

3 June 2016 proved to be a very special day for World Priest apostolate

The annual Global Rosary Relay for the sanctification of priests on the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus on 3 June 2016 circled the world in prayer once again, in this its seventh year, with more shrines than ever taking part in what is now recognised as a truly significant and powerful devotional initiative within the Catholic Church to recognise and bless the work of priests serving the faithful the world over.

The event took on an even greater significance this year when the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization in Rome agreed that the Annual Global Rosary Relay for the sanctification of Priests would close the three-day Jubilee for Priests at 6p.m. in St Peter's Square on 3 June (actually on the steps of St Peter's Basilica) with the president of the council leading the rosary on that day.

Council official Rev. Geno Sylva STD introduced the Rosary Relay for Priests, informing the gathering that the rosary relay was coming to Rome from the designated shrine of Our Lady of the Rosary, Haverstock Hill in London, England, and then continuing on to the next shrine at the Sanctuary of the Holy Family Centre in Trinidad. Archbishop Rino Fisichella, the first President of the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization marked the Rosary Relay for Priests as an official Vatican event and prayed the first sorrowful mystery. A number of priests from around the world then recited the following mysteries in Latin, introducing each mystery with a short reflection in various languages. At the end of the rosary the archbishop lead the conclusion and blessing, including a prayer for Pope Francis and the singing of the *Salve Regina*.

For World Priest founder Marion Mulhall 3 June 2016 was a day to be treasured forever. On that day a great blessing and honour was bestowed on her and her

apostolate in supporting our priests over many years when she personally met the Holy Father following the Pontifical Mass at the conclusion of the three-day Jubilee for Priests, to which Marion had been invited. Unknown to her it had been arranged for Pope Francis to receive her in St Peter's Square, where he took her hand and embraced her warmly. 'I was totally taken by surprise by this recognition and honour', says Marion.

'To me it was a great affirmation and blessing from Our Lady, especially on Rosary Relay Day, and I was overcome with joy by the opportunity to meet the Holy Father in person. I wonder how this meeting will enhance our apostolate in the future? What blessings will be bestowed upon World Priest in the years ahead? I can still hardly believe this has happened and that our apostolate in support of priests has received such supreme recognition and blessing. This day will live with me for the rest of my life, inspiring me to work with even greater enthusiasm and dedication for a vital apostolate, reassuring me that this apostolate is not only purposeful, but that it has been appreciated at the highest level within the Catholic Church.'

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