

A Rosary with Blessed Pier Giorgio

INTRODUCTION

*“I’m going up to Oropa and I’ll pray for you at the feet of the Black Madonna, even though my prayers are only worth a little bit, and . . . I’ll send you a token of remembrance which should hopefully always bind us in **a bond that is not material: a rosary made with seeds from the garden.**”*

(from a letter to Marco Beltramo, 22 October 1924)

Dear Friends,

Today is the 116th birthday of Pier Giorgio, and like every year, we do not want to let this day pass without making him a gift—responding to his invitation: *“I would like us to make a pact that knows neither earthly boundaries nor temporal limits: union in prayer.”* (to I. Bonini 1/15/1925)

You may know that this year marks the 100th anniversary of Our Lady’s apparition in Fatima, where she called upon all of her children to renew their devotion to the Rosary. Let us approach our mother, whom Bl. Pier Giorgio loved so tenderly, by praying the rosary united to him and to those who love him all around the world.

As our intention we shall all together pray for the youth all across the world, in view of the upcoming "Synod for Young People, the Faith, and Vocational Discernment". We want to ask Pier Giorgio that young people may reach for the rosary with the same enthusiasm as he did - he who always carried a Rosary in his pocket - and under the care of Our Lady may discern their vocation.

In this very significant year, we can only imagine how enthusiastic Pier Giorgio would be to give to his friends so many Rosaries, *made with seeds from his own garden*. One day a friend who saw him leave a church, with the Rosary still in his hand asked him, “Pier Giorgio, have you become a religious bigot?” “No, he replied, *I remained a Christian!*”

Opening Hymn *ad libitum***Introductory Prayers**

Sign of the Cross

Apostles' Creed

for the intentions of the Holy Father:

Our Father

3 Hail Marys

Glory Be

Opening Reading

From a letter to Marco Beltramo, Pier Giorgio's best friend, sent by Clementina Luotto on the day of Pier Giorgio's funeral, two days after his death:

"That night with Pier Giorgio on the train from Turin to Oulx, in all that snowy whiteness, the Lord gave us the priceless gift of seeing him in his many different aspects: wearing that raincoat, helping the railway men to carry the luggage, and then going up and down along the train, bogged down by snow and water, reciting aloud his beloved poetry . . . Then he came back into the train compartment – do you remember? – and everyone complained about the loud noise he was making. So he took his seat quietly, in the place next to me, on the other side of the arm rest. I thought he was sleeping, but I realized that he was saying the rosary, his grey rosary – the keepsake which he left to each of us – which was precious to me two days ago, but today is so sacred that that I would give everything not to lose it."

The First Luminous Mystery
THE BAPTISM OF JESUS IN THE JORDAN RIVER

From the Gospel according to St. Matthew (3:13-17)

Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. John tried to prevent Him, saying, "I need to be baptized by You, and yet You are coming to me?" Jesus said to him in reply, "Allow it for now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness." Then he allowed Him. After Jesus was baptized, He came up from the water and behold, the heavens were opened for Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon Him. And a voice came from the heavens, saying, "This is My beloved Son, with Whom I am well pleased."

Reflection

The faith of Pier Giorgio was as clear as his eyes, as strong and broad as his shoulders, and as bright as his smile. It was always fresh and new like water, like the water of Baptism which gives life. On 15th January 1925, he wrote to his friend Isidoro Bonini: "*While I am studying, every now and then, I ask myself: Shall I go on trying to lead a good life? Do I have the strength to persevere to the end after all? In this tremendous conflict of doubts the Faith given to me in Baptism suggests to me with a sure voice: 'By yourself you can do nothing, but if you have God as the centre of your every action, then yes you will reach the goal.'*"

Our Father
10 Hail Marys
Glory Be

Conclusion

Father Rinaldo Ruffini remembered this about Pier Giorgio: "*How many times in hotels or in mountain shelters, in the evening, all of a sudden Pier Giorgio's voice rose above the commotion which he himself had instigated, chanting the holy rosary with his out-of-tune voice so loudly that other boarders who were not from his group were compelled to join in.*"

The Second Luminous Mystery
THE WEDDING AT CANA

From the Gospel according to St. John (2:1-5)

There was a wedding at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and His disciples were also invited to the wedding. When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus said to Him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, how does your concern affect Me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servers, "Do whatever He tells you."

Reflection

A miracle changes water into wine, and a miracle transforms a rich young man, a happy and strong young man, into a saint. The same grace works the miracle, and the same secret obtains the grace: that secret is Mary.

Thirty years after the death of Pier Giorgio, his friend Marco Beltramo said: *“If you were to ask me what was the sure means upon which he depended to accomplish such an enduring masterpiece of a life that was intimately united to God, I would not hesitate to say that the secret of Pier Giorgio’s spiritual perfection is to be found in his devotion to Mary. A day never passed that did not find him at the feet of his heavenly Mother with his rosary, his favorite prayer, entwined in his fingers. . . . There were many times when members of his family would find him in his bedroom, asleep next to his bed, with his rosary beads held tightly in his hands.”*

Our Father
10 Hail Marys
Glory Be

Conclusion

Father Pietro Ocelli remembered this: *“As soon as he got off the tram in the Monterosa suburbs of Turin to visit the poor . . . Pier Giorgio, holding the beads of his huge rosary of Fra Savonarola in his right hand, suddenly whispered a command with great politeness: “The First Sorrowful Mystery: The Agony of Jesus in the Garden. Our Father . . .” In this way on many Fridays, going up and down every street and alley, until we arrived at the shacks of the homeless, we fingered our beads praying the Sorrowful Mysteries.”*

The Third Luminous Mystery **THE PROCLAMATION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**

From the Gospel according to St. Matthew (5:1-10)

When Jesus saw the crowds, He went up the mountain, and after He had sat down, His disciples came to Him. He began to teach them, saying: “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land. Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy. Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

Reflection

If we are going to proclaim the Kingdom of God, then we must be meek, we must be poor in spirit, we must be clean of heart . . . We must be men and women of the eight Beatitudes, as Pope John Paul II called Pier Giorgio “the man of the Beatitudes”, so that we can have the courage to raise our voices in the midst of the crowd and proclaim the Truth.

Pier Giorgio wrote this to his friend Isidoro Bonini on 29th January 1925: *“The Faith is the only anchor of salvation, and we should hang on to it strongly. Without it, what would our whole life be? Nothing, or even worse, it would be lived in vain, because in the world there is only sorrow, and sorrow without faith is unbearable. But sorrow fueled by the little torch of faith becomes a beautiful*

thing, because its fire purifies the soul for the struggle. In today's struggle I cannot but thank God, because in His infinite mercy He has willed to grant this sorrow to my heart, so that by means of these sharp thorns I might return to a life that is more interior, more spiritual."

Our Father
10 Hail Marys
Glory Be

Conclusion

One day a friend who saw Pier Giorgio leave the church in a hurry, with his Rosary still in his hand, teased him, "Pier Giorgio, have you become a religious bigot?" "No," he replied, "*I have remained a Christian*"

The Fourth Luminous Mystery **THE TRANSFIGURATION**

From the Gospel according to St. Luke (9:28b-31)

Jesus took Peter, John and James and went up the mountain to pray. While He was praying, His face changed in appearance and His clothing became dazzling white. And behold, two men were conversing with Him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His exodus that He was going to accomplish in Jerusalem.

Reflection

Toward the top: a pure heart is able to discern, up there on the summit, that Face which is approached in dazzling whiteness. A heart in love with God and with the mountains is able "*to contemplate in that pure air the Greatness of the Creator*". A strong heart is able to transfigure an obscure, winding path into a way that is clearly seen in resplendent light. It is able to see even suffering and death in a new light.

Pier Giorgio wrote this to Marco Beltramo on 20th December 1924: "*Death: what does this word mean? If you understand death in the ordinary sense of the word, then I am alive now, if my senses are telling me right. But if you understand the true meaning of death, then maybe not only have I died but, alas, sometimes I have been raised up only to die again. I would like to set out on the right path, but at every step I stumble and fall. And so I urge you to pray for me as much as you can, so that the day which Divine Providence wills to be the end of my burden will arrive, but by the right path.*"

Our Father
10 Hail Marys
Glory Be

Conclusion

Luciana Frassati remembers that, in the last hours of his life, Pier Giorgio "*was hardly able to speak anymore, but a bit of life remained in his eyes, which were fixed on the face of the Madonna.*"

The Fifth Luminous Mystery
THE INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST

From the Gospel according to St. Luke (22:14-20)

When the hour came, Jesus took His place at table with the apostles. He said to them, "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer, for, I tell you, I shall not eat it again until there is fulfilment in the kingdom of God." Then He took a cup, gave thanks, and said, "Take this share it among yourselves; for I tell you that from this time on I shall not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes." Then He took the bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, saying, "This is My Body, which will be given for you; do this in memory of Me." And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My Blood, which will be shed for you."

Reflection

"Jesus visits me every day in the Eucharist," said Pier Giorgio, revealing that intimate, divine encounter which produced in him a profound desire for Holy Communion, from which sprang forth a dream: *"I would like for us to pledge a pact which knows no earthly boundaries nor limits of time: union in prayer."* And from this also came a commitment: *"I am sending you a keepsake which should always bind us together in a bond that is not material: it is a rosary made with seeds from the garden."*

Thirty years after Pier Giorgio's death, Marco Beltramo said of him: *"In his garden he grew a plant whose hard seeds he collected and gave to the nuns, because they made rosaries from them which he then gave to his friends. Sometimes we sang our way through those rosaries with their huge and gaudy beads, and we said that they were the bequest of an old mother abbess. But we made sure to carry with us, as we carry to this day, the rosary which has become the most beautiful and most precious gift that he gave us."*

Our Father
10 Hail Marys
Glory Be

Conclusion

"In the winter of 1926-27 (the year after the death of Pier Giorgio), we were going up to Sauze D'Oulx, in the pitch-black night, and I heard a little sound coming from the pocket of my companion on the outing. It was the jingling of the rosary that Pier Giorgio had given to him. I asked him, "Are you afraid?" He replied, "No, I'm saying a decade of the rosary with Pier Giorgio. He often prayed when he passed by here." I said, "Do you want us to pray with him?" He responded, "Yes, Pier Giorgio hears prayers said along with him under the mountain sky. From the place of peace he hears his friends, just like he used to when they said to him over and over again in difficult moments: 'Pier Giorgio, help us . . . you're so strong!'"

Hymn: *Salve, Regina* or “Hail, Holy Queen Enthroned Above”

Litany of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Lord, have mercy.	Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.	Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.	Lord, have mercy.
God our Father in heaven	have mercy on us.
God the Son, Redeemer of the World	have mercy on us.
God the Holy Spirit	have mercy on us.
Holy Trinity, one God	have mercy on us.
Holy Mary	pray for us.
Holy Mother of God	pray for us.
Holy Virgin of virgins	pray for us.
Chosen Daughter of the Father	pray for us.
Mother of Christ the King of the ages	pray for us.
Glory of the Holy Spirit	pray for us.
Virgin Daughter of Zion	pray for us.
Virgin poor and humble	pray for us.
Virgin meek and obedient	pray for us.
Handmaid obedient in faith	pray for us.
Mother of the Lord	pray for us.
Helper of the Redeemer	pray for us.
Full of grace	pray for us.
Fountain of beauty	pray for us.
Treasury of virtue and wisdom	pray for us.
First fruit of the redemption	pray for us.
Perfect disciple of Christ	pray for us.
Purest image of the Church	pray for us.
Woman of the New Covenant	pray for us.
Woman clothed with the sun	pray for us.
Woman crowned with stars	pray for us.
Lady of great goodness	pray for us.
Lady of forgiveness	pray for us.
Lady of our families	pray for us.
Joy of the New Israel	pray for us.
Splendor of the Holy Church	pray for us.
Pride of the human race	pray for us.
Advocate of grace	pray for us.
Minister of divine mercy	pray for us.

Help of God's people pray for us.

Queen of love pray for us.

Queen of mercy pray for us.

Queen of peace pray for us.

Queen of angels pray for us.

Queen of patriarchs pray for us.

Queen of prophets pray for us.

Queen of apostles pray for us.

Queen of martyrs pray for us.

Queen of confessors of the faith pray for us.

Queen of virgins pray for us.

Queen of all saints pray for us.

Queen conceived without original sin pray for us.

Queen assumed into heaven pray for us.

Queen of all the earth pray for us.

Queen of heaven pray for us.

Queen of the universe pray for us.

Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the world: spare us, O Lord!

Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the world: graciously hear us, O Lord!

Lamb of God, You take away the sins of the world: have mercy on us!

Pray for us, Holy Mother of God that we may be made worthy
of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray:

*(All say together the Prayer of St. Bernard to the Virgin from Canto 33 of Paradise from The Divine Comedy by the great Italian poet, Dante Alighieri. **Pier Giorgio often recited this aloud from memory, and had copied it out and tacked it on his bedroom door.)***

O Virgin Mother, daughter of your Son,
humbler yet higher than all creatures,
predestined object of the Eternal Will!

You gave such nobility to our flesh
that He Who made humanity
did not disdain to make Himself a creature of His own making.

Within your womb that Love was re-enchanted
Whose heat has germinated this fair flower
to blossom thus in everlasting peace.

You are our noonday torch of charity,
and you are for us mortals here below
the living font of hope.

O Lady, you are so noble and of so much worth,
that anyone who desires grace but does not have recourse to you
foolishly wishes that his desire should fly without wings!

Your gracious kindness
not only gives help to the one who asks,
but oftentimes will generously anticipate his request.

In you are found mercy and magnificence and pity,
for in you is concentrated
whatever good there may be in any creature.

Concluding Prayer by the Leader

Lord Jesus,
 You have taught us that if we are to be Your disciples
 we must be open to Your love and follow in Your steps.
Give us the courage to fly high,
 to flee every temptation to be mediocre or ordinary.
Enable us to aspire to greatness, as Pier Giorgio did,
 and to open our hearts in joy to Your call to holiness.
Free us from the fear of failure
 or from the false humility which protests that You could not be calling us.
We want to be Your disciples, Lord,
 firmly and forever united to You, as Pier Giorgio was.
Tightly holding the Rosary, that unbreakable rope which keeps us tied to You,
 we ask You for the strength to follow You faithfully
 along the way which leads us "Toward the Top".

Grant this, Lord Jesus,
 living and reigning with the Father and the Holy Spirit,
 one God for ever and ever.

ALL Amen.

Blessing

If a priest or deacon is present, he gives the blessing. If the gathering is led by a lay leader, he or she says, as all make the Sign of the Cross:

Leader The Lord bless us and keep us from evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

ALL Amen.

Closing Hymn *ad libitum*