



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF WICHITA

Office of the Bishop

424 N. BROADWAY | WICHITA, KANSAS 67202

July 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It has been said that we live in unprecedented times. But do we really? After all, any amateur student of history and especially Church history can attest that Holy Mother Church has already experienced everything we are living through and even far worse, things like plagues and pandemics, persecutions of Christians, violent attacks against persons for reason of color or other discriminatory traits, the shameless desecration of churches and statues and acts that cause scandal, even by those who are called to serve as leaders of the faith. These are among the things that are clearly seen in our modern day, but the Church has been here before. The only difference between then and now is us. We are the ones whom God has chosen and destined to live at this time in history, bringing our faith to bear, as did our predecessors, so that with God's grace and by God's grace alone, we too will triumph and overcome all adversity and grow stronger in faith, hope and love in the process.

My dear brothers and sisters, for this reason, as your bishop, I want to invite each of you to reaffirm or discover anew the importance of your spiritual life, so important for us in all seasons but never more so than in this current season of uncertainty, fear, and dismay. The spiritual life is our source of strength, consolation and courage. The spiritual life calls for growth and development. How does this happen? Most obviously, by the life giving Sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Confession. Mass, even daily mass must be the source of our strength to meet the challenges of our times; regular confession, at least monthly helps to cleanse the soul from sin, but it also equips us for the spiritual battle in which we are presently engaged; and make no mistake, ours is a spiritual battle: it always has been and always will be.

In addition to these essential sacramental opportunities for grace and reconciliation, the spiritual life is developed slowly and gradually through daily devotions and prayers. The Church is replete with many worthy and time honored devotions, but one among them I think has particular relevance for us in our times and that is the Holy Rosary. The Rosary has been recommended to the faithful for centuries as a prayer of contemplation, a weapon against evil and a source of divine strength and consolation.

For these reasons, I want to invite and encourage you to join me in a special diocesan Rosary crusade for the month of August. I want to sincerely ask that everyone who so chooses, to join me in praying at least five decades of the Holy Rosary every day during

"Put your gifts at the service of one another." 1 Peter 4:10

August. I am encouraged to know that many in this diocese are already devoted each day to the Rosary. I would be so grateful to learn that those who infrequently pray the Holy Rosary might be inspired to join us in this diocesan Rosary crusade.

The Rosary is a simple but powerful prayer, which many of the saints identified as our greatest spiritual weapon, second only to the Sacraments. St. John Paul II called the Rosary his most favorite prayer and promoted it during his long pontificate. In 2002, he wrote a beautiful and inspiring encyclical letter on the Rosary. It is called *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, a letter which I highly recommend. The young visionaries at Fatima were asked by Mary to pray many Rosaries each day. Through the centuries, this devotion has connected us to Mary and to each other as a bond between heaven and earth. You may be interested to know that I recently received a letter from a Protestant pastor, who told me that he prays the Rosary every day. I cannot adequately express how inspired and edified that news left me.

Although the month of October is traditionally dedicated to the rosary, and given our current circumstances, I am of the mind that we should not wait until then, but use this August and its 31 days to deepen our devotion to God through the Blessed Virgin Mary's prayer and her intercession. The month of August also contains some wonderful liturgical feasts and observances that relate well to this special diocesan crusade. Among them are the following: the memorial of St. John Vianney, patron of priests, who himself always prayed the rosary, night and day; we priests should never let a day pass without praying the Rosary, uniting our hearts to Mary and asking Her to bless our ministry. In August, we also celebrate the Feast of the Transfiguration, the fourth Luminous Mystery, the memorial of St. Dominic, to whom tradition tells us Mary gave the rosary to use in defense of the heresies of his day, the memorial of St. Maximilian Kolbe, who founded the Militia of Mary Immaculate, the Solemnity of the Assumption, the fourth Glorious Mystery, the memorial of St. Bernard, who gave the Church one of my favorite prayers, the *Memorare*, the memorial of the Queenship of Mary, the fifth Glorious Mystery and at the end of the month, the memorials of St. Monica and St. Augustine, who lived long before the Rosary was popularized throughout the Church, but whose intercession we can also entreat to pray for the conversion and reconversion of members of our families and parishes. I hope that you will agree that August is a very appropriate month to use the Rosary to deepen our spiritual lives.

Friends, we might be tempted to think that we can do little or nothing in the face of so many modern day trials and challenges; sometimes we feel helpless but as Christians, we can and must always pray. Prayer is not a passive response to life's challenges, or something we do in the absence of something more productive or beneficial; no prayer in all its many forms is an active engagement, calling upon the powers of heaven to come to our assistance. Jesus showed us this example in the Gospels; all the saints demonstrated this spiritual truth and mystery. Might God be calling each of us to deeper prayer and a more God centered life by means of the trials and struggles of our times? I believe God is doing just that.

If you join me in this Rosary crusade for the Diocese of Wichita, you may choose to pray the Rosary anytime and in any manner, either individually or in groups or even better

as a family. You may also pray for any intentions you wish, but I might suggest any or all of the following intentions:

- THE SPEEDY END OF THE PANDEMIC
- FOR PERSECUTED CHRISTIANS
- IN REPARATION FOR THE DESECRATION OF CHURCHES AND RELIGIOUS SYMBOLS
- FOR STUDENTS TO RETURN TO SCHOOL IN A SAFE AND FRUITFUL MANNER AND FOR THEIR PARENTS AND TEACHERS
- FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE FOR ALL, ESPECIALLY THE UNBORN, THE NEW BORN, THE ELDERLY, THE IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE, THE MARGINALIZED, VICTIMS OF RACISM AND DISCRIMINATION, PRISONERS, AND THE POOR AND POWERLESS
- IN REPARATION FOR THE SINS AND FAILURES OF OUR SPIRITUAL LEADERS
- FOR THE STRENGTH AND PERSEVERANCE OF MARRIED PERSONS, FOR UNITY OF FAMILIES, PARISHES, NEIGHBORHOODS, CITIES, STATES AND NATIONS
- THAT ALL OUR LEADERS WILL LEAD WITH INTEGRITY AND COURAGE
- FOR PRIESTLY AND RELIGIOUS VOCATIONS
- FOR THE DYING AND THE DEAD TO BE FOUND HOLY AND WORTHY OF HEAVEN

Thank you for receiving this invitation. I ask that our pastors help me in promoting this crusade by means of their parish bulletins and announcements, as well as through social media. I am praying and hoping that thousands from all over the diocese will choose to participate so that together and through the powerful intercession of Mary, we will emerge from this present darkness with renewed faith and confidence in God. May God bless you all.

+ Carl A. Kemme

Bishop Carl A. Kemme
Bishop of Wichita