



THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO
OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

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September 15, 2016

Dear Pastors and Parochial Administrators,

Pope Francis is known to be a Pope of surprises. True to his style, he surprised many people this past August when he arrived at St. Peter's Square and set aside his prepared audience talk. The audience took place just six hours after a devastating earthquake struck a region of Italy just north of Rome. Addressing the pilgrims gathered in the Square that morning, Pope Francis talked about his "heartfelt sorrow and ... closeness" to everyone affected by the earthquake. He said he wanted those who "are still shaken by fear and terror" to know of his spiritual closeness to them.

Instead of delivering his usual Wednesday catechesis, the Pope asked all those gathered in Piazza San Pietro that day to pray the Rosary with him for the victims of the earthquake. It is estimated that 11,000 pilgrims were in the Square that day as well as many others viewing on television or listening on radio. Pope Francis is well known for his strong piety and devotion to the Mother of God. He himself said that he prays 15 Mysteries of the Rosary each day. Talking about this powerful prayer, the Pope said: "The Rosary is a prayer that always accompanies me; it is also the prayer of the ordinary people and the saints ... it is a prayer from the heart."

For the past several years an increasing number of people have been gathering in San Francisco to take part in our annual Rosary Rally. I am writing this letter to encourage you and your parishioners to join with me and numerous others to pray the Rosary for the many needs of our nation and the whole world.

Next year, the Church will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the apparitions of Our Lady of Fatima to three young children. During those apparitions, Our Lady requested that devotion to the Rosary be more widespread and asked the children to pray the Rosary often for the salvation of the world, promising great graces to those who do so.

This year's event will begin with a solemn celebration of Mass at 10:00am at the Cathedral of Saint Mary of the Assumption. We will then process to UN Plaza for the Rally while praying the Rosary, ending with Benediction of the Most Blessed Sacrament.

I hope and pray that as many of you as possible will take the time to join with me in this special day of prayer. Our families, parishes, country and world have much need of prayer, and the Blessed Virgin Mary is the surest of intercessors in Heaven.

Assuring you and your parishes of my prayers, especially during the month of October dedicated to the Most Holy Rosary, I remain,

Sincerely yours in our Lord,

Most Reverend Salvatore J. Cordileone
Archbishop of San Francisco