

VERAPOLY ARCHDIOCESAN GAZETTE

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PASTORAL LETTER

Devotion to the Holy Rosary

Beloved Brother Priests, Consecrated Religious, Sisters, and Dear Children in Christ,

The much-loved month of October is upon us once again. This is the sacred month in which we joyfully gather in our families, churches, and religious houses to recite and pray the Holy Rosary, with its beads strung together like pearls on a thread of love.

The Holy Rosary is the most noble, efficacious, and pleasing prayer we can offer to our Blessed Mother to express our love, devotion, and reverence towards her, and to implore her powerful intercession and protection. Although we are accustomed to praying the Rosary daily, the month of October affords us a special opportunity to deepen our devotion to it and to receive heavenly graces through its recitation. This is a devotional experience that many of us have cherished in our hearts since childhood. Let us recall the memories of going to our churches for special Rosary devotions early in the morning and at eventide alongside our grandparents and parents. Let us strive to pass on the purity of this rich traditional heritage to the new generation without losing even a fraction of its essence. I remind you that this is a magnificent testimony of the Christian faith.

The Supreme Pontiff, Pope Leo XIV, continually reminds us to pray the Holy Rosary daily, offering our prayers for world peace. Let us pray the Rosary this October so that, through the powerful intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Queen of Peace, the conflicts and threats of war currently persisting in the Middle East and elsewhere may be dispelled and peace restored to the world, and so that national leaders and governments may adopt approaches that prioritise the dignity of the human race.

It was the Blessed Mother herself who appeared to Saint Dominic in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, instructing him to pray the Rosary and teaching him how to recite it in order to overcome the Albigensian heresy, which denied the principal doctrines and articles of faith of the Catholic Church. Saint Dominic and the members of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans) he founded became zealous heralds of devotion to the Rosary. Whenever the Church was hard-pressed in subsequent centuries by various false doctrines, numerous wars, and moral degeneration, Popes and saints alike sought refuge in the prayer of the Holy Rosary.

In the naval battle fought in the Gulf of Corinth in 1571, the vast military might of the Ottoman Empire—which sought to turn the whole of Europe into a realm of

superstition and barbarism—was defeated by a relatively weak Christian fleet solely because the Church, under the leadership of Saint Pius V, continually prayed the Rosary as a single family to seek the special protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In memory of that victory, Pope Pius V desired a feast to be celebrated in honour of "Our Lady of Victory". Subsequently, his successor, Pope Gregory XIII, established the feast in the Church as the feast of the "Holy Rosary" and designated October 7th as its feast day. Later, Pope Leo XIV [Note: text references Leo XIII tradition]—known as the "Pope of the Rosary"—dedicated the entire month of October to Our Lady of the Holy Rosary. This is how the practice of solemnly reciting the Rosary throughout the entire month of October originated. Dearly beloved, let us devoutly continue this holy tradition.

Regarding the fruits of families sitting together to pray the Rosary, the Marian-devoted Pope Pius XII stated:

"Parents and children, united in heart, gather before the image of the Virgin Mother to recite the Rosary. This unites them with those members who are absent and those who have passed away. The Blessed Virgin will be present in the midst of her children, like a loving mother. Then the Christian family will become a centre of holiness like the Holy Family of Nazareth; it will be transformed into a holy temple."

I express my heartfelt wish that our families, gathering together as one to pray the Rosary, may likewise be transformed into holy temples.

I conclude with the touching prayer of Blessed Bartolo Longo, known as the "Apostle of the Rosary":

"O blessed Rosary of Mary, sweet chain which binds us to God, bond of love which unites us to the angels, tower of salvation against the assaults of hell, safe port in our universal shipwreck, we will never abandon you. You will be our comfort in our hour of agony; to you be our last kiss as life ebbs away. And the last word from our lips shall be your sweet name, O Queen of the Rosary, O dearest of mothers, O refuge of sinners, O sovereign consoler of the afflicted. May you be blessed everywhere, today and forever, on earth and in heaven. Amen."

As a sign of my paternal love for you, I bless you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Given from our Metropolitan Archdiocese House in Ernakulam, on this 15th day of September, 2026.

+ Joseph Kalathiparambil

Metropolitan Archbishop of Verapoly

N.B.: This pastoral letter is to be read during Holy Mass on Sunday, September 27, 2026.