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VATICAN - AVE MARIA by Rev. Luciano Alimandi -"Life cannot be understood without the Rosary"

Vatican City (Agenzia Fides) - In the month traditionally dedicated to the prayer of the Holy Rosary, we are invited to turn with greater confidence to pray for the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In this the Church helps us, above all through personal witnesses, calling once again to our heart to have visible love and devotion for the Mother of God, our Mother; this devotion is the salt of Christian life.

His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI quite recently recalled an incisive statement by the then Patriarch of Venice, Cardinal Albino Luciani, who was to become Pope John Paul I on the very day in which Poland celebrates Our Lady of Czestochowa (26 August 1978).

We read the words of the Holy Father Benedict XVI: «I would like to recall his devotion for the Blessed Virgin Mary. When still Patriarch of Venice he wrote: . We do well to take up his call and find, as he did, in humble entrustment to Mary the secret of daily serenity and concrete commitment for peace in the world» (Benedict XVI Address at the end of the projection of the film "Papa Luciani: il sorriso di Dio", 9 October 2006).

"It is impossible to understand our life…. without the rosary". These are strong words, and the Pope reminds us of them because of their authenticity and importance. How could a life, a Christian life, be understood without Mary whom God willed to be the Mother of his Son Jesus, and the Mother of all of us: in the Son, children of God!

In fact the Church teaches clearly that the spiritual maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary is a "most consoling truth" which "must be held as faith by all Christians", as the Servant of God Paul VI wrote in the Apostolic Exhortation "Signum Magnum":

« Indeed, just as no human mother can limit her task to the generation of a new man but must extend it to the function of nourishing and educating her offspring, thus the blessed Virgin Mary, after participating in the redeeming sacrifice of the Son, and in such an intimate way as to deserve to be proclaimed by Him the Mother not only of His disciple John but - may we be allowed to affirm it - of mankind which he in some way represents,(21) now continues to fulfil from heaven her maternal function as the co-operator in the birth and development of divine life in the individual souls of redeemed men. This is a most consoling truth which, by the free consent of God the All-Wise, is an integrating part of the mystery of human salvation; therefore it must be held as faith by all Christians» (Signum Magnum, n. 6).

This Apostolic Exhortation was written in 1967, on occasion of the 50th anniversary of the apparition Fatima, when Paul VI travelled to Fatima as a pilgrim of peace. Undoubtedly Mary's message to the three shepherd children in Portugal represented, in the last century, and represents still in our day, an eloquent sign of the Blessed Virgin Mary's maternal concern for her children; a message, which has touched and transformed the life of many believers.

It is natural at this point to recall an authentic apostle of the message of Fatima, Jesuit Bishop Pavel Maria Hnilica, who died on October 8 after a life of spreading the "most consoling truth" of the spiritual motherhood of Most Holy Mary.

May such examples encourage the young and also the not so young to realise that the life of faith is a marvellous adventure, made all the more captivating by the eternal youth of God resplendent and tangible in every time and every place with the announcement of the Gospel. We too are called to discover and to contemplate day by day, mystery by mystery, "the Child and His Mother" (Mt 2, 11) and not to keep the joy of encountering them to ourselves, but rather offer it to everyone we meet on our way. (Agenzia Fides 11/10/2006 - righe 47, parole 671)

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