LEPANTO
AND A ROOF FOR THE LORD JESUS

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In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

Today, at the threshold of this Marian month of October, we are celebrating the so-called external solemnity of the feast of the Most Holy Virgin Mary of the Rosary. Since the feast itself, 7 October, is not a day off work, the Church nevertheless desires that all Catholics stop, bow down and reflect on this treasure which was entrusted to us by the Most Holy Mother, namely the holy Rosary. That is why on the first Sunday of October the Mass of the feast is celebrated, with a commemoration; hence the second prayer in the Holy Mass is from the 18th Sunday after Pentecost. The Sunday Gospel will be read in place of the Gospel of John. A note for the altar servers: at the end the missal has to be moved, after the Postcommunion we move it, because the Sunday Gospel is not lost, in quotation marks, but is read in place of the Gospel of John.

My dear brethren, this feast of Our Lady of the Rosary was established by the Holy Church to commemorate a great victory, a great victory which the Catholic army won over the Muslim hordes on 7 October 1571 at Lepanto. A victory that was the victory of Our Lady. Of Our Lady, who hastened to save her people from the flood of Islam. My dear brethren, at the head of the Holy Church there stood at that time a great pope, Pope Saint Pius V, the same who codified the Holy Mass of all time, who commanded for all time [?] that it be celebrated by all priests, as the perfect expression of the worship and honour rendered to God by the Holy Church. This holy pope knew perfectly well how Catholics ought to act. And it is worth, my dear brethren, that we look at how the Holy Church reacted at that time to this enormous, mortal threat, which was the flood of Islam. The very same Islam which today is welcomed with open arms.

You have probably seen it, a film is circulating on YouTube from Brazil: the funeral of one of the cardinals, and an imam comes up to receive communion, he holds out his hands, receives the host, he doesn't really know what to do with it, he puts it into his pocket somewhere. Blasphemous behaviour on the part of the one who gave him that communion; seeing him in an imam's robes, he did not hesitate to lay what may well have been the Body of the Lord on his paws. And, interestingly, the imam apologised for his behaviour, for having offended Catholics, whereas the archbishop who gave him communion declared that he had done nothing wrong and has nothing to reproach himself with, because, after all, Vatican Council II teaches that in all religions there are seeds of truth. And since the Lord Jesus sat down to a feast with prostitutes, tax collectors and godless people, he sees nothing wrong in giving communion to unbaptised and unbelieving persons.

My dear brethren, fortunately in 1571 the Church was functioning normally, the hierarchy was Catholic. And so Saint Pius V did exactly what every Catholic should do and what we, too, should do. All our actions must run on two tracks. First, Saint Pius V called on the Catholic kings and princes to form a coalition, to prepare for war, to create an army that would be able to take up the fight against a far more powerful opponent. Second, at the same time he called on the whole Christian people to pray the Rosary, to obtain the victory over the Islamic plague. And this is, my dear brethren, what we too, every Catholic, ought to do in his life.

On the one hand we undertake those material, temporal actions, our efforts, such as, for example, creating places, oratories, in which the Catholic faith can be preserved, in which priests who have been driven out, persecuted for their fidelity to Christ, find shelter, in which, as in the grotto of Bethlehem, that Lord Jesus, for whom there is no place today in the church, will be able to be born here, on the altar, of this Catholic, true Holy Mass. And on the other hand, my dear brethren, these efforts of ours, these endeavours to find a roof for the Lord Jesus, must absolutely be joined with prayer. Steeped in prayer.

TRUST IN GOD'S PROVIDENCE

We must, my dear brethren, learn trust in God's Providence. Something that is enormously difficult today. So many adversities meet us. So many unjust, false accusations, unkind words, mockery. From people who do not understand what the Catholic faith is. From people who have so often been led astray by false prophets, who are most often victims, and not perpetrators [?]. And we must, my dear brethren, learn to accept this with humble submission to the will of God. These crosses which God sends us, with which He tries us, through which He purifies and sanctifies us. It is necessary, my dear brethren, that in fulfilling the request of the Most Holy Mother, we take up our rosaries, bend our knees and ask her for victory. This victory will certainly come, but it has to be prayed for. So always combine these two elements in your action: the material and the spiritual.

Saint Pius V, as the leader, guide and shepherd of the Holy Church, behaved exactly as Moses did several thousand years ago. Moses, who led the chosen people out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage, to the Promised Land, the land flowing with milk and honey. When the Jewish people were wandering through the Sinai peninsula for 40 years, one day they had to fight a battle. A battle with the godless people of the Amalekites. The battle of Rephidim. And Moses prepared for this battle in exactly the same way. First he summoned his closest collaborator, his right hand, Joshua, and ordered him to prepare an army, troops, to work out a plan, a strategy for the battle. And on the day of the battle Moses went up the mountain and stretched out his hands toward Heaven.

HANDS RAISED TOWARD HEAVEN

As we read in Holy Scripture, as long as the hands of Moses were raised, so long did the Jews have the advantage in that battle. When the strength of Moses failed and his hands dropped, then the scale of victory tipped to the side of the enemy. And what do we read in Holy Scripture? Then Aaron and Hur came up to Moses to hold up his hands, so that those hands would remain raised. And this is, my dear brethren, a very small detail at first sight, but so essential in our times. Those who are the shepherds of the Church, those who care for your souls, who are not deserters, are not traitors, those who have devoted their whole lives to priestly service, need prayer and support from the Church, from the faithful. For it is not easy in these times full of storms to keep one's hands raised toward Heaven. It is not easy to face so many fierce, barking sons of the devil around us. And in a particular way those exposed to these attacks are the priests and bishops who desire to remain faithful to our Lord Jesus Christ.

And this is a very important lesson for all of us. That there may never be wanting those who will hold up the priestly hands raised toward Heaven. That there may never be wanting faithful who will surround their spiritual guides, their shepherds, with prayer. A great task, a great responsibility on the part of the faithful, to hold up hands raised toward Heaven. For if those hands are held up, if they are raised, then exactly as God gave the victory to the Israelites then, so He will give it to us too.

And look, is it not the case that these tragic events of which we are witnesses since the time of Vatican Council II are, to a greater or lesser extent, the fruit of there having been no one to hold up the hands raised toward Heaven? That the vigilance of superiors and the prayer of the faithful were lacking? That it was we Catholics who allowed those hands, instead of being raised toward Heaven, toward God, to turn toward the earth, toward temporal affairs? Those hands, which are far holier than the hands of Moses, anointed hands, hands that hold the Body of our Lord Jesus Christ. What we all lacked, my dear brethren, was the spirit of prayer, what we lacked, my dear brethren, was the spirit of battle, and that is why we live in the world in which we live. And may Catholics, my dear brethren, understand this, and may there be found again those who will desire to hold up the priestly hands, which may lead us toward victory. Toward victory through Mary.

Exactly as in 1571 at Lepanto, when humanly speaking it seemed that everything was already lost. That the army which the quarrelling Catholic kings and princes had somehow managed to put together had, humanly speaking, no great chance in a clash with the mighty, well-organised, drilled and battle-hardened army of the sultan. But that is only, my dear brethren, humanly speaking. And Pope Saint Pius V understood this perfectly, may he be a model of action for us. Let us create these oratories, chapels, and let us surround them, fill them with a spirit of prayer, a spirit of trust. Let us beseech the Immaculate Virgin to shelter us with her mantle, to protect us from the attacks of the enemy. From attacks which will certainly be ever sharper and ever more ferocious. The devil will wave his hooves and tail ever more and more, because he knows that his defeat is already drawing near. And the nearer his defeat, the more aggressive he will be. Which all of us gathered here will certainly experience.

And I am convinced that we all understand that this is unavoidable and necessary. This sacrifice on our part. This pain of heart felt by many of you because of the lack of spiritual unity in the family, because of the lack of understanding from those closest to you. All this, my dear brethren, purifies us, strengthens us, sanctifies us. If only it is offered through the hands of the Most Holy Mother to our Lord Jesus Christ, it will contribute to the conversion of so many poor sinners who today understand nothing, who do not want to listen to the truth, who have turned their backs on God.

My dear brethren, a great task lies before us. A battle far greater than the one that we remember at all [?]. But before us there is also a triumph. Even greater than that which the Christian army won then. An army united under the sign, the banner of the Cross. An army united by the Most Holy Sacrifice of the Holy Mass, by the Holy Rosary. Let us therefore not be afraid, but let us go into battle [?], spurred on by the prince of the heavenly host, Saint Michael the Archangel, to whom the Holy Church paid honour in recent days. Remember, when he saw the rebellion of Lucifer: in answer to the Luciferian *non serviam*, "I will not serve," Michael cried out *Quis ut Deus*, "Who is like God?" And that cry of his became his name. May that cry of his accompany us, remind us why we fight, for whom we fight, where we are going. May the Immaculate Virgin, Queen of the Holy Rosary, be our intercessor, our guide and our comforter. Amen.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.