

Let's pray together for the healing of humanity

In all periods of history, humanity has thought that it was living particularly troubled times, so one must not quickly judge that our age is exceptionally dramatic. Nonetheless, it may not be without reason that we are tempted to estimate that the emergency of the present time is especially serious.

Never has planet earth been so misused by mankind. Never have the sources of life themselves been so threatened as they are today by generalized contraception, frequent sterilization, whether voluntary or imposed, and by commonplace abortion. Even the art of caring for human life and, if possible, of curing it when it is weakened, has become in certain regions, the art of ending human life with full impunity.

Never has the family, the fundamental unit of society, been, at least in the west, so undermined legally and culturally by irresponsible legislation, rendering divorce accessible at the wave of a hand and raising to the level of marriage unions which cannot in any case merit that title.

Alongside splendid accomplishments on the social landscape, such as legislation protecting labor and organizing solidarity in healthcare, and many other forms of support for the most vulnerable persons, we are witnessing the fresh upsurge of a savage and merciless capitalism, and in anguish perceive the powerlessness of politics in the face of the triumph of nancial speculation. The shameful indebtedness of many states places us on the brink of a monetary, nancial and nally an economic abyss which may engulf the most destitute.

During this time, millions of men and women, youth in particular, allow themselves to be subjugated by alcohol, drugs and

pornography, three markets scandalously robust, cleverly organized by merchants of illusion, to say nothing of the general stupor of entire populations, deepened by a music without heart, without melody, without meaning, reducing itself to a rhythm as primal as it is loud. The emptiness of the soul, now abysmal, tries desperately to heal itself in an immense escape ahead, ending often in suicide.

Even the quest for spirituality, in itself laudable, strays too often into impersonal mysticisms, in a foggy divinity, where the personal splendor of the human soul dissolves. There, one loses the rare pearl of life, but without recovering it, so far, in a truth of a greater price.

Despite promising ecumenism, even the western Christian churches have often lost their soul. The salt has become tasteless and one cannot devise how to restore its flavor. We have opened so many doors and windows for the sake of an inconsistent openness, that the perfume of the gospel has simply dissipated. The holy Tradition of Jesus' apostles has been dismantled to the advantage of doomed ideologies. The liturgy is attenuated to such a point that many assemblies, to the liking of derisory clerical fantasies, celebrate their own mediocrity rather than the glory of God and Christ. According to the frightening words of Jesus, the pearls have been thrown to the swine and misled Christians unwittingly trample underfoot the treasures for which the martyrs spilled their blood.

And yet, where a hundred reasons to despair assail us, we find in Jesus Christ a thousand reasons to hope more than ever. He who bore all of the difficulty of human existence, He who crossed all of our impasses, even death, by his blessed resurrection, He says to us "Do not fear, for I am the First and the Last, the one who Lives; Once I was dead, but now I am alive forever and ever. I hold the keys of death and of the netherworld," (Rev 1:17-18). He knew our trials and he murmurs to our hearts "In the world, you will have

trouble, but take courage, I have overcome the world.” (Jn 16: 33) Before leaving us on the day of the Ascension, but without leaving us orphans for all that, he reassured us; “And remember, I am with you always, until the end of time.” (Mat 28:20) Would Jesus now abandon humanity to its lot? Never in His life! He, who during His earthly life, healed so many sick and reconciled so many sinners, He who affirmed multiple times that all prayer made with perseverance and in faith would, in the end, be granted. We do not cry out unto him to make him sensitive to our distress. His heart, pierced through, is innately more vulnerable than our own! We do not pray to inform him of our miseries. He knows them better than us and carried them before us in His distress in His agony and on the cross, abandoned by men and even, apparently, by God His Father... and if He asks us to pray long, with endurance, it is not because He has grown deaf with the passing centuries. It is because we, poor*unbelievers, *we* need time, much time, to nally believe in the omnipotence of prayer. “But when the Son of Man comes, will he nd faith on earth?” (Lk 18: 8)

And if Mary, herself, has appeared to humanity so frequently for nearly two centuries, if she speaks to us with such perseverance, with such a maternal tenacity, and if she insists untiringly on the vital importance of prayer, it is not because she is bored up there and has become chatty and driveling from celestial idleness, it is because she is engaged thoroughly in the battle of Christ and the Church against the dragon (Rev 12) and wants to draw us powerfully into her immense intercession for the salvation of the world.

So, yes, let us pray with ardor and complete trust for our conversion and the healing of humanity! We will not be disappointed. For, “all that you ask for in prayer, believe that you will receive it and it shall be yours,” (Mk 11:24, and so many other passages: Mt 7:7-11; 18-19; 21-22; Lk 18:6-8; Jn 11:42; 15:7; 16:14). May the modest text of

the Novena of prayer proposed here help us to ask for all and obtain all!

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1st Day Respect for creation

Saint Paul reminds us that, in its present state, creation is damaged by original sin and subjugated to a law of death, so much so that it shudders in its entirety like a woman in the pains of childbirth: “For the creation was subjected to vanity, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its slavery to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.” (Rm 8: 20-21)

It is impossible to entirely escape from this “power of nothingness” that affects the Universe in its current condition. Nonetheless, even waned, the cosmos remains the creation of God and is fundamentally good, even if it is wounded. It is why it is our duty as human and Christians to safeguard it as best we can, by respecting our environment.

God our Father, you freely created the world in your wisdom and love, and you saw yourself that it was good, even very good. (Gen 1:10.12.18.21.31.) Still today, despite the evil which disfigures it, you love this universe which you created in the Word and the Son of your eternal love, for “All things came to be through Him, and without Him nothing came to be. What came to be through Him was life, and this life was the light of the human race.” (Jn 1:3-4) Send into our hearts that Spirit which glided over the waters in the beginning (Gen

1:1) so that, everywhere we are, we will respect your creation and guarantee to safeguard it. We ask You this through Jesus, the Christ, our Lord. Amen.

2nd Day Respect for the human person in the maternal womb

Our society is more and more sensitive to the importance of ecology and this is great progress. However, in the capital concern for biodiversity, that is to say the diversity of animal and plant species, society often forgets to include what Benedict XVI calls “human ecology.” It is shocking that, in numerous countries, a tree seedling or a wolf is better protected than a small human in his mother’s womb.

Let us beware of the myth of overpopulation on the planet and the theory of the predatory human! The earth is not over-populated, it is even approaching, especially in the west, the threat of an ageing populations. With imagination and generosity, the earth can feed and sustain all of its current and future inhabitants. May all those theories cease forever to serve as arguments to make abortion commonplace. With love in one’s heart, it is always possible to avoid the drama of abortion for a woman and for the child she carries.

Lord, when you were still a tiny embryo in Mary’s womb, John the Baptist, in Elizabeth’s womb, recognized you and he quivered with joy, and unleashed a cry of jubilation in his mother; “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb!(...) For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy” (Lk 1:42.44.) Lord Jesus, each and every one of us was once, like you, such a tiny little one in the womb of our mother. Teach us to respect this humble beginning of each human

and take us to the rescue of pregnant women in difficulty. We ask this of you, the child of Mary and Eternal Son of the Father, Amen.*

3rd Day Respect for the human persona at the approach of death

How can we be insensitive to the suffering and anguish of persons carried towards death by a painful illness? Yes, we must help the incurably ill to approach their death in peace and without crushing or humiliating suffering. Thanks to the progress of medicine, today we have at our disposal effective palliative care, permitting us to live the end of our time down here in relative comfort. If the pain proves resistant to all treatment, we still have the possibility, in moments of crisis, to disconnect the consciousness for the necessary time.

But we must denounce the now-frequent practice which, abruptly, puts an end to a patient's life under the pretext of a misunderstood compassion. Even the consent or express request of the patient does not justify a compromise of the profound importance of all medical and paramedical professions, or that the art of caring for and healing be transformed into the art of killing. I cannot, even in the name of my liberty, ask that the whole perception of life and death be modified in society in favor of laws decriminalizing the act of causing an innocent human person to die.

God our Father, even the last months and weeks, days and hours of our lives, are subject to your paternal Providence. You offer us even those last moments of our time on earth as a chance for purification, to surrender our whole lives into your hands and to progressively reconcile ourselves with those around us, with all of those who we have loved, or failed to love enough. Make of us, for ourselves and for others, witnesses of a culture of life, so loving and so generous, that it triumphs over all undertakings that lead us to act like masters

and lords of life and death. We ask you this through Jesus, the Christ, our Lord. Amen.

4th Day The love of peace and spiritual struggle

The heart of man desires peace and yet, he is constantly confronted by violence. And this does not concern only...others! In each of us sleeps a dangerous aggressiveness. Strategic peace is not enough, which rests on the balance of fear and the calculation of interests. We still need to arrive at a real respect of the other, for himself. In the human perspective, and in any case on a large scale, this seems frankly utopic. Only peace drawn humbly from “the Prince of Peace” can allow us to construct a mutual respect on the communion and the solidarity of individuals and nations. It is at this source alone that we will learn to live the beatitude: “Happy are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God!” (Mt 5:9)

“I leave you peace, my peace, I give you; Not as the world gives it do I give it to you,” says Jesus (Jn 14: 27). But also, and for this very reason: “Do you think that I have come to establish peace on the earth? No, I tell you, but rather division.” (Lk 12:51). He wants us to seek true peace in Him. And, precisely because of this, He invites us to spiritual battle, nonviolent, against all injustices that feed violence.

Lord Jesus Christ, you said to your Apostles: “I leave you peace, my peace I give you.” Look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church. So that your will may be done, give her always this peace and lead her to perfect unity, You who live and reign forever and ever, Amen.

5th Day Peace among peoples and between religions

Cultures, languages and people are legitimately different and their diversity represents a richness as well as a risk. But, we all belong fundamentally to the same humanity. That which unites us is greater than that which distinguishes us. The same joys and pains, the same trials and challenges.

Religions, spiritualities, and philosophies are by nature likewise diverse, with different priorities. But all represent a precious openness to a mystery which surpasses us, to a depth or altitude which we did not invent.

Why should our cultural and philosophical diversity not become symphonic? Just as in an orchestra where reigns a great variety of instruments, tones, voices, and roles, without unleashing a cacophony.

God our Father, we thank you for the symphony of the universe, in spite of sin and evil. Even more, we say to you “thank you,” for the symphony of humanity, in spite of the dissonance and false notes which compromise its harmony. We give you our gratitude for your Son Jesus and for the Holy Scriptures where you left us the partitions of your very own symphony, still incomplete however long this world should endure. We thank you for offering us your Holy Spirit as the conductor of the orchestra, and the inspirer of our interpretation of your grace. Guide us. Unite us, so that your music can soften our hearts. Amen.

6th Day Peace in families

The family is a small “Church at home,” a “domestic” church. It is a reflection of the Holy Trinity. Just as the Spirit is born of the mutual

love of the Father and Son, so too the child, all children, are the personal fruit of the love between a man and a woman in marriage.

It is probably just because the family is so great and important in the eyes of God, that it is so attacked by the Enemy. In making divorce extremely easy, in rendering abortion commonplace and in instituting a pseudo-marriage between persons of the same sex, western societies have dreadfully weakened the family, with all the disastrous consequences which follow for betrayed spouses and children shunted from either side.

Lord, you the faithful Spouse of the Church, you who consecrated the beauty of human love by unifying yourself forever to humanity, watch with tenderness over our families, especially those that are tempted by separation. Put in the heart of your Church, your chosen Bride, a great love for couples and a patient solicitude to accompany them and support them in their delity. Inspire us in a just attitude with regard to our brothers and sisters who have experienced marital failure. May we know how to welcome them, joining love and truth, in delity to your Gospel and the teachings of your Church. We ask this of you who lives and reigns with the father and the Holy Spirit forever and ever. Amen.

7th Day Peace in the church

For centuries we have been suffering from tears between the different Christian denominations. The patient work of ecumenism has already made possible precious rapprochements, especially between Catholics, Orthodox, and Lutherans, but there is still a long road ahead.

Furthermore, even within the heart of the Catholic Church, there is

no shortage of division between traditionalists and progressivists, between those who love the pope and the church, and those who are more inclined to criticism.

Yet, the Christian testimony in the world will only be fully credible if we are all united together in and by Christ. What are we waiting for to celebrate Easter all on the same date, as the Nicene Council wished in 325? That is to say, the Sunday after the full moon that follows the spring equinox. Astronomy enables us today to resolve the problem with certainty. It would suffice to agree on the meridian in function of which we determine the hour of the full moon...An agreement on Easter might launch other agreements on more profound matters, by inspiring us all together with the faith and practice of the Church in the course of the first millennium, before the great schisms.

Lord Jesus, on the eve of your death, you prayed ardently for the unity of your Church: "so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us, that the world may believe that you sent me." (John 17,31). May your prayer today more than ever, and without delay, be fully granted. Amen.

8th Day The healing of humanity

In many countries of the world, we have been horrified to learn that even priests and religious brothers had abused children and youth, and, without in the least minimizing these crimes within the church, we know that everywhere, in our societies, children, youth, men and women are sexually exploited. Sometimes we may even be accomplices to this wave of pornography that is washing over the planet. We think also of all the victims of alcohol and above all, of that satanic commercial enterprise, which is the distribution of drugs

to millions of victims.

And then, there are all the other abuses that sicken us; economic exploitation, the scorn of foreigners, dictatorial regimes, police repression, and religious intolerance. Every five minutes, a Christian is killed because of his faith. The list is endless...

Lord Jesus, this time it's too much. We cannot do it anymore. You who are the Friend of men and their Savior, you who are the Doctor of humanity, we entrust to your Sacred Heart the injured heart of every human being and of all men. Come to our rescue and mobilize us in a great surge of faith, hope and love for the salvation of mankind in peril. We put our confidence in you like the Apostles in the boat shaken by the storm, we cry out towards you because we have the impression that you are sleeping and have forgotten us: "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" Get up and rebuke the wind and say to the sea, "Quiet, be still." Confirm us in hope by telling us also: "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" (Mk 4: 38-40)

9th Day The ardent desire for the coming of Jesus in glory : »Maranatha ! »

The present world in which we live is no longer terrestrial paradise, but it is not yet celestial Paradise. It is still fundamentally good, because it is created by God, and already contains, especially in the Eucharist, the energy of a new world. But in the meantime, it's susceptible to vanity, with the hope, nonetheless, to be soon transfigured thanks to the new coming of Jesus in glory.

We can greatly improve this world through our respect for creation and our solidarity when facing catastrophes, famine and sickness.

But, this world can never be fully healed. Even the sick whom Jesus healed later fell sick again. Miracles foretell the harmony of the world to come, but they cannot be the definitive solution. The salvation of the world will happen by a dazzling transfiguration of the universe, in the wake of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. But the energy that will glorify the world is already at work in us by our baptism and the Eucharist. Yes, with Paul, we understand with gratitude *“what is the surpassing greatness of His power for us who believe, in accord with the exercise of His great might, which he worked in Christ, raising him from the dead and seating him at His right hand in the heavens.”* (Eph 1:19-20). Also, with the apocalypse, let us ardently pray that this supreme Energy bursts soon in the whole entire cosmos.

Lord Jesus, crucified and resurrected, seated evermore in heaven at the right hand of the Father, we turn ourselves towards you. With the Spirit and the Bride, with the Holy Spirit and the Church, with the Spirit and Mary, we turn towards you and beg of you “Come!” (Rev22:17). And, smiling with great goodness and profound compassion for our misery, you answer us, for the last 20 centuries, but with a particular seriousness today: “Yes, I am coming soon!” So we redouble our confidence, thinking of the distress of the present time and of the urgent, definitive healing of humanity, and we say again with conviction the prayer of the Holy Spirit and the Bride: “Amen, Come, Lord Jesus!” (Rev 22:20).