



¡Adorada sea la Santa Faz de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo!

**IGLESIA CRISTIANA PALMARIANA
DE LOS CARMELITAS DE LA SANTA FAZ**

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One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Palmarian Church



FOURTH APOSTOLIC LETTER

SOME ORIENTATIONS.

**THE HISTORY OF THE INFANT JESUS OF PRAGUE,
OF OUR MOTHER OF PERPETUAL SUCCOUR AND OF MARY AUXILIATRIX**

We, Peter III, Sovereign Pontiff, Vicar of Christ, Successor of Saint Peter, Servant of the servants of God, Patriarch of Palmar de Troya, *de Glória Ecclesiæ*, Herald of the Lord God of Hosts, Good Shepherd of souls, Aflame with the Zeal of Elias and Defender of the Rights of God and of the Church.

Before all, We wish from Our Papal Heart to express Our gratitude for all that you did for the feasts of the 12th and 13th of October; for having made the effort to be present at the solemn ceremonies on those two days, and the affection and loving-kindness you dispensed and showed to the Vicar of Christ on earth. We wish to manifest the same gratitude to all for the hearty welcome in Our journeys to different nations.

Profit well from the Holy Masses and other Sacraments so that they be for your sanctification and final perseverance.

We continue asking for prayers from the whole Church so as to be able to guide the Barque of the Church with helm firm and secure.

We have Our conscience quite at peace. We struggle every day to perfect and sanctify Ourselves!

The Palmarian Church is the second Noah's Ark. For a total of one hundred and twenty years Noah preached penance and repentance, and no one paid him any attention. Of these one hundred and twenty years, Noah spent one hundred years building the Ark. The Palmarian Church will soon reach the fiftieth anniversary of her first Apparition, and soon will reach the fortieth anniversary of the Papacy and of the Church in the desert.

Noah constructed the Ark in a waterless valley, and was deemed mad until God intervened and everything changed. It is the same with the Palmarian Church: God is going to intervene, but we do not know when. Just as with Noah, they consider us to be mad, and we have to have patience, humility and perseverance. When we least expect it, God is going to act. Everything in the Apocalypse that is still to happen is just a question of time.

We, Peter III, by means of this Apostolic Letter, and with great jubilee, desire the history of three very important Church devotions to be made known, as there are copies of these three Sacred Images on the altars of the Cathedral-Basilica of Our Crowned Mother of Palmar, and almost no one knows their history. Thus it is Our desire to increase devotion to them yet further.

Origin of devotion to the Infant Jesus of Prague

In 1620 Saint Ferdinand II, Emperor of Germany, to manifest his gratitude to Our Lord for an eminent victory gained in battle, in the city of Prague founded a monastery of Carmelite Fathers. When those excellent religious arrived, Bohemia was undergoing times of extreme difficulty, ravaged by cruel wars which kept Prague victim of the most unspeakable calamities, to such a point that the Carmelite monastery

itself lacked the indispensable means for survival and providing for the most elementary needs of life. At that time the pious Princess Polixena Lobkowitz lived in Prague, and she, feeling in her soul the Carmelites' urgent needs, decided to entrust them with a small wax statue 48 cm high, which represented a beautiful Child God, standing with his right hand raised in the act of blessing, while his left held a gilded globe. His countenance was enchanting and full of grace, the tunic and mantle had been prepared by the princess herself who, when giving the statue to the religious told them: "My Fathers, I entrust you with the dearest thing I possess in this world: honour this Infant Jesus greatly and you will lack nothing."



Princess Polixena Lobkowitz was the daughter of the chancellor of the Czech kingdom and a Spanish noblewoman, and her mother gave her the image of the Divine Infant Jesus for her protection.

The statue was received with gratitude and placed in the interior oratory of the monastery, where it was the object of veneration by all those good Fathers, prominent among them Father Cyril, who in all truth could be called the apostle of the Divine Infant Jesus of Prague.

The august donor's promise was fulfilled to the letter, and the wonderful effects of the protection of the Divine Child were not long in being felt, as very soon and on several occasions, prodigies took place and the monastery's needs were miraculously succoured.

Meanwhile, war broke out again in Bohemia. In 1631 the Saxon army seized the city of Prague. The Carmelite Fathers believed it prudent to move to Munich.

Devotion to the Infant Jesus was forgotten during this time, so disastrous, especially for Prague. The heretics destroyed the church, sacked the monastery, invaded the interior oratory, made mockery of the statue of the Infant Jesus, and having broken its hands, threw it scornfully to the ground behind the altar.

The following year, the enemy withdrew from Prague and the religious were able to return to their monastery, but no one remembered the precious statue. Doubtless for that reason the monastery found itself reduced to misery like the rest of the population, as the religious lacked food for themselves and the indispensable means for restoring their house.

But after nearly seven years of such desolation, Father Cyril returned to Prague in the year 1637, when Bohemia was in imminent danger of succumbing and even of losing the invaluable gift of the Faith, and the city itself was surrounded on all sides by enemies. In such circumstances, and when the Father Guardian was exhorting his religious to beseech God to put an end to so many evils, Father Cyril spoke to him of the unforgettable statue of the Divine Child and obtained permission to search for it. He found it at last among the rubble behind the altar. He cleaned it, covered it with kisses and tears and, as it still wonderfully conserved its countenance intact, exposed it in the choir for the veneration of the religious, who full of confidence in its protection, fell to their knees before the Divine Infant and implored Him to be their refuge, strength and protection in every sense.

From the moment it was enthroned in its place of honour, the enemy raised the siege and the monastery found itself provided at once with all that the religious needed.

Father Cyril found himself one day at prayer before the statue when he clearly heard these words: "Take pity on me and I will take pity on you. Give me back my hands and I will give you back peace. The more you honour me, so much the more will I bless you."

In effect, the hands were missing, something that Father Cyril had not noticed on finding it, beside himself with joy as he was. The good Father, surprised, immediately ran to the Father Superior's cell and recounted the happening, asking him to have the statue repaired. The Superior refused, alleging the extreme poverty of the monastery. Jesus' humble devotee was called to assist a dying man, Benedict Maskoning, who gave him a hundred florins as alms. He took them to the Superior in the conviction that he would have the statue repaired

with them, but the Superior judged that it was better to buy another one more beautiful, and this he did. The Lord did not delay long in showing His displeasure; for on the same day of the new image's inauguration, a candelabrum, well and securely fixed to the wall, became detached and fell on top of the statue, reducing it to smithereens. At the same time, the Father Superior fell ill and could not finish his term of office.

A new Superior having been elected, Father Cyril went back to implore him to have the statue repaired, but received a fresh repulse. Then, without losing heart, he turned to the Most Holy Virgin. Hardly had he finished his prayer when he was called to the church; a lady of venerable aspect approached him and placed a considerable alms in his hands, and disappeared, without anyone having seen her enter or leave the church. Full of joy, Father Cyril went to report the happening to the Superior, who nevertheless gave him no more than half a florin (25 centavos), insufficient for the purpose, and everything stayed as it was.

The monastery found itself subject to new calamities; the religious had no means of paying the rent for a terrain they had leased and which produced nothing. The flocks died, plague ravaged the city; many Carmelites, including the Superior, suffered this scourge. All turned to the Infant Jesus. The Superior humbled himself and promised to celebrate ten Masses before the statue and spread its worship. The situation improved considerably, but as the statue continued in the same state, Father Cyril did not cease to present his complaints before his generous protector, when he heard these words from his divine lips: "Place me at the entrance to the sacristy, and you will find someone to take pity on me".

Effectively, an unknown man appeared who, noting that the beautiful Child had no hands, spontaneously offered to have them replaced. He did not delay in receiving his recompense, for in a few days he won a lawsuit he had almost lost, by which he saved his honour and his fortune.

The innumerable benefits which everyone obtained from the miraculous Child multiplied the number of his devotees from day to day. For that reason the Carmelites wished to build a public chapel, taking into account that the place where it was to be built had already been indicated to Father Cyril by the Most Blessed Virgin, but the means were lacking and besides, they feared to undertake this new construction at a time when the calvinists were razing every church to the ground. They were satisfied with placing it in the exterior Chapel, on the main altar, until the year 1642, in which Princess Lobkowitz ordered a new sanctuary to be built, inaugurated in 1644, on the day of the feast of the Most Holy Name of Jesus.

People came from everywhere to prostrate themselves before the miraculous Child, the poor, the rich, the sick, in a word every class of people found the remedy for their tribulations in him.

In 1655, Count Martinitz, Grand Marquis of Bohemia, donated a precious enamelled crown of gold with pearls and diamonds. The Reverend Don José de Corte placed it on the Infant Jesus in a solemn coronation ceremony.

The innumerable graces and wonders of the "little Great one" (thus is the Infant Jesus of Prague called in Germany), were broadcast to the most distant regions, so that His worship spread in a prodigious way.

An image of the Infant Jesus of Prague is venerated in the Palmarian Chapel of Unterschwandorf. Saint Elisabeth Steppacher née Bous, when a child, fell grievously ill with meningitis, and the doctor told her mother to pray for her daughter's health, as but few with this sickness escape serious consequences. The mother left it in God's hands, and the family prayed before an image of the Infant Jesus of Prague. The girl became miraculously cured, and the news spread throughout the town. Years later, her husband, Saint John Steppacher, placed the Most Holy Infant Jesus in a prominent place in his home at Unterschwandorf, as He had miraculously cured his wife of meningitis when she was thirteen.

In the Cathedral-Basilica of Our Crowned Mother of Palmar, there is an image of the Infant Jesus of Prague on the altar of Crowned Saint Teresa of Jesus.

Our Mother of Perpetual Succour

The icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Succour, painted on wood, 53 cm by 42 cm, is of the Immaculate Mother with the Child Jesus. The Divine Child is observing two angels who are showing him the instruments of his future Passion. With his two hands, he is holding fast to his Most Holy Mother, who bears him in her arms. There is a tradition which says that the icon was painted by the evangelist Saint Lucas.

In the XV century, the beautiful painting of Our Mother of Perpetual Succour was in the possession of a wealthy merchant in the isle of Crete in the Mediterranean Sea. He was a very pious man and a devotee of the Virgin Mary. How the painting came to be in his hands is not known. Was it entrusted to him for reasons of

security, to protect it from the Saracens? What is certain is that the merchant was resolved to prevent the picture of the Virgin from being destroyed as had happened with so many others.

For protection, the merchant decided to take the painting to Italy. He packed his belongings, closed down his business and boarded a ship heading for Rome. On the voyage a violent storm was unleashed and everyone aboard feared the worst. The merchant took the picture of Our Mother, held it up on high, and implored succour. The Most Holy Virgin responded to his prayer with a miracle. The sea became calm and the ship reached the port of Rome safely.

The merchant had a well loved friend in the city of Rome, so he decided to spend a while with him before going on ahead. With great joy he showed him the picture, and predicted to him that one day the entire world would render homage to Our Mother of Perpetual Succour.

Some time later, the merchant fell grievously ill. Feeling that his days were numbered, he called his friend to his bedside and asked him to promise that after his death he would put the picture of the Virgin in a worthy or distinguished church for public veneration. The friend agreed to the promise but did not fulfil it so as to please his wife who had become fond of the image.

But Divine Providence had not brought the painting to Rome so as to be the property of one family, but to be venerated by the entire world, just as the merchant had prophesied. Our Mother appeared to the man on three occasions, telling him that he ought to place the painting in a church, otherwise something terrible would happen. The man discussed the way to comply with the Virgin with his wife, but she made fun of him, saying that he was a visionary. The man was afraid of upsetting his wife, so that nothing was done. At last, Our Mother appeared to him again and told him that in order for Her painting to leave that house, he would have to go first. Suddenly the man fell grievously ill, and in a few days, died. His wife was very attached to the painting and tried to convince herself that it would be better protected in her own home. And so, day by day, she put off parting with the image. One day, her little daughter of six years went rushing up to her with the news that a beautiful and radiant Lady had appeared to her while she was looking at the painting. The Lady had told her to tell her mother and her grandmother that Our Mother of Perpetual Succour desired to be placed in a church; and that otherwise everyone in the house would die.

The girl's mother was frightened and promised to obey the Lady. A friend who lived nearby heard of the apparition, and went to see the mother and ridiculed all that had happened. The neighbour tried to persuade her friend to keep the picture, saying that if it were hers, she would not pay any attention to dreams and visions. She had hardly finished speaking when she began to feel such terrible pain that she thought she would die. Full of pain, she began to invoke Our Mother for pardon and help. The Virgin heard her prayer. The neighbour touched the painting with a contrite heart and was instantly healed. She then went on to implore the widow to obey Our Lady once and for all.

The widow began asking herself in what church she should put the painting, when Heaven itself replied. The Virgin again appeared to the girl and told her to tell her mother that she wanted the painting to be placed in the church situated between the basilica of Saint Mary Major and that of Saint John Lateran. That Church was Apostle Saint Matthew's.

The lady hastened to speak with the superior of the Augustinians, who were those in charge of the church. She informed him regarding all the circumstances related to the picture. The painting was taken to the church in solemn procession on the 27th of March 1499. On the way from the widow's residence to the church, a man touched the painting and recovered the use of an arm which had been paralysed. They hung the painting



over the church's main altar, where it stayed for almost three hundred years. Loved and venerated by everyone in Rome as a truly miraculous painting, it served as the means for countless miracles, cures and graces.

In 1798, the French army commanded by Napoleon took the city of Rome, and on the pretext of fortifying Rome's defences, destroyed thirty churches, among them that of Saint Matthew, which was razed to the ground. Together with the church, many venerable relics and statues were lost. One of the Augustinian Fathers, just in time, had succeeded in removing the picture secretly.

When the Pope, who had been Napoleon's prisoner, returned to Rome, he gave the Augustinians the monastery of Saint Eusebius, and afterwards the house and Church of Saint Mary in Posterula. A famous painting of Our Lady of Grace was already placed in that church, so that the miraculous painting of Our Mother of Perpetual Succour was placed in the private chapel of the Augustinian Fathers, in Posterula. There it stayed for sixty-four years, almost forgotten.

Meanwhile, at the instance of the Pope, the Superior General of the Redemptorists established their main see in Rome where they constructed a monastery and the Church of Saint Alphonsus. One of the Fathers, the historian of the house, carried out a study on the district of Rome in which they lived. In his investigations, he found many references to the ancient Church of Saint Matthew, and the miraculous painting of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour.

One day he decided to tell his brother priests about his investigations: The present church of Saint Alphonsus was constructed over the ruins of that of Saint Matthew, in which a miraculous painting of Our Mother of Perpetual Succour had been publicly venerated during centuries. Among those listening was Father Michael Marchi, who remembered often having served Mass in the chapel of the Augustinians of Posterula when a boy. There in the chapel he had seen the miraculous painting. An elderly lay brother who had lived in Saint Matthew's and whom he had frequently visited, had often related to him stories about the miracles of Our Mother and used to add: "Bear in mind, Michael, that Our Mother of Saint Matthew is the one in the private chapel. Do not forget it." Father Michael told them all that he had heard from that lay brother.

By way of this incident the Redemptorists knew of the existence of the painting. Nonetheless, they were unaware of its history and of the express desire of the Virgin to be honoured publicly in the Church.

That same year, owing to an inspired sermon by a Jesuit on the ancient painting of Our Mother of Perpetual Succour, the Redemptorists learned the history of the painting and of the desire of the Virgin that this image of Hers be venerated between the Church of Saint Mary Major and that of Saint John Lateran. The holy Jesuit had lamented the fact that the picture, which had been so famous for miracles and cures, should have disappeared without revealing any supernatural sign during the previous sixty years. It seemed to him that this was due to the picture's not being shown publicly in order to be venerated by the faithful. He implored his listeners to inform the owner of the Virgin's desire if anyone knew of the painting's whereabouts.

The Redemptorist Fathers dreamt of seeing the miraculous picture again exposed for public veneration and if possible in their own Church of Saint Alphonsus. Thus they pressed their Superior General to try and acquire the famous picture for their church. After a time of reflection, he decided to request that painting from the Holy Father, Pope Saint Pius IX. He narrated the history of the miraculous image and presented his petition.

The Holy Father listened attentively. He dearly loved the Most Holy Virgin and he rejoiced that She be honoured. He took up his pen and wrote out his desire that the miraculous picture of Our Mother of Perpetual Succour be returned to the church between Saint Mary Major and Saint John Lateran. He also charged the Redemptorists with making Our Mother of Perpetual Succour known everywhere.

None of the Augustinians of that time had known the Church of Saint Matthew. Once they learnt about the history and of the Holy Father's desire, they willingly gratified Our Lady. They had been her custodians and now they would give it back to the world under the protection of other custodians. All had been planned by Divine Providence in a truly extraordinary way. At the petition of the Holy Father, the Redemptorists gave the Augustinians a lovely painting which would serve to replace the miraculous one.

The image of Our Mother of Perpetual Succour was taken in solemn procession along the colourful and lively streets of Rome prior to being placed over the altar specially constructed for its veneration in the Church of Saint Alphonsus. The joy of the people of Rome was evident. The enthusiasm of the twenty

thousand people who thronged the streets full of flowers for the procession gave testimony to their profound devotion towards the Mother of God.

At every hour of the day numbers of people from every class could be seen before the painting, imploring Our Mother of Perpetual Succour to hear their prayers and to obtain mercy for them. Many miracles and graces were reported daily.

Devotion to Our Mother of Perpetual Succour was spread throughout the world. Churches and sanctuaries were constructed in her honour, and arch-confraternities were set up. Her portrait became known and loved everywhere.

Manuel Alonso Corral, today Pope Saint Peter II the Great, ill with tuberculosis, completely recovered his health in the month of May 1956, after insistently praying with great faith to Our Mother of Perpetual Succour.

Another Palmarian, Saint Mary Bridget O'Neill née Keaney, related that her own mother, shortly before giving birth to her, saw Our Mother of Perpetual Succour smile at her from a large image on the wall of her room; that image is today in a place of honour in the Palmarian house of her eldest son in Ireland.

Pope Saint Gregory XVII the Greatest, in his Pontifical Document n° 27, declared Our Mother of Perpetual Succour as sublime Patroness of the Cathedra of Saint Peter in El Palmar de Troya. For that reason there is an altar dedicated to Our Mother of Perpetual Succour in the Cathedral-Basilica of Our Crowned Mother of Palmar, and in the Palmarian Devotionary we have a prayer and invocations in honour of Our Mother of Perpetual Succour, written by Pope Saint Peter II.

History of the Devotion to Mary Auxiliatrix

The first to call the Virgin Mary by the title of “Auxiliatrix” was Saint John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, who was born in the year 347, for he said: “You, Mary, are most powerful Auxiliatrix from God”, and called Her most powerful Auxiliatrix of Christ’s followers.

Saint Sabas of Caesarea, in the year 532, narrates that in Orient there was an image of the Virgin called “Auxiliatrix of the sick”, as many cures were wrought beside it.

Saint Germanus, Archbishop of Constantinople, in the year 733, said in a sermon: “O Mary, You are the powerful Auxiliatrix of the poor, valorous Auxiliatrix against the enemies of the Faith, Auxiliatrix of the military so that they defend their country, Auxiliatrix of rulers so that they obtain for us wellbeing, Auxiliatrix of the humble who need Your help.”



Saint John Damascene, in the year 749, was the first to propagate the invocation: “Mary Auxiliatrix, pray for us”. And he repeats: “the Virgin is Auxiliatrix to obtain salvation, Auxiliatrix to avoid evils and dangers, Auxiliatrix at the hour of death.”

The name of Auxiliatrix was already given to the Virgin Mary in the year 1030 in Ukraine (Russia), for having freed that region from the invasion of pagan tribes. From then on in Ukraine the feast of Mary Auxiliatrix is celebrated every year on the 1st of October.

It is recorded that towards the year 1558, in the litany they used to recite in the Loreto Sanctuary in Italy, it was already included; and then, at the invasion by the turks, Pope Saint Pius V invoked Her as Mary Auxiliatrix of Christians and ordered that throughout the Catholic world the title “Auxilium Christianórum, ora pro nobis” be recited in the Litany, as in 1571 at the battle of Lepanto, Our Lady had freed the whole of Christendom, which faced destruction by a muslim army of 282 ships and 88,000 soldiers.

In the first half of the XVII century, the Catholics of southern Germany made a promise to the Virgin to honour Her with the title of Auxiliatrix if She freed them

from invasion by the protestants and brought the terrible Thirty Years' War to an end. The Mother of God granted them the two favours and soon there were more than seventy chapels with the title of Mary Auxiliatrix of Christians.

In 1683, in a Holy Crusade led by the Polish King Saint John III, the Catholics obtained an immense victory in Vienna against the enemies of religion, freeing the city from the clutches of the fanatical muslim turks. This decisive victory against the turks was the motive for untold joy throughout Christendom, so that the association of Mary Auxiliatrix was founded, which spread to more than sixty countries.

In 1814, Pope Saint Pius VII, prisoner of emperor Napoleon, promised the Virgin that the day he arrived at Rome in liberty he would declare that day feast of Mary Auxiliatrix. Unexpectedly, the Pope was set free, and reached Rome on the 24th of May. From then on the 24th of May was declared day of Mary Auxiliatrix.

In 1860 the Most Holy Virgin appeared to Saint John Bosco and told him that She wanted to be honoured under the title of "Auxiliatrix", and indicated a place for him to build Her a Church, in Turin, Italy. He began work on the church with his three coins, each of twenty centavos, and that was the first payment he made to the builders; but the miracles which Mary Auxiliatrix began to work in favour of Her devotees were so many and so great, that in just four years the great Basilica was finished. What surprised Don Bosco first, and then the entire world, was that Mary Auxiliatrix had built her own home, to irradiate from there her patronage. The Saint used to say: "Each brick of this church corresponds to a miracle of the Most Holy Virgin". From that Sanctuary, devotion to Mary under the title Mary Auxiliatrix of Christians began to spread throughout the world. Saint John Bosco said: "Propagate devotion to Mary Auxiliatrix and you will see what miracles are", and recommended frequently repeating: "Mary Auxiliatrix, pray for us", explaining that those who say this invocation frequently obtain great favours from Heaven. Without doubt, Saint John Bosco was the Saint of Mary Auxiliatrix, and the man in whom this Marian title found its best champion for its development and popularity. The Virgin wants us to honour Her by the title of Auxiliatrix: the times we live in are so fateful that we need the Virgin to help us to keep and defend the Christian Faith.

In his Pontifical Document n° 47, Saint Gregory XVII explains a sublime apocalyptic vision of Saint John Bosco's, who saw the Barque of Peter in between two gigantic columns, the Most Holy Eucharist atop the highest, and the Most Blessed Image of Mary Auxiliatrix atop the other. In 1980, Saint Gregory XVII and several Bishops visited the Sanctuary of Mary Auxiliatrix in Turin. Before the majestic picture of the Virgin Mary which presides the main altarpiece, they prayed with great fervour and sang the Salve Regina and the Salve Madre. The Most Holy Virgin Mary appeared there, accompanied by Saint John Bosco, Saint Mary Mazzarello and Saint Dominic Savio. The Most Holy Virgin gave the Pope this Message: *"It was high time that you visited this Sanctuary which encloses so many prophetic mysteries for the Church, the chief of which has already been fulfilled, the one corresponding to the election of your Papacy. I bless you all."*

In the Cathedral-Basilica of Our Crowned Mother of Palmar, there is an altar dedicated to Mary Auxiliatrix.

Given in El Palmar de Troya, Apostolic See, on the 8th of December, Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, in the Year of Our Lord Jesus Christ MMXVI, and first of Our Pontificate.

With Our Apostolic Blessing
Petrus III, P.P.
Póntifex Máximus

Petrus III P.P.

