

Our Lady Intervenes in South American Conflict

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(March 25, 2008) In early March, with his country on the brink of war, Colombian President Alvaro Uribe ordered the recitation of the Rosary at the Presidential Palace. Only two days later, at a summit in the Dominican Republic, the world watched in amazement as the presidents of Venezuela, Ecuador and Colombia shook hands to end the conflict.

According to the *Catholic News Agency*, a report appearing in the Colombian daily, *El Tiempo*, revealed that on March 5, when the threatening rhetoric between the three nations was at its height, President Uribe called for a Rosary to be prayed for an end to the tensions.

Uribe invited all officials at the Presidential palace, as well as the minister of Defense of the Interior to join him in praying the Rosary in the Palace chapel. At Uribe's request, the Rosary was dedicated to Our Lady of Chiquinquirá (the patroness of Colombia), Our Lady of Coromoto (the patroness of Venezuela) and Our Lady of Mercy (the patroness of Ecuador).

“For believers, the prayer was more than effective,” *El Tiempo* reported, “since only two days after the presidents of the three countries shook hands during the Group of Rio summit, and for many the crisis was over.”

The crisis began on March 1 when President Uribe ordered a military raid into neighboring Ecuador to attack a camp used by Marxist guerrillas to launch terrorist strikes. A top guerrilla leader, Paul Reyes, was killed.

This excursion prompted Ecuador's President Rafael Correa to cut all diplomatic relationships with Colombia. President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela, a political ally of Correa, jumped into the fray by ordering a massive military build up at the Colombian border.

It was at this point in the conflict when President Uribe called for the Rosary to be prayed. Two days later, while meeting at the summit, the three presidents vented their differences but agreed to end the conflict after Uribe apologized for the raid.

“The President is a man of faith,” said Father Julio Solórzano, Chaplain of Colombia's Presidential Palace. “He always carries with him a wooden cross and a rosary. I have heard him pray several times in the motorcade or on the presidential airplane.”

He added, “He always tries to be coherent with his faith in his work, pleasing God with what he does.”

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