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## **Pope Francis: video message Rosary for Italy, “let us help each other hold fast to what really matters”**

“In this unprecedented situation, in which everything seems to be crumbling, let us help each other hold fast to what really matters”. Thus begins Pope Francis’ video message in support of the Rosary prayer for the whole country, an initiative promoted by the Italian Bishops’ Conference (CEI) for the ongoing health emergency. Households, families and religious communities across Italy will pray the Luminous Mysteries at 9:00pm tonight. They will all be symbolically united in prayer, from North to South. “This is the advice I have received in so many letters from your Pastors who, in sharing such a dramatic moment, seek to sustain your hope and your faith with their word”, Pope Francis continued. In backing the Italian Church’s call for prayers at the time of coronavirus, the Pontiff recalled that “the Rosary is the prayer of the humble and of the saints. In its mysteries, they contemplate, along with Mary, the life of Jesus, the merciful face of the Father”. “O, how much we all need to be truly comforted, to be wrapped in loving presence!”, Pope Francis remarked, adding that “we measure the truth of this experience through our relationship with others. At this moment, they are our closest relatives. Let us be close to one another, being the first to be charitable, understanding, patient and forgiving”. “Though you may be confined to your own homes, allow your hearts to expand so they may be available and welcoming to all”, the Holy Father exhorted: “Tonight, we are praying together, entrusting ourselves to the intercession of St. Joseph, Guardian of the Holy Family, Guardian of all our families. Even the carpenter of Nazareth knew the precariousness and bitterness. Though he worried about the future, he knew how to walk through the darkness of certain moments, always letting himself be guided by God’s will without reservation”. “Protect, O Holy Guardian, this our nation. Enlighten those responsible for the common good, so that they might know — like you do — how to care for those entrusted to their responsibility”, the Holy Father’s prayer reads: “Grant intelligence of knowledge to those seeking adequate means for the health and physical well-being of their brothers and sisters. Sustain those who are assisting those in need, even at the cost of their own safety. Bless, O St Joseph, the Church: beginning with her ministers, make her the sign and instrument of your light and your goodness. Accompany, O St Joseph, our families: with your prayerful silence, create harmony between parents and their children, in a special way with the youngest. Preserve the elderly from loneliness: grant that no one might be left in desperation from abandonment and discouragement. Comfort those who are the most frail, encourage those who falter, intercede for the poor. With the Virgin Mother, beg the Lord to liberate the world from every form of pandemic. Amen”.

Valentina Bombelli