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# Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network

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## **The Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network, a participation in the dynamic of the Sacred Heart of Jesus**

We began the “recreation” of the Apostleship of Prayer almost ten years ago. These long spiritual processes do not depend on our own powers or capacities but rather on our availability to the Spirit of the Lord, because it is He who is leading. This recreation was necessary so that this spiritual treasure of the Church could be communicated to more people, especially to the new generations and also so that we might be more faithful to the mission that the Holy See has confided to us since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Our mission is to pray and to live the challenges of humanity and of the mission of the Church expressed in the prayer intentions of the Pope. This is not possible without a deep communion with the Heart of Jesus. For this reason we propose to those who desire to become part of this network a spiritual itinerary, the “Way of the Heart,” which leads our heart to be deeply united with the Heart of Jesus, in a mission of compassion for the world.

**This process of recreation does not change the Apostleship of Prayer into something totally new or different, but rather helps us to deepen our fidelity to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.** Misunderstandings, fears and insecurities have been generated along the way. This is normal and to be hoped for, since it is sometimes difficult to understand the dynamic of how continuity is associated to what is new. This to say that the new gives continuity to what already exists. Is this not what Jesus says when he speaks of the new patch on the old clothing? (Mark 2:8-22) As the Gospels demonstrate to us, there are always misunderstandings when the Spirit of the Lord makes something new.

The current process of recreation going forward and led by the Spirit of the Lord finds its source in the reform made by Fr. Henri Ramière in 1861. This Jesuit priest had to give a new dynamism to the Apostleship of Prayer, explaining to its members that devotion to the Heart of Jesus was part of the proposed way. With the publication of the first issue of the Messenger of the Heart of Jesus, he invited them to pray for the intentions of the Heart of Jesus. After 1879 these intentions were formulated each month by the Pope and confided to the Apostleship of Prayer. **Through this invitation, Ramière saw that this prayer was apostolic and open to the world and, that through the prayer of offering, we are united to the Heart of Jesus, at the service of his mission.**

Apostolic or missionary prayer is prayer that prepares us for the mission of Christ in our daily life. **The prayer of offering makes us available to his mission.** This attitude of interior availability to the mission is an opening of the heart and docility to the Spirit of the Lord. For this reason the title of the document of recreation of the Apostleship of Prayer carries the

name: “A way with Jesus in Apostolic readiness.” What Fr. Ramière called “prayer and zeal” (in the sense of care, diligence, commitment) for the Kingdom of Christ, today, we call “prayer and action,” since true prayer prepares us for action, opens us to others and to the world.

Ramière synthesized the Apostleship of Prayer in three characteristics: “[a] prayer, as the universal means of action; [b] association, as a necessary condition for prayer to be effective, [c] the union with the Heart of Jesus, as the source of life for the association.” What was called “association” we now call “network,” a word which better expresses the original intention. Ramière explained this clearly, saying that “this is not an association like others, nor a new work to be added to others, but rather a new connection that unites all the ecclesial associations in the same focus” for the mission of the Church. (See the publication: “L’Apostolat de la Prière” 1861.) Saying that the Apostleship of Prayer was the “holy tie of Christian hearts united to the Heart of Jesus” is equivalent to the current expression “a network of hearts united to the Heart of Jesus.”

This network of hearts is the Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network, to which the Holy Father recommends praying for his prayer intentions, which express challenges of humanity and of the mission of the Church. Challenges that are the fruit of his gaze and universal discernment and which are the intentions of the Heart of Jesus. Forming part of this Prayer Network leads us to grow in availability to the mission of compassion of Jesus for the world, entering into the dynamic of the Heart of Jesus.

**How can you become a member?** Two ways of participation are offered: an “open” form and another of “membership and commitment,” which is available at both the personal and community levels. These modalities are a reinterpretation of the three grades of participation of the Statutes of 1896, which were present in many countries.

**The open participation**, accessible to anyone who has been baptized, consists of praying for the prayer intentions of the Pope, in particular on the First Friday of each month, “the monthly Day of Prayer for his intentions.”

**The way of membership and commitment** is a more active commitment at either the personal or community level. The personal level involves three moments of prayer to the Lord as part of daily life.

These prayers are present on our prayer platform “Click to Pray”:

- “With Jesus in the morning” propose a prayer of offering
- “With Jesus during the day”, a prayer that permits us to calibrate the heart and relaunch what remains of the day.
- “With Jesus in the night”, a rereading to recognize our availability to the mission that the Lord has given us.

As the statutes say: “this prayer and apostolic availability is always united to Mary, the Queen of the Apostles” (2.1.)

For those who feel a call to live more closely united to the Heart of Jesus and desire to formalize their personal offering, commitment and service in this sense, are proposed **the**

**consecration or “alliance with Jesus Christ.”** This makes them “apostles of prayer,” assuming the commitment to be available for service in their communities, parishes, schools, etc., as members of the Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network (including the Eucharistic Youth Movement.)

**On the community level a *parish or a Christian community*** can desire to manifest its commitment with this ecclesial service, today a pontifical work, to specifically unite to pray for the intentions of the Pope, and, in particular, choosing the First Fridays of each month as days dedicated to this end.

Our most numerous and essential communal commitments are the among the ***groups of the Apostleship of Prayer***, born of our spiritual tradition and present in the parishes. These groups form the Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network, are found in many countries and are the visible part of the iceberg that we make up. Without these groups, which faithfully maintain the call of the spiritual treasure that the Lord has confided to us, we would never have been able to begin the recreation of this ecclesial service. In many countries they have a diocesan structure and in some cases they have their own internal instruction and rules. They are invited to integrate themselves, at their rhythm, in the process of “recreation” in order to deepen their spiritual foundation and return in encountering the dynamic of the Heart of Jesus of their origins.

This process of recreation of the groups of the Apostleship of Prayer requires time since the rhythm of each one needs to be respected. Persons who discover the Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network can form **communities which already completely reflect the “refoundation.”** The Way of the Heart is the spiritual itinerary that embodies this refoundation.

These communities not only pray and assume an interior attitude of availability to collaborate with the mission of the Church, but also mobilize themselves concretely, looking for ways to put themselves at the service of the challenges of humanity and of the needs of the Church. Those who join these communities promise, personally and as a group, to live according to the dynamic of the Heart of Jesus. At the same time, the statutes say (2.2) they will support our youth branch, the **Eucharist Youth Movement**, where it exists or other pastoral youth programs (of the parish, college, etc.)

This entire process of recreation can create misunderstandings, tensions, and fears. What is important is to put our confidence in the Lord, since it is He who is leading us. The Pope’s Worldwide Prayer Network (Apostleship of Prayer) is essential for the mission of the Church, since there is no mission, docile to the Spirit of the Lord, without prayer. Today as yesterday the Lord gives us his fire, from his heart.

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