or another. In some places the situation is still uncertain; in others timid voices of a recovery are beginning to be heard; in others, the situation still continues to be very difficult and uncertain.

It is certainly a very hard time for all, but, at the same time, it is a period that is facilitating prayer and reflection. We are also returning to think back to many things in our personal, communitarian and congregational life, but also as a Church, as a society and as a whole humanity.

It is a time that is showing a real and profound turning point in our priorities, in our lifestyle, in the scale of values, in the choices of the future. It is indeed, I would say, a providential time that is part of the Easter dynamic of passion, death and resurrection.

It is a time of great challenges, of prophetic options, of courage, as Pope Francis wrote to us: *“courage in prayer and courage in action”*¹! Courage in order to open ourselves to the new that will surely come after this pandemic... but it is important to open ourselves with trust and hope, because God, in his Divine Providence, will direct everything to our good and the good of humanity.

The main reason for this letter is to make a proposal to all of you, starting with the Holy Father's Letter to all the faithful for the month of May 2020, published yesterday, April 25th.

As many of you already know, the month of May in many countries is the *“Month of Mary”*, while in others it is celebrated in November. In this letter from the Pope, his proposal is to invite all the faithful to celebrate it. Therefore, the proposal that I want to make to all the LMSC is to celebrate all together, as a Congregation, a *“special Month of Mary”*, with the aim of entrusting all humanity to Mary in this time of great suffering and asking God, through Her intercession, the grace of the end of this pandemic.

Don Orione has consecrated and entrusted his Small Work and his sons and daughters to Mary Most Holy, Immaculate and Mother of God many times, and he himself would have accepted this invitation from the Pope with great faith, enthusiasm and devotion, involving the greatest number of people.

It is beautiful for us to remember these ardent words from Don Orione, with which he exhorted to prepare for the month of May 1915: *“We love Mary! We are approaching May, the month consecrated to the Most Holy Mary ... (...) We owe everything to Mary: that's the reason why we are devoted to her, why we show her our gratitude. The devotion to Mary is not simply an ornament of*

¹ *Scritti* (Writings) 71,194.

*our most holy Religion, neither any flower, a help like many others, which we can use or not, as we like; but it is an integral part of it. God did not want to come to us except through Mary, and we can go to God only through Mary. (...) Mary is our defence, because She is our sweetest Mother, she is our advocate, our hope, Mary is the one in whom we must place all our trust. Oh Our Lady Most Holy, may She always be in our mind, in our heart, in our studies, in our work, in all our actions! Mary, always Mary. (...) Mary in tribulations, Mary in joys, Mary in health, Mary in diseases; Mary in poverty, Mary in abundance; Mary in humiliations, Mary in honours; Mary in the grace, Mary in the sin; Mary in youth, Mary in old age; Mary in life, Mary in death, Mary in eternity, Mary, always Mary! ...”*².

The proposal does not necessarily mean to add more prayers to those we already have. It is rather to give greater emphasis to the prayer of the Holy Rosary in this Month, as the Pope says, in a personal or communitarian way, with the intentions that the Pope also asks for in his Letter, and with the creativity that each one of us has.

For this reason, I am enclosing the letter from the Pope to this letter of mine, and a *"proposal"*, which you can freely use. The most important thing is to unite among us, as a Congregation, and unite with the Church around Mary, Mother of the Divine Providence, Mother of Mercy and Health of the sick, and pray with confidence and filial love, for the end of the pandemic in the world.

Don Orione from heaven will pray with us: *“There we are, we come to your feet with happiness and joy, with love and trust of children! May our prayer arrive to you, as a sweet smell: for all I kneel and for all I pray you, O Most Holy Virgin, for all!”*³.

I greet all of you with fraternal affection. Let's gather spiritually around Mary in a spiritual embrace in this ***"special Month of Mary"***.

Your sister,



Sr M. Mabel Spagnuolo
Superior general

Rome, Generalate House, April 26th, 2020.

² *Scritti* (Writings) 71, 193; for the newsletter of the Work of the Divine Providence, April 19th, 1915.

³ *Scritti* (Writings) 85,186; To the school of Mary, from Buenos Aires, August 15th, 1936.

**LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS POPE FRANCIS
TO THE FAITHFUL FOR THE MONTH OF MAY 2020**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The month of May is approaching, a time when the People of God express with particular intensity their love and devotion for the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is traditional in this month to pray the Rosary at home within the family. The restrictions of the pandemic have made us come to appreciate this “family” aspect, also from a spiritual point of view.

For this reason, I want to encourage everyone to rediscover the beauty of praying the Rosary at home in the month of May. This can be done either as a group or individually; you can decide according to your own situations, making the most of both opportunities. The key to doing this is always simplicity, and it is easy also on the internet to find good models of prayers to follow.

I am also providing two prayers to Our Lady that you can recite at the end of the Rosary, and that I myself will pray in the month of May, in spiritual union with all of you. I include them with this letter so that they are available to everyone.

Dear brothers and sisters, contemplating the face of Christ with the heart of Mary our Mother will make us even more united as a spiritual family and will help us overcome this time of trial. I keep all of you in my prayers, especially those suffering most greatly, and I ask you, please, to pray for me. I thank you, and with great affection I send you my blessing.

*Rome, Saint John Lateran, 25 April 2020
Feast of Saint Mark the Evangelist
Pope Francis*

(The two Prayers to Mary, proposed by the Pope, have been inserted in the outline of prayer which I am proposing below)

PROPOSAL FOR THE PERSONAL OR COMMUNITARIAN PRAYER OF THE HOLY ROSARY - MAY 2020

Prayer of the Holy Rosary, according to the mysteries of the day, at the time that the community is normally used to pray it.

Start:

- **In the name of the Father....**
- **Prayer from Pope Francis (the first), together or in alternate choirs:**

Prayer to Mary

O Mary, You shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope.

We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick, who, at the foot of the cross, were united with Jesus' suffering and persevered in your faith.

Protectress of the Roman people, you know our needs, and we know that you will provide, so that, as at Cana in Galilee, joy and celebration may return after this time of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the will of the Father and to do what Jesus tells us. For he took upon himself our suffering, and burdened himself with our sorrows to bring us, through the cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.

We fly to your protection, O Holy Mother of God; do not despise our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us always from every danger, o Glorious and Blessed Virgin.

1. First mystery⁴:

- **The Mystery is announced**
- **Prayer (a soloist or together)**

"We fly to your protection, O Holy Mother of God".

In the present tragic situation, when the whole world is prey to suffering and anxiety, we fly to you, Mother of God and our Mother, and seek refuge under your protection.

Virgin Mary, turn your merciful eyes towards us amid this coronavirus pandemic. Comfort those who are distraught and mourn their loved ones who have died, and at times are buried in a way that grieves them deeply. Be close to those who are concerned for their loved ones who are sick and who, in order to prevent the spread of the disease, cannot be close to them. Fill with hope those who are troubled by the uncertainty of the future and the consequences for the economy and employment.

- **The mystery is prayed.**

2. Second mystery:

- **The Mystery is announced**
- **Prayer (a soloist or together)**

Mother of God and our Mother, pray for us to God, the Father of mercies, that this great suffering may end and that hope and peace may dawn anew. Plead with your divine Son, as you did at Cana, so that the families of the sick and the victims be comforted, and their hearts be opened to confidence and trust.

- **The mystery is prayed.**

⁴ Before each mystery pray the "second prayer" divided into various parts

3. Third mystery:

- **The Mystery is announced**
- **Prayer (a soloist or together)**

Protect those doctors, nurses, health workers and volunteers who are on the frontline of this emergency, and are risking their lives to save others. Support their heroic effort and grant them strength, generosity and continued health.

Be close to those who assist the sick night and day, and to priests who, in their pastoral concern and fidelity to the Gospel, are trying to help and support everyone.

- **The mystery is prayed.**

4. Fourth mystery:

- **The Mystery is announced**
- **Prayer (a soloist or together)**

Blessed Virgin, illumine the minds of men and women engaged in scientific research, that they may find effective solutions to overcome this virus.

Support national leaders, that with wisdom, solicitude and generosity they may come to the aid of those lacking the basic necessities of life and may devise social and economic solutions inspired by farsightedness and solidarity.

Mary Most Holy, stir our consciences, so that the enormous funds invested in developing and stockpiling arms will instead be spent on promoting effective research on how to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future.

- **The mystery is prayed.**

5. Fifth mystery:

- **The Mystery is announced**
- **Prayer (a soloist or together)**

Beloved Mother, help us realize that we are all members of one great family and to recognize the bond that unites us, so that, in a spirit of fraternity and solidarity, we can help to alleviate countless situations of poverty and need. Make us strong in faith, persevering in service, constant in prayer.

- **The mystery is prayed.**

➤ Hail Holy Queen...

6. Litanies to Mary: (these or others can be done)

- Holy Mary...
- Holy Mother of God and our Mother...
- Mother of Christ...
- Mother of the Church...
- Mother of suffering humanity...
- Mother of Mercy...
- Mother of Divine Providence
- Mother of the poor...
- Mother of the forgotten...
- Comforter of the afflicted...
- Salvation of the Roman people...
- Salvation of those who trust in You...

- Health of the sick...
- Protector of doctors and health workers...
- Comfort of the families of the sick
- Consolation of the families of the victims of the epidemic...
- Support of priests and those who assist the sick...
- Support of scientists...
- Support of the leaders of the Nations...
- Queen of the human family...
- Queen of Nations...
- Our heavenly Founder...
- Queen of the world...
- Our Lady of..... (insert the patroness of your country)
- Queen of Peace

7. Concluding Prayer:

Mary, Consolation of the afflicted, embrace all your children in distress and pray that God will stretch out his all-powerful hand and free us from this terrible pandemic, so that life can serenely resume its normal course.

To you, who shine on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope, do we entrust ourselves, O Clement, O Loving, O Sweet Virgin Mary.

Amen.

8. Song of your choice.