

# Devotion to Mary

## Introduction

It is time for us to improve our devotion to Mary. Wearing the Scapular and saying a Rosary is simply not enough. Let us consider this as we consider the following devotions. First let us consider the presumptuous devotee as explained by Saint Louis de Montfort.

### From True Devotion to Mary

Presumptuous devotees are sinners abandoned to their passions, or lovers of the world, who, under the fair name of Christians and clients of our Blessed Lady, conceal pride, avarice, impurity, drunkenness, anger, swearing, detraction, injustice, or some other sin. They sleep in peace in the midst of their bad habits, without doing any violence to themselves to correct their faults, under the pretext that they are devout to the Blessed Virgin. They promise themselves that God will pardon them; that they will not be allowed to die without confession; and that they will not be lost eternally, because they say the Rosary, because they fast on Saturdays, because they belong to the Confraternity of the Holy Rosary, or wear the scapular, or are enrolled in other congregations, or wear the little habit or little chain of our Lady. They will not believe us when we tell them that their devotion is only an illusion of the devil, and a pernicious presumption likely to destroy their souls. They say that God is good and merciful; that He has made us to condemn us everlastingly; that no man is without sin; that they shall die not the without confession; that one good Peccavi (I have sinned) at the hour of death is enough; that they are devout to our Lady; that they wear the scapular; and that they say daily, without reproach or vanity, seven Paters and Aves in her honour; and that they sometimes say the Rosary and the Office of our Lady, besides fasting, and other things. To give authority to all this, and to blind themselves still further, they quote certain stories, which they have heard or read, it does not matter to them whether they be true or false, relating how people have died in mortal sin without confession; and then, because in their lifetime they sometimes said some prayers, or went through some practices of devotion to our Lady, how they have been raised to life again, in order to go to confession, or their soul been miraculously retained in their bodies till confession; or how they have obtained from God at the moment of death contrition and pardon of their sins, and so have been saved; and that they themselves expect similar favours. Nothing in Christianity is more detestable than this diabolical presumption. For how can we say truly that we love and honour our Blessed Lady, when by our sins we are pitilessly piercing, wounding, crucifying, and outraging Jesus Christ her Son?

I confess that, in order to be truly devout to our Blessed Lady, it is not absolutely necessary to be so holy as to avoid every sin, though this were to be wished; but so much at least is necessary, and I beg you to lay it well to heart: 1. To have a sincere resolution to avoid, at least, all mortal sin, which outrages the Mother as well as the Son. 2. I would add also that to do violence to ourselves to avoid sin, to enroll ourselves in

confraternities, to say the Rosary or or prayers, to fast on Saturdays, and the like, is wonderfully useful to the conversion of a sinner, however hardened; and if my reader is such a one, even if he has his foot in the abyss, I would counsel these things to him. Nevertheless it must be on the condition that he will only practise these good works with the intention of obtaining from God, by the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, the grace of gaining the pardon of his sins, to conquer his evil habits, and not to remain quietly in the state of sin, in spite of the remorse of his conscience, follow the example of Jesus Christ and the Saints; and the maxims of the holy Gospel.

## Comment

The fasting on Saturday has been removed from newer reprints of this important book. Since this has been omitted by modern reprints, we should consider this part of devotion to Mary most carefully. However, let us begin with visits to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

## Visits to the Blessed Virgin Mary

From Saint Alphonsus, The Holy Eucharist:

And now as to the visits to the Most Blessed Virgin, the opinion of St. Bernard is well known, and generally believed: it is, that God dispenses no graces otherwise than through the hands of Mary: 'God wills that we should receive nothing that does not pass through Mary's hands.' Hence Father Suarez declares that it is now the sentiment of the universal Church, that 'the intercession of Mary is not only useful, but even necessary to obtain graces.' And we may remark that the Church gives us strong grounds for this belief, by applying the words of Sacred Scripture to Mary, and make her say: 'In me is all hope of life and virtue. Come over to me, all ye that desire.' Let all come to me; for I am the hope of all that you can desire. Hence she then adds: 'Blessed is the man that heareth me, and that watcheth daily at my gates, and waiteth at the posts of my doors.' Blessed is he who is diligent in coming every day to the door of my powerful intercession; for by finding me he will find life and eternal salvation: 'He that shall find me he will find life, and shall have salvation from the Lord.' Hence it is not without reason that the Holy Church wills that we should all call her our common hope, by saluting her saying, 'Hail, our hope!'

'Let us then,' says St. Bernard (who went so far as to call Mary 'the whole ground of his hope'), 'seek for graces, and seek them through Mary.' Otherwise, says St. Anotninus, if we ask for graces without her intercession, we shall be making an effort to fly without wings, and we shall obtain nothing: 'He who asks without her as his guide, attempted to fly without wings.'

In Father Autiemma's little book, Affetti Scambievoli, we read of innumerable favors granted by the Mother of God to those who practised this most profitable devotion of often visiting her in her churches or before some image. We read of the graces which she granted in these visits to Saint Albert the Great, to the Abbot Rupert, to Father Suarez, especially when she obtained for them the gift of understanding, by which they afterwards became so renowned throughout the Church for their great learning: the graces which she granted to Saint John Berchmans of the Society of Jesus, who was in the daily

habit of visiting Mary in a chapel of the Roman college; he declared that he renounced all earthly love, to love no other after God than the Most Blessed Virgin, and had written at the foot of the image of his beloved Lady: 'I will never rest until I shall have obtained a tender love for my Mother;' the graces which she granted to Saint Bernadine of Sienna, who in his youth also went every day to visit her in a chapel near the city-gate, and declared that the Lady had ravished his heart. Hence he called her his beloved, and said that he could not do less than often visit her; and by her means he afterwards obtained the grace to renounce the world, and to become what he afterwards was, a great saint and the apostle of Italy.

Do you, then, be also careful always to join to your daily visit to the Most Blessed Sacrament a visit to the most holy Virgin Mary in some church, or at least before a devout image of her in your own house. If you do this with tender affection and confidence, you may hope to receive great things from this most gracious Lady, who, as St. Andrew of Crete says, always bestows great gifts on those who offer her even the least act of homage.

### Comment and Summary

Let us undertake to acquire the habit of a daily visit to the Blessed Virgin Mary. What we should do is set up a little shrine to her in our homes, where we retire for a few minutes each day to make this visit. And this shrine does not need to be elaborate. A simple plastic statue of the Immaculate Heart of Mary wept in 1953 in Syracuse, Sicily, the last time Mary appeared to anyone on earth. Mary was crying, because she knew we were not listening to her requests earlier in the century at Fatima and elsewhere.

In The Holy Eucharist, Saint Alphonsus has prayers for each day of the months, but any prayers or meditations or even reading would suffice, provided it honors our most holy Mother. For instance, we could make the Novenas before her principal feasts, which are outlined below. We could make reparation to the insults offered to her Immaculate Heart on first Saturdays, as well as fulfill the First Saturday requests. On all Saturdays we could lengthen our visit as part of our devotion on Saturday to accompany our fast on Saturday.

Although it is appropriate also to pray the Rosary before an image of Mary, this visit should be separate from that devotion and an additional devotion in our lives. Let us pray for the day when she triumphs through the Rosary and Scapular.

Since many cannot make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, the visit to His most holy Mother becomes even more important. At this visit, one can ask her to visit Jesus for us, while making a spiritual Visit to the Blessed Sacrament. This spiritual visit is recommended by the *Raccolta*. Part of this spiritual visit should be a simple Spiritual Communion.

### Devotion of Visiting the Images of Mary

Note this is from Saint Alphonsus:

Father Segner says, that the devil could in no better way console himself for the losses he has sustained by the overthrow of idolatry, than by attacking sacred images through the heretics.

But the holy Church has defended them even by the blood of the martyrs; and the divine mother has also made manifest by miracles, how much she is pleased by devotion and visits to her images. The hand of St. John of Damascus was cut off because he defended with his pen the images of Mary; but our Lady restored it to him in a miraculous manner. Father Spinelli relates, that in Constantinople, every Friday after vespers, a veil which hung before the image of Mary was withdrawn of itself, and after vespers on Saturday it closed of itself. The veil before an image of the Virgin was seen to withdraw itself, in a similar way, by St. John of God, whereupon the sacristan, believing the saint to be a robber, struck him with his foot, but the foot was withered. All the servants of Mary, therefore, are accustomed often to visit her images with great devotion, and also the churches dedicated to her honor. There are, indeed, as John of Damascus teaches, the cities of refuge, where we find safety from temptations, and from the punishments merited by the sins we have committed. St. Henry, Emperor, when he entered a city, always visited, before anything else, some church of our Lady. Father Thomas Sanchez never returned home until he had visited some church of Mary. Let us not be weary then of visiting our Queen every day in some church or chapel, or in our own house, where it would be well for that purpose to have in some retired place, a little oratory, with her image adorned with drapery, flowers, tapers, or lamps, and before it also the litanies, the rosary, &c., may be said. For this purpose I have published a little book, which has already gone through eight editions, of Visits to the most Holy Sacrament, as well as to the Virgin, for every day in the month. Some devout servant of Mary might cause one of her feasts to be celebrated in some church or chapel, and preceding it by a Novena, with the exposition of the Sacrament, and also with sermons.

But here it is well to notice the fact which Father Spinelli relates in the "Miracles of the Madonna." In the year 1611, in the celebrated sanctuary of Mary in Montevergine, it happened that on the vigil of Pentecost the people who thronged there profaned that feast with balls, excesses, and immodest conduct, when a fire was suddenly discovered bursting forth from the house of entertainment where they were feasting, so that in less than an hour and a half it was consumed, and more than one thousand five hundred persons were killed.

Five persons who remained alive affirmed upon oath, that they had seen the mother of God herself, who with two lighted torches set fire to the inn. After this I entreat the servants of Mary to abstain as far as they can, and to induce others to abstain from going to such sanctuaries of our Lady in times of feasting, for hell then received much more fruit from it, than the divine mother received honor. Let him who practise this devotion go and visit them at a time when they are not thronged.

## Fasting on Saturday

Sermons of Saint Alphonsus, for the Second Lord's Day after Epiphany: "But, to obtain special favors in her honor certain devotions practiced by her servants; such as, first, to recite every day at least five decades of the Rosary; secondly, to fast every Saturday in her honor. Many persons fast every Saturday on bread and water: you should fast in this manner at least on the vigils of her seven principle festivals."

## From Glories of Mary

Many servants of Mary, on Saturdays and the vigils of her feast, are accustomed to honor her by fasting on bread and water. It is well known that Saturday is a day dedicated by the holy Church to the honor of the Virgin, because on this day, says St. Bernard, she remained constant in the faith after the death of her Son.

For this reason the servants of Mary never fail on this day to offer her some special homage; and particularly the fast on bread and water, as St. Charles Borromeo, Cardinal Toledo, and so many others practised it. Rittard, Bishop of Bamberg, and Father Joseph Arriaga, of the Society of Jesus, did not even taste food on Saturday. The great graces which the mother of God afterwards bestowed upon those who practised this devotion, may be read in the writings of Father Auriemma. It is sufficient for us to mention the compassion which she showed to that bandit chief, who on account of this devotion, was permitted to remain alive, although his head had been cut off, and although he was under the displeasure of God, and was enabled to make his confession before dying. He afterwards declared that the holy virgin, for this fasting which he had offered her, had preserved him in life, and he then suddenly expired. It would not then be a very extraordinary thing, if any one, especially devoted to Mary, and particularly if he had already deserved hell, should offer to her this fast on Saturday. He who practises this devotion, I may say, will hardly be condemned; not that our Lady will deliver him by a miracle if he dies in mortal sin, as happened to the bandit; such prodigies of divine mercy seldom take place, and it would be madness to expect eternal salvation by them. But I do say that the divine mother will readily obtain perseverance and divine grace and a good death for him who will practise this devotion. All the brothers of our little congregation who can do so, fast on bread and water on Saturday, in honor of Mary. I say those who can do so, meaning, that if any one is prevented from doing so on account of ill health, at least on Saturday, he may content himself with one dish, make a common fast, or at least abstain from fruits or other agreeable food. It is necessary on Saturday to offer special devotions to our Lady, to receive communion, or, at least, hear Mass, visit some image of the Virgin, wear hair-cloth, and the like. And at least on the vigils of the seven feasts of Mary, let her servants endeavor to offer this fasting on bread, or in any other manner they are able.

## Pope Michael's Comments

Saint Nilus prophesied: "After the year 1900, toward the middle of the 20th century, the people of that time will become unrecognizable. When the time for the advent of the Antichrist approaches, people's minds will be clouded by carnal passions, and dishonor and lawlessness will grow stronger. Then the world will become unrecognizable."

We know that Saturday is consecrated to the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, who is our Mediatrix and Co-Redemptrix. And yet in the world today, Saturday more than most days is consecrated to sin. The Saints recommend fasting on Saturdays in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We would like to revive this practice in such a way as to honor Mary and atone for the sins of today. For those who receive Holy Communion weekly, Saturday should also be a preparation for Holy Communion as well. For those who

cannot communicate, Saturday should be spent in asking God to remove any obstacle to communicating regularly.

Let us consider some of the sins of today. How many lose their virginity in an act of fornication on a Saturday night? How many people are driving drunk on Saturday night? And driving drunk is certainly also a mortal sin. How many are out gambling away what is needed to support their family on a Saturday night? How many are going to watch an immoral movie or watching something immoral on television at home on Saturday night?

It has been stated that Christ's Passion began at eight in the evening, because that is when sin is on the rise. If we consider well, how many sit down to turn on an immoral television program at eight in the evening, while their children are out committing many other sins?

Let us return to fasting on Saturday. Unless one finds true whole wheat bread or bakes it themselves, fasting on bread and water is not practical in these days. Also the health of most is weaker today, than when Saint Alphonsus or Saint Louis de Montfort wrote, which is evidenced by our relaxed fast laws. However, there are many things we should do in the spirit of fasting, especially on Saturdays. Part of what has made our world unrecognizable is that few have the spirit of fasting. And those who recommend returning to the true morals of over a century and a half ago before the slide into apostasy began in earnest are called *puritans*, as if what was once a sin is no longer a sin. Of course, this is not true, for sin remains constant, the acceptability of sin changes with time.

## First Saturdays

Jesus appeared to Sister Lucy on December 10, 1925 to ask for the devotion of First Saturdays: "Behold, my daughter, my Heart surrounded with the thorns with which ungrateful men continually pierce it by their blasphemies (heresies?) and ingritudes. Do you at least try to console me, and for my part I declare to you that I promise to assist at the hour of death with the graces necessary for salvation all those who on the first Saturday of five consecutive months shall go to confession, receive Holy Communion, say five decades of the rosary and keep me company during a quarter of an hour, meditating on the mysteries of the rosary with the intention of offering reparation to me."

Our Lady of Pfaffenhofen (1946): "Observe the Holy Saturday devoted to me the way I have suggested it. The apostles and priests ought to devote themselves to Me especially in order that the great sacrifices which the Inscrutable One demands from them very particularly may grow in holiness and worthiness when they are laid into My hands. Make many sacrifices for Me and make your prayer a sacrifice. Be selfless." "I am the great Mediatrix of Grace. The Father wants the world to recognize His Handmaid. Men must believe that I am the eternal Bride of the Holy Ghost, the faithful Mediatrix of all graces. My sign is about to appear. Thus God wills it. Only My children will recognize it because it manifests itself in hiding, and therefore they honor the Eternal One. I cannot reveal My power to the world as yet. I must go into retirement with My children. In hiding I will perform miracles in the souls until the (ordained?) number of victims is complete. It is up to you to shorten the days of darkness. Your prayers and sacrifices will destroy the image of the Beast."

The First Saturday consists of four parts. The first is the recitation of the Rosary, the second is Holy Communion. The third is Confession and the Final part is an additional fifteen minutes meditation on the mysteries of the Rosary. This should be continued for five months, although it is advisable to continue this the rest of our lives. We should add to this the Saturday fast at least on first Saturdays. For those who cannot communicate, a Solemn Spiritual Communion should be made and to replace the Confession a Perfect Act of Contrition made.

## Scapular

From The Glories of Mary by Saint Alphonsus Ligouri

I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, and my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation; and with a robe of justice he hath covered me. Isaias 61, 10.

### The Origin of This Devotion

The institution of the Scapular is to be attributed to St. Simon Stock, an Englishman by birth, one of the ornaments of the church in the thirteenth age.

Having retired to the desert at the age of twelve years, he passed thirty days in the practice of the most austere penance and contemplation. Meeting with some Carmelite religious, called brothers of the Virgin, on account of their tender devotion towards her, he took their habit, and went to pass six years of profound solitude on Mount Carmel. On his return to Europe, having become General of his order, in 1245, as he was one day asking the blessed Mother of God, in the simplicity of his confidence, to grant him a mark of her protection; she appeared to him in great glory, surrounded by myriads of angels. and holding in her hand a Scapular, or covering for the shoulders, Which she gave to him, saying these words: "My well beloved son, receive this Scapular which I present to you and to all the members of your order; it is by this sign that I wish you should be hereafter recognized as my children; it is a privilege granted you and all the children of Mount Carmel, so that whoever shall die invested with this holy habit shall have an assurance of my protection in escaping everlasting flames: "In quo quis moriens aeternum non patietur incendium:" it is a mark of predestination, a safeguard in dangers, an emblem of peace, and the symbol of perpetual alliance. This vision has been so well attested by all the evidences that could guaranty its authenticity, that the wise Pope Benedict XIV, has not hesitated to say: "We believe it true and we are of opinion that all the world should hold it as true; hanc visionem veram credimus, veramque habendam ab omnibus arbitramur. (De, Beat, 1V.--2. 9. et de Fest. II.-9.)" We will not then be astonished that this devotion has been rapidly propagated, and that it continues to flourish through out the catholic world.

### Of the Advantages Which It Procures

I. It entitles us to the promises of the Blessed Virgin, that is to say that the Scapular: 1. Serves as a pledge of a more intimate and lasting union with the august queen of heaven; 2. It protects us, as a celestial armour, in the dangers both of soul and

body; 3. It becomes for us a preservative against the flames of hell, by assuring to us, during life and at the hour of death, the most special aid of the powerful Mother of God. We can undoubtedly be saved without wearing the Scapular, but with it salvation is easier and more certain; what more is necessary to attach us to it?

II. We participate in all the good works of the Carmelite order, as is expressed in the formula of the reception: the first says "In virtue of the power which has been intrusted to me, I receive and admit you to the full participation of all the prayers, penances, suffrages, alms, watchings, masses, offices and other spiritual duties, which are performed day and night, in every part of the world, through the mercy of Jesus Christ, by all the religious of the holy order of Mount Carmel."

### We Gain Numerous Indulgences Plenary Indulgences

1. On the day of our reception. (Paul V.)
2. On the Feast of our Lady of Mount Carmel, the 16th of July, or on one of the days of the Octave. (Paul III. Benedict.)
3. On the day of each month when there is a procession in honour of the blessed Virgin, when we assist at it. (Paul V.)
4. At the hour of death, provided we pronounce at least with the heart, the holy name of Jesus.
5. Any time that the other confraternities enjoy any plenary indulgence. (Sixtus IV.—Clement VIII.)

### Partial Indulgences

1. An indulgence of 5 years and 5 quarantines to members who accompany the holy Viaticum, and pray for the sick.
2. Of 5 years and 5 quarantines to all those who communicate once a month, and pray according to the intentions of our holy father, the Pope.
3. Of 100 days every time we perform a spiritual or corporal work of mercy.
4. Of 40 days, when we recite each day 7 Paters and Aves, etc.—all these different indulgences are applicable to the souls in Purgatory.

### Sabbatine Privilege

Note.—A term derived from the Jewish Sabbath, our Saturday.

"It is not only in this life," says the Roman Breviary, "the B. V. Mary shows herself favourable, to the children of Mount Carmel, it is also in the life to come; for her power and her goodness extend everywhere. All those who wear the Scapular are careful to recite the few prayers prescribed, and preserve chastity according to their state of life, may hope (pie creditur,) that should they have to suffer the fire of purgatory, Mary will come to console them in her maternal tenderness, and cause them to enter their heavenly country as soon as possible; (quantocius,) especially on Saturday, the day consecrated to her, adds Pope Paul V in a Bull of 1612.

When a true Christian is at the point of death, with what earnestness does he not recommend himself to his parents and friends, that they may abridge by their prayers the time of expiation which he dreads! But will they be faithful to this injunction? Will they pray for him? Will they procure for him the prayers of others? He knows not, and has too often reason to doubt it; men so soon forget! The servant of Mary has no such fears—he has only to observe some easy practices to be sure of relief; for Mary does not forget, as men do! She remembers her children, she remembers also her promises; and soon introduced into glory, they feel the happiness of having been faithful to her.

## The Duties to be Fulfilled

The devotion of the Scapular imposes no obligation under pain of sin; but the privileges which it grants are not obtained but on certain conditions.

1. In order to be entitled to a more special protection of the B. V. M., the merits of the Carmelites, and the plenary and partial indulgences, three things are necessary: 1. To be received by a priest duly authorized; 2. To wear the Scapular constantly; 3 To be inscribed upon the register of the confraternity.

2. To obtain the Sabbatine indulgence, chastity must be observed according to each one's state, and the little office of the blessed Virgin or the canonical office recited. The office may be supplied by the fasts of the church and abstinence on Wednesday and Saturday; or if these fasts and abstinences are not possible, by some works equally painful and meritorious, as prescribed by a priest authorized to receive members, or by the confessor. Any one neglecting to gain the Sabbatine indulgence, does not lose the benefit of the other privileges.

In order to gain any plenary indulgence, confession, communion, and prayer, according to the intentions of the church (i.e. the Pope), are requisite.

## Intentions of the Pope

The intentions of the Supreme Pontiff are: the exaltation of Holy Mother Church, the extirpation (overcoming) of heresies, propagation of the Faith, the conversion of sinners and peace among Christian nations. During the vacancy of the Papacy, the intention of the Pope is for a speedy and unanimous election. Unless specific prayers are prescribed for the Pope's intentions, any vocal prayers may be used.

## Novenas

Saint Alphonsus recommends the making of Novenas before the seven principal festivals of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The prayers will be provided below to go along with the other practices recommended by Saint Alphonsus.

## Glories of Mary

Devout clients of Mary are all attention and fervor in celebrating the novenas, or nine days preceding her festivals; and the Blessed Virgin is all love, in dispensing innumerable and most special graces to them. St. Gertrude one day saw under Mary's

mantle, a band of souls, whom the great Lady was considering with the most tender affection; and she was given to understand that they were persons who, during the preceding days, had prepared themselves with various devotions for the Feast of the Assumption. The following devotions may be used during the novenas:

1. We may make mental prayer in the morning and evening, and a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, adding nine times the "Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be to the Father."
2. We may pay Mary three visits (visiting her statue or picture), and thank our Lord for the graces that He granted her; and each time ask the Blessed Virgin for some special grace: in one of these visits the prayer, which will be found after the discourse on the feast, which ever it may be, can be said. (Note this are included below)
3. We may make many acts of love toward Mary (at least fifty or a hundred), and also towards Jesus; for we can do nothing that pleases her more than to love her Son, as she said to St. Bridget: "If thou wishest to bind thyself to me, love my Son."
4. We may read every day of the novena, for a quarter of an hour, some book that treats of her glories.
5. We may perform some external mortification, such as wearing a hair-cloth, taking a discipline, or the like; we can also fast, or at table abstain from fruit, or some favorite dish or a part of it, or chew some bitter herbs. On the vigil of the feast we may fast on bread and water: but none of these things should be done without the permission of our confessor. Interior mortifications, however, are the best of all to practise during these novenas, such as to avoid looking at or listening to things out of curiosity;<sup>1</sup> to remain in retirement; observe silence; be obedient; not give impatient answers; bear contradictions, and such things; which can all be practiced with less danger of vanity, with greater merit, and which do not need the confessor's permission. The most useful exercise is to propose, from the beginning of the novena, to correct some fault into which we fall most frequently. For this purpose it will be well, in the visits spoken of above, to ask pardon for past faults, to renew our resolutions not to commit them any more, and to implore Mary's help. The devotion most dear and pleasing to Mary is, to endeavor to imitate her virtues; therefore it would be well always to propose to ourselves the imitation of some virtue that corresponds with the festival; as, for example, on the feast of her Immaculate Conception, purity of intention; on her Nativity, renewal of the spirit, to throw off tepidity; on her Presentation, detachment from something to which we are most attached; on her Annunciation, humility in supporting contempt; on her Visitation, charity towards our neighbor, in giving alms, or at least praying for sinners; on her Purification, obedience to Superiors; and in fine, on the Feast of her Assumption, let us endeavor to detach ourselves from the world, do all to prepare ourselves for death, and regulate each day of our lives as if it was to be our last.

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<sup>1</sup> We strongly advise total abstinence from television, during such a novena, to atone for the many sins against Jesus and Mary committed through means of this device.

6. Besides going to Communion on the day of the feast, <sup>2</sup> it would be well to ask leave from our confessor to go more frequently during the novena. Father Segneri used to say, that we cannot honor Mary better than with Jesus. She herself revealed to a Holy soul (as Father Crasset relates), that we can offer her nothing that is more pleasing to her than the Holy Communion; for in that Holy Sacrament it is that Jesus gathers the fruit of His Passion in our soul. Hence it appears that the Blessed Virgin desires nothing so much of her clients as Communion; saying, “Come eat My bread, and drink the wine which I have mingled for you.” (Proverbs 9:5)
7. Finally on the day of the feast, after Communion, we must offer ourselves to the service of this divine Mother, and ask of her the grace to practice the virtue, or whatever other grace we had proposed to ourselves, during the novena. It is well every year to choose amongst the feasts of the Blessed Virgin, one for which we have the greatest of most tender devotion; and for this one to make a very special preparation by dedicating ourselves anew, and in a more particular manner, to her service, choosing her for our Sovereign Lady, Advocate and Mother. Then we must ask her pardon for all our negligence in her service during the past year, and promise greater fidelity for the next; and conclude by begging her to accept us as her servants, and to obtain for us a holy death.

### Pope Michael's Comment

All that is required to make most novenas and gain the appropriate indulgence is to persevere in prayers of some kind for nine days. No specific prayers are advised. The above practices would certainly suffice.

### How to Make a Novena

Below We have reproduced two instructions on Novenas. The first is from Saint Alphonsus and the second is from an almost century old spiritual manual. Many think of a Novena as a series of nine days of prayers from a booklet or prayer book. This takes all of three to five minutes a day and nothing further is thought about the Novena.

Let us consider the first Novena, which was prescribed by Jesus Himself for Mary and the Apostles, lasting from His Ascension until Pentecost. Let us read the following from Goffine, which will give us an idea how we should observe Novenas:

#### Instruction on Preparation For Pentecost

1). We should withdraw, after the example of the Blessed Virgin and the apostles, to some solitary place, or at least avoid, intercourse with others, as much as possible; speak but little, and apply ourselves to earnest and persevering prayer; for in solitude God speaks to man.

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<sup>2</sup> One may only receive Holy Communion from the Pope or a priest in full visible union with the Pope. For many this will be impossible, so a solemn Spiritual Communion is advised. (complete details are given below)

2). We should purify our conscience by a contrite confession, become reconciled to our neighbor, if we have lived in enmity; for the Holy Ghost, as a spirit of peace and purity, lives only in pure and peaceful souls.

3). We should give alms according to our means, for it is said in the Acts of the Apostles (Acts 10) of the Gentile centurion Cornelius, that by prayer and alms-deeds he made himself worthy of the gifts of the Holy Ghost.

4). We should fervently desire to receive the Holy Ghost, and should give expression to this longing by frequent aspirations to God, making use of the prayer: "Come, O Holy Ghost, etc."

## Return to Commentary

For nine days from the Ascension to Pentecost Mary and the Apostles retired to the upper room to pray and prepare for the coming of the Holy Ghost. And by prayer we do not mean a simple Rosary or even a short meditation. Their whole life was a life of prayer for those nine days, as far as duty would allow. No worldly distractions.

Saint Alphonsus recommends: "But better than all others are the practices in these Novenas of internal mortifications, as abstaining from the indulgence of curiosity, either through the eye or the ear; remaining retired and silent;" If we wish to hear the voice of God, we must retire from the noise of the world, which today bombards us from all sides. Indeed we should lay aside all curiosity and take the roll of Mary Magdalene and seek the one thing important through meditation, spiritual reading and prayer. And when we can no longer meditate, read or pray, let us rest silently.

It is time to go beyond the vocal prayers and get into the spirit of prayer and mortification, since prayer derives its power from mortification. Saint Jerome says: "The number nine in Holy Writ is indicative of suffering and grief." A Novena is nine days of intense prayer, usually for some intention.

Rev. Garrigou LaGrange says: "A meritorious work becomes satisfactory (or one of reparation and expiation) when there is something painful about it." We can sum this up as *no pain, no gain*. If we wish to gain some favor for ourself or someone else, we must sacrifice something that causes us pain to give up. As The Catholic Encyclopedia says: the novena belongs to hopeful mourning, of yearning, of prayer." Now what sacrifice is there is merely reciting a few prayers every day for nine days? No, sacrifice requires more from us in order to get God's attention. He expects us to take things seriously.

With all of this in mind, please read what follows from Saint Alphonsus and from Fr. Girardey. Notice that Saint Alphonsus never mentions any set form of prayers. Even the *Raccolta* does not prescribe any set prayers for most Novenas. Let us take this example: "The faithful who devoutly offer some prayers in honor of the Nativity, Presentation, Annunciation, Visitation, Expectation, Purification or Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary at any season of the year, with the intention of continuing these prayers for nine days are granted an indulgence of five years on each day; a plenary indulgence on the usual conditions at the close of novena."

## How to Make A Novena

From Prayer: Its necessity Its power Its conditions By Rev. Ferreol Girardy, C.Ss.R., 1916

Fourthly, making a Novena is also an efficacious means of obtaining graces and favors from God. A Novena is a nine days' prayer or supplication. A Novena is generally made thus: A certain prayer or certain prayers for a certain specified object are said for nine consecutive days and, after a good confession, holy Communion is received on the tenth day. What prayer or prayers we should say are left to our choice; for instance, we may recite daily nine Hail Marys, or a decade or five decades of the rosary, a litany, hear holy Mass, make a visit to the Blessed Sacrament, etc. To the prayers we recite we may join a certain alms, a certain act of self-denial, or some other good work, according to our devotion or to the circumstances in which we are placed. But our prayers, our good works should be performed with earnestness and fervor. Our Novena will be still more efficacious, if we have the Sacrifice of the Mass offered for our intention once or oftener during the Novena. If in our power, it would be well, if we would request others, especially good and pious souls, to join us in our Novena. Novenas may be made, for instance, in honor of or to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, in honor of the Blessed Virgin, of Our Lady of Mercy, of Good Counsel, of Lourdes, of Perpetual Help, to Mary Refuge of sinners, in honor of St. Joseph, St. Gerard Majella, etc. Prayers and Novenas may be addressed privately to persons who have died in the odor of sanctity, especially if the Cause or Process of their Beatification has already been introduced, as for instance, Sister Thérèse of the Infant Jesus and the Holy Face. The reason is that God, when He wants to have persons honored as saints by the Church, grants to that end many wonderful favors and even miracles to prove their sanctity. A Novena may be made for the benefit of the souls in purgatory to obtain a grace or favor through their intercession. Moreover, they who make a Novena for a certain grace, usually promise to God some prayer or good work as a thanksgiving, if their prayer is granted. For instance, if their prayer is granted they will hear Mass daily, or every Saturday for a year or more, or will go weekly to confession and holy Communion, or abstain from certain delicacies or beverages for a stated time, or from certain comforts or amusements, or perform certain penances, etc. Beware of promising too much, or of undertaking certain rigorous penances without your confessor's special permission. And if your prayers have been granted, show your gratitude to God by thanking Him from your inmost heart, and faithfully performing your promises. If your prayers have not been heard in the manner you desired, do not murmur or complain, but be resigned to God's holy will, and feel confident that He has given or will give you something else more necessary or useful to you, for never is a true and sincere prayer lost.

## Solemn Spiritual Communion

Since many cannot receive Holy Communion without participating in the sin of sacrilege by receiving Holy Communion from a priest who is not in visible communion with the true Pope, it is necessary to consider how to make a Solemn Spiritual Communion. Much could be said on the practice of frequent Spiritual Communion, which can be done at any time of the day or night and one need not be fasting. However,

when we cannot communicate for any reason, we should make a more solemn Spiritual Communion asking God to shorten the time to our next actual Communion. We should prepare for this Solemn Spiritual Communion as we would prepare for the actual reception of Holy Communion.

We should fast from midnight as recommended by Pope Pius XII in his two decrees permitting evening Mass and the three hour fast prior to Holy Communion. We should also prepare for Holy Communion by closing our day with night prayers. In addition to our customary prayers, examination of conscience and preparing the mornings meditation point, we should also begin a preparation for Communion, real or spiritual. A necessary part is the observance of silence from night prayers <sup>3</sup> until after our thanksgiving. If we awake in the night, let our thoughts be pious.

And then let us go to our morning prayers more zealously, making our proximate preparation, then our Spiritual Communion followed by thanksgiving. It is best to also have completed our meditation prior to Holy Communion or Solemn Spiritual Communion. And then we should be more recollected throughout the day than we normally are. <sup>4</sup>

## Seven Great Feasts of the Blessed Virgin

### The Immaculate Conception December 8

Start the Novena on November 29<sup>th</sup>. In preparation for the Immaculate Conception imitate Mary's purity of intention.

Ah, my immaculate Lady, I rejoice with thee, seeing thee endowed with so great purity. I give thanks, and make the resolution always to give thanks to our common Creator, for having preserved thee from every stain of sin, as I certainly believe; and to defend this great and peculiar privilege of thy Immaculate Conception I am ready, and swear to give even my life if it is necessary. I wish that all the world might know thee, and acknowledge thee for that beautiful aurora, which was always resplendent with the divine light; that chosen ark of salvation, safe from the common shipwreck of sin; for that perfect and immaculate dove, as thy divine spouse declared thee; that inclosed garden, which was the delight of God; that fountain sealed up, which the enemy never entered to trouble; finally, that spotless lily, which thou art, springing up among the thorns of the children of Adam; for whereas all are born defiled with original sin, and enemies of God, thou wast born pure, all spotless, and in all things a friend of thy Creator.

Let me, then, also praise thee as thy God himself hath praised thee when He said: Thou art all fair, and there is not a spot in thee. Oh most pure dove, all white, all beautiful, and always the friend of God. Oh most sweet, most amiable, immaculate Mary, thou who art so beautiful in the eyes of our Lord, do not disdain to look with thy pitying eye upon the loathsome wounds of my soul. Behold me, pity me, and heal me. Oh

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<sup>3</sup> We should always observe silence from night prayers until after our morning meditation. For those who have adopted the vice of playing the radio or television at night, this abominable vice should be eliminated. Such dissipation is destructive to the soul and disturbing to those within earshot and is thus not only a sin against our own soul, but also that against charity towards our neighbor.

<sup>4</sup> Those who have the benefit of daily Communion should live a recollected life that is suitable for such a privilege.

powerful magnet of hearts, draw also my miserable heart to thee. Thou who even from the first moment of thy life wast pure and beautiful in the sight of God, have pity on me, for I was not only born in sin, but after baptism, I again have defiled my soul with sin. Will God, who hath chosen thee for His child, His mother, and His spouse, and therefore hath preserved thee from every stain, refuse any grace to thee? Virgin immaculate, you must save me; I will say to thee with St. Philip Neri, make me always to remember thee and do not forget me. It seems to me a thousand years before I shall go to behold thy beauty in paradise, to praise and love thee more, my mother, my queen, my beloved, most lovely, most sweet, most pure, immaculate Mary. Amen.

#### On the Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

1st. It was indeed befitting the three divine persons to preserve Mary from original sin. It was befitting the Father, for Mary was his first born daughter. As Jesus was the first-born of God, so Mary, being destined to become the mother of Jesus, God always considered her as his adopted first born daughter, and therefore always possessed her by his grace. It was, then, befitting the honor of the Son that the Father should preserve the mother from every stain of sin. It was also fitting, because He destined this his daughter to crush the head of the infernal serpent which had seduced man, as we read: "She will crush your head." How could He then permit that she should first be his slave? Moreover, Mary was also destined to be the advocate of sinners; and for this reason also it was meet that God should preserve her from sin, that she might not appear guilty of the very sin of those for whom she was to intercede.

2d. It was befitting the Son that his mother should be immaculate. He chose her Himself for His mother and it cannot be believed that a son who has it in his power to choose a queen for his mother, would choose a slave. How then could we believe that the eternal Word would wish his mother once defiled by sin, and once an enemy of God, when it was in His power to have an immaculate mother and one always the friend of God? Moreover, St. Augustine says: The flesh of Christ is the flesh of Mary. The Son of God would have felt horror at taking flesh from St. Agnes, St. Gertrude, or St. Theresa, because those holy virgins, before baptism, were stained by sin, and the devil would have been able to reproach Him for being clothed with a flesh which once had been subject to him. But he felt no horror at becoming man in the womb of Mary, Mary having always been pure and immaculate. Besides, St. Thomas says that Mary was preserved from every actual sin, even venial, for otherwise she would not have been a fitting mother of God; but how much less fit would she have been, if she had been defiled by original sin, which renders the soul odious to God!

3d. It was befitting the Holy Ghost that this His most beloved spouse should be immaculate. The redemption of men who had already fallen into sin being decreed, He wished that this His spouse should be redeemed in the most noble manner, namely, by being preserved from falling into sin. And if God preserved the body of Mary after her death, how much more ought we to believe that He would preserve her soul from the corruption of guilt? For this reason the divine spouse called her an inclosed garden, a sealed fountain (Cant.) for the enemies never entered the blessed soul of Mary. Therefore He praised her, calling her all fair, always beloved, and spotless. Ah, my most lovely Lady, it is my delight to see thee so dear to thy God through thy purity and beauty. I

thank God for having preserved thee from every sin. Ah, my queen, since thou art so loved by the most Holy Trinity, do not disdain to cast thy eyes upon my soul so defiled by sin, that thou mayest obtain for me, from God, pardon and eternal salvation. Look upon me and change me. Thou, by thy sweetness, hast drawn so many hearts to love thee, draw also my heart, that henceforth I may love no other than God and thee. Thou knowest that in thee I have placed all my hopes; my dear mother, do not abandon me. Assist me always by thy intercession, in life and especially in death; make me then to die invoking thee, and loving thee, that I may come to love thee forever in paradise.

## The Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary September 8

Start the Novena on August 30<sup>th</sup>. In preparation for Mary's most holy Birthday let us work on the renewal of the spirit, to throw off tepidity.

Oh holy and heavenly infant Mary! thou who art the destined mother of my Redeemer and the great mediatrix of miserable sinners, have pity on me. Behold at thy feet another ungrateful creature who has recourse to thee and implores thy mercy. It is true that, for my ingratitude towards God and thee, I am deserving of being abandoned by God and by thee; but I have been told, and thus I believe, knowing how great is thy compassion, that thou wilt not refuse to help him who, with confidence, recommends himself to thee. Thou, oh most exalted of all creatures, since there is no one above thee but God, and, in comparison with thee, the greatest in heaven are but small; oh saint of saints, oh Mary, abyss of grace, full of grace, help a miserable sinner who has lost it by his own fault. I know that thou art so dear to God that He denies thee nothing. I know also that thou dost rejoice to employ thy greatness in relieving the distressed. Ah, make known how great is thy favor with God by obtaining for me a divine light and a flame so powerful that it may change me from a sinner into a saint, and detaching me from every earthly affection, may wholly inflame me with divine love. Do this, oh Lady, because thou canst do it; do this for the love of that God who has made thee so great, so powerful, and merciful. Thus I hope. Amen.

### On the Feast of the Nativity of Mary.

1st. Before the birth of Mary the world was lost in the darkness of sin. Mary was born, and the morning arose, says a holy Father. Already it had been said of Mary: "Who is she that cometh forth as the morning rising?" As the earth rejoices when the day dawns, for the dawn is the precursor of the sun, so Mary at her birth gave joy to the whole world, for she was the precursor of the sun of justice, Jesus Christ, who being made her son, came to save us by his death; therefore the Church sings; "Thy nativity, oh virgin mother of God, announced joy to the whole world, for from thee the sun of justice has arisen, who has given us life eternal." Thus, when Mary was born, we received our remedy, our consolation, and our salvation; for through Mary we have received the Saviour.

2d. This child being then destined for the mother of the eternal Word, God bestowed on her so much grace, that even from her Immaculate Conception her sanctity excelled the sanctity of all the saints and angels united, for she received a grace of a superior order, corresponding to the dignity of mother of God. Oh holy infant, oh full of

grace, I, a miserable sinner, salute thee and honor thee. Thou art the beloved, the delight of God; have pity on me, who through my sins have been hateful and abominable in the eyes of God. Thou, oh most pure Virgin, hast so well known even from thy infancy how to gain the heart of God, that he denies thee nothing, and grants all that thou dost ask of him. In thee then I place my hopes. Recommend me to thy Son, and I shall be saved.

3d. At the same time that Mary was destined to be the mother of our Redeemer, she was also destined to be the mediatrix between God and us sinners. Hence the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas, says, that Mary received grace sufficient to save all men; and therefore St. Bernard calls Mary a channel so full that we can all partake of its fulness. Oh my queen, oh mediatrix of sinners, perform thy office and intercede for me! Let not my sins prevent me from confiding in thee, oh great mother of God; no, I trust in thee, and trust in thee so much, that if my salvation were in my own hands, yet I would place it all in thine. Oh Mary, receive me under thy protection, and this is enough for me.

## The Presentation of Mary November 21

Start the Novena on November 12<sup>th</sup>. In preparation for Mary's presentation in the Temple, let us detach from something to which we are most attached.

Oh beloved of God! most amiable child Mary! oh, that like thee, who didst present thyself in the temple, and at once and wholly didst consecrate thyself to the glory and love of thy God, I might offer to thee today the first years of my life, and dedicate myself entirely to thy service, oh my most holy and sweet Lady! But it is now too late, for, unhappily, I have lost so many years in serving the world and my caprices, as it were entirely forgetful of thee and of God. Alas for the time in which I did not love thee! But it is better to commence late than at all. Behold, oh Mary, today I present myself to thee, and offer myself entirely to thy service, for the longer or shorter time that remains for me to live on the earth; and with thee I renounce all creatures, and dedicate myself entirely to the love of my Creator. I consecrate to thee, then, oh queen, my mind, that I may always think of the love that thou dost merit, my tongue to praise thee, and my heart to love thee. Accept, oh most holy Virgin, the offering which the most miserable sinner presents to thee; accept it, I pray thee, for the sake of that consolation which filled thy heart when in the temple thou gavest thyself to God. And if late I begin to serve thee, it is right that I should make good the time lost by redoubling my devotion and my love. Aid my weakness, oh mother of mercy, with thy powerful intercession, and obtain for me perseverance and strength to be faithful to thee until death; that always serving thee in this life, I may come to praise thee eternally in paradise.

### On the Feast of the Presentation of Mary.

1st. The holy child Mary, having hardly arrived at the age of three years, entreated her parents that she might be placed in the temple according to the promise which they had made. The day appointed having arrived, the immaculate young Virgin leaves Nazareth with St. Joachim and St. Anne, accompanied by a host of angels who attend that holy child who was destined for the mother of their Creator. Go, says St. Germanus, go, oh blessed Virgin, to the house of the Lord, to await the Holy Ghost, who is to come to render thee mother of the eternal Word.

2d. The holy company having arrived at the temple in Jerusalem, the holy child turns to her parents, and kneeling, kisses their hands, asks their blessing, and then, without looking back, ascends the steps of the temple. There renouncing entirely the world and all things that the world could give her, she offers and consecrates herself wholly to God. Henceforth the life of Mary in the temple was but one continual exercise of love, and the offering of her whole self to her Lord. She increased from hour to hour, nay, from moment to moment, in holy virtues, sustained indeed by divine grace, but always endeavoring, with all her powers, to correspond with grace. Mary herself revealed this to St. Elizabeth, the virgin, saying: "Do you think that I obtained the graces and virtues without an effort? Know that I received from God no grace without great effort, continual prayer, an ardent desire, and many tears and penances."

3d. Thus Mary, a young virgin in the temple, did nothing but pray. And seeing the human race lost and hateful to God, she especially prayed for the coming of the Messiah, desiring then to be the servant of that happy Virgin who was to be the mother of God. Oh, who would have said to her then: Oh holy Lady, know that already through thy prayers the Son of God is hastening to come and redeem the world; and know that thou art the blessed one chosen to be the mother of thy Creator. Oh beloved of God, most holy child, thou prayest for all, pray also for me. Thou hast consecrated thyself wholly, even from infancy, to the love of thy God; ah, obtain for me at least that during the remaining years of my life I may live for God alone. Today together with thee, I renounce all creatures, and consecrate myself to the love of my Lord. I also offer myself to thee, oh my queen, to serve thee forever. Accept me for thy special servant and obtain for me the grace to be faithful to thee and to thy Son, that I may come one day to praise thee and love thee eternally in paradise.

### The Annunciation March 25

Start the novena on March 16<sup>th</sup>. However, if the Annunciation is moved to after Easter, because of it falling in Holy Week or Easter Week, then start the novena on Holy Saturday. In preparation for the Annunciation let us imitate Marys humility in supporting contempt.

Oh immaculate and holy Virgin! Oh creature the most humble and the greatest before God! thou wast so small in thy own eyes, but so great in the eyes of thy Lord, that He exalted thee even to choose thee for His mother, and therefore to make thee queen of heaven and of earth. I then thank that God Who hath so much exalted thee, and rejoice with thee in seeing thee so closely united to God, that more is not permitted to a pure creature. I am ashamed to appear before thee who art so humble, with so many graces; I, a miserable sinner, and so proud with so many sins. But wretched as I am, I, wish to salute thee: Hail Mary, full of grace. Thou art already full of grace; obtain a share of it also for me. The Lord is with thee. The Lord who hath ever been with thee even from the first moment of thy creation, is now more intimately with thee, by making himself thy Son. Blessed art thou among women. Oh woman, blessed among all women, obtain for us also the divine benediction. Oh blessed plant which hath given to the world a fruit so noble and so holy. Holy Mary, mother of God. Oh Mary, I confess that thou art the true mother of God, and for this truth I would give my life a thousand times. Pray for us sinners. But if thou art the mother of God, thou art also the mother of our salvation, and

of us poor sinners; since it is to save sinners that God made Himself man; and He has made thee His mother that thy prayers may have the power to save every sinner. Pray for us, oh Mary. Now and in the hour of our death. Pray always; pray now, while we are in life, in the midst of so many temptations and so great danger of losing God; but still more, pray in the hour of our death, when we are on the point of leaving this world and being presented at the divine tribunal; that being saved by the merits of Jesus Christ, and by thy intercession, we may one day come, without the danger of losing thee any more, to salute thee and praise thee, with thy Son, in heaven, for all eternity. Amen.

For the Day of the Annunciation to Mary.

1st. When God wished to send His Son to make Himself man that He might redeem lost man, He chose for Him a virgin mother, among all virgins the most pure, the most holy, and the most humble. And behold, whilst Mary was in her poor dwelling praying to God for the coming of the Redeemer, an angel appears and salutes her, and says to her: "Hail full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women." And what does the humble Virgin when she hears such words in her honor? She is not elated, but is silent and troubled, esteeming herself too unworthy of these praises. She was troubled at his saying. Oh Mary, thou so humble and I so proud, obtain for me holy humility.

2nd. Did not those praises, at least, cause Mary to suspect that she was the destined mother of the Redeemer? No, they only caused her to conceive a great fear of herself. Wherefore it was necessary that he should encourage her not to be afraid: "Fear not, Mary, for thou hast found grace with God." And then he announced to her that she was chosen to be mother of the Savior of the world: "Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and shalt bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus." Blessed art thou, oh Mary! how dear thou wast and art to thy God! Have pity on me.

3rd. Take courage, says St. Bernard, addressing her; why delay, holy Virgin, in giving thy consent? The eternal Word awaits it, in order to clothe himself with flesh, and become thy Son. We, who are all condemned to eternal death, are waiting for it in misery; if thou dost accept and consent to be His mother, we shall all be delivered. Quickly, oh Lady, answer; do not delay giving to the world that salvation which depends on thy consent. But rejoice, for Mary already answers to the angel: Behold, she says, the servant of the Lord, bound to do whatever her Lord commands, if He chooses a servant for his mother, the servant is not to be praised, but only the goodness of God, who wishes thus to honor her. Oh Mary, most humble, thou, by thy humility, hast so enamored thy God that thou hast constrained Him to make Himself thy Son and our Redeemer. I know that thy Son denies thee nothing that thou dost ask; ask of Him to give me His holy love; ask of Him to pardon me all the offences which I have committed against Him; ask of Him to give me perseverance until death. In a word, recommend to Him my soul, for thy recommendations are never rejected by a Son who loves thee so much. Oh Mary, thou must save me: thou art my hope.

## The Visitation July 2

Start the Novena on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. In preparation for the Visitation let us imitate Mary's charity towards her neighbor.

Immaculate and blessed Virgin, since thou art the universal dispenser of all divine graces, therefore thou art the hope of all, and also my hope. I always thank my Lord that He hath given me to know thee, and the means that I must use to obtain graces and save myself. Thou art this means, oh great mother of God, for I now understand that it is principally through the merits of Jesus Christ, and after those, through thy intercession, that I am to be saved. Ah, my queen, thou didst make so great haste to visit, and sanctify with thy visit, the house of Elizabeth; ah, visit, and visit quickly the poor house of my soul. Ah, hasten! thou knowest better than I how poor it is, how infected with many maladies, with irregular affections, bad habits, and actual sin, all those fatal diseases which will bring it to eternal death. Thou canst enrich it, oh treasurer of God! and thou canst heal all its infirmities. Visit me then in life, and visit me especially at the hour of my death, for then thy help will be more necessary to me. I do not, indeed expect, neither am I worthy that thou shouldst visit me on this earth with thy visible presence, as thou hast done to so many of thy servants, but servants not so unworthy and ungrateful as I am. I will be content to be allowed then to see thee in thy kingdom of heaven, there to love thee better, and thank thee for whatever good thou hast done me. At present I will be content that thou shouldst visit me with thy mercies. It is enough that thou dost pray for me.

Pray for me then oh Mary, and commend me to thy Son. Thou knowest better than I know myself, my miseries and my necessities. What more would I say to thee? Have pity on me. I am so miserable and ignorant that I do not even know, and cannot even ask, the graces that are most necessary for me. Oh my queen and most sweet mother, ask thou and obtain for me, from thy Son, those graces which thou knowest to be most useful and necessary for my soul. Into thy hands I entirely abandon myself, and only pray the divine Majesty, that through the merits of my Saviour Jesus, He may grant me those graces that thou dost ask of Him for me. Ask, ask then for me, oh most holy Virgin, whatever thou esteemest best. Thy prayers are never rejected. They are the prayers of a mother to a Son, Who loves thee so much, and finds His joy in granting whatever thou dost ask of Him, thus the more to honor thee, and at the same time, show thee the great love He bears thee. Oh Lady, thus let it be. I will live trusting in thee. Thou must think only on saving me. Amen.

### On the Feast of the Visitation of Mary

1st. Mary set out from Nazareth to go to the city of Hebron, distant, according to Broccardo, seventy miles; that is to say, at least seven days journey over rough mountains and with no other companion than her spouse Joseph. The holy Virgin hastens, as St. Luke informs us: She went into the mountainous country in haste. Tell us, oh holy Lady, why thou didst undertake this long and difficult journey, and why thou didst thus hasten on thy way? I am going, she answers, to exercise my office of charity; I am going to console a family. If, then, oh great mother of God, thy office is to console and dispense

graces to souls, ah come to console and visit my soul. Thy visit then sanctified the house of Elizabeth; come, oh Mary, and sanctify me also.

2d. And now the holy Virgin has arrived at the house of Elizabeth. She had been made mother of God, but she is the first to salute her relation. She entered, and saluted Elizabeth. Elizabeth enlightened by the Lord, already knows that the divine Word has become man and the Son of Mary, hence she calls her blessed among women, and blesses that divine Fruit that was in her womb: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb." And, filled (at the same time) with confusion and joy, she exclaims: "And whence is this to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" But what does the humble Mary answer to these words? She answers: My soul doth magnify the Lord. As if she would say: Ah, Elizabeth, you praise me; but I praise my God that He has chosen to exalt me, His poor servant, to be His mother: He hath regarded the humility of His servant. Oh most holy Mary, since thou dost dispense so many graces to those who ask them of thee, I pray thee to give me thy humility. Thou dost esteem thyself as nothing before God; but I am worse than nothing, for I am, at the same time, nothing and a sinner. Thou canst make me humble. Make me so through love of that God who has made thee his mother.

3d. But at the first words of Mary, when she salutes Elizabeth, what happens? The child, John, exults with joy on account of the divine grace given him before his birth; Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Ghost, and Zachary, the Father of the Baptist, not long after, is consoled by recovering his speech. So that it is indeed true, oh my queen and mother, that through thee the divine graces are dispensed, and souls are sanctified. Do not forget, then, oh my most dear Lady, me, thy poor servant, who loves thee, and has placed in thee all my hopes. Thy prayers are all graciously heard by that God who loves thee so much. Pray, then, for me, oh my mother, and make me holy.

## The Purification February 2

Start the Novena on January 23<sup>rd</sup>. In preparation for Mary's Purification let us imitate her obedience to Superiors.

Oh holy mother of God my mother Mary, didst thou then feel so great care of my salvation that thou didst even consent to offer up to death the object dearest to thy heart, thy beloved Jesus? If thou, then, hast so greatly desired to see me saved, it is just that next to God I should place in thee all my hopes. Oh, blessed Virgin, I do indeed confide entirely in thee. Oh, by the merit of this great sacrifice of the life of thy Son which today thou hast offered to God, pray him to have pity on my soul, for which this immaculate Lamb did not refuse to die upon the cross.

today, oh my queen, I also, in imitation of thee wish to offer my poor heart to God; but I fear that he will refuse it, seeing it thus filthy and loathsome. But if thou wilt offer it to Him, He will not refuse it. All the offerings made Him by thy most pure hands he accepts and receives. To thee, then, oh Mary, I present my self today, miserable as I am, and to thee I give myself entirely. Offer me as thine to the eternal Father and to Jesus, and pray Him that through the merits of His Son, and by thy favor, He may accept me, and take me for His own. Ah, my sweetest mother, for the love thou bearest this Son whom thou hast sacrificed, aid me always, and do not abandon me. Do not permit that I should one day lose, through my sins, this my most loving Redeemer, today offered by

thee with so much anguish to die on the cross. Say to Him that I am thy servant; say to Him that in thee I have placed all my hope; say to him, in a word, that thou dost wish for my salvation, and He will certainly graciously hear thee. Amen.

For the day of the Purification of Mary and the Presentation of Jesus.

1st. The time having arrived when Mary was to go, according to the law, to be purified in the temple and to present Jesus to the divine Father, she departed with Joseph. Joseph took the two turtle-doves that were to be offered, and Mary takes her dear Infant she takes the divine Lamb to offer him to God as a sign of that great sacrifice which this Son was one day to complete upon the cross. Oh my God, I also unite my offering to that of Mary; I offer Thee Thy Son made man, and by His merits I pray thee to give me thy grace. I do not merit it, but Jesus, to obtain it for me, has sacrificed Himself to Thee. For love then of Jesus, have pity on me.

2d. Behold, Mary enters into the temple and makes the oblation of her Son in the name of the whole human race. But especially on this day does Jesus offer Himself to His eternal Father: Behold me, He says, oh my Father, to thee I consecrate My whole life: Thou hast sent me into the world to save it; behold My Blood and My Life, I offer all to thee for the salvation of the world. Unhappy should I be, my dear Redeemer, if thou hadst not satisfied for me the divine justice. I thank thee for it with my whole soul, and I love thee with my whole heart. And whom should I love if I do not love a God Who has sacrificed His life for me?

3d. This sacrifice was more dear to God than if all men and all the angels had offered to Him their lives. Yes, because in this offering alone of Jesus the eternal Father received an infinite honor and an infinite satisfaction. Jesus Christ once said to the blessed Angela of Foligno: "I have offered Myself for thee that thou mayest offer thyself to Me." Yes, my Jesus, as thou didst offer to the Father Thy life for me, I offer to Thee my life and my whole self. Hitherto I have with so great ingratitude slighted Thee, but Thou hast promised to forget the offences of a sinner who repents of having offended thee, my Jesus, I grieve for it, and I wish to die of grief. I was dead in sin; from Thee I hope for life, and my life will be to love Thee, oh Infinite Good. Grant that I may love Thee, and I will ask of Thee nothing more. Dispense the goods of this earth to those who desire them; I desire nothing but the treasure of Thy love. My Jesus, Thou art alone enough for me. Oh my queen and mother Mary, through thee I hope for every good.

## The Assumption August 15

Start the Novena on August 6<sup>th</sup>. In preparation for the Assumption let us practice detachment from the world, which we shall soon leave in death.

Oh, our most sweet Lady and Mother, thou hast already left the earth, and hast reached the kingdom, where thou sittest as queen over all the choirs of angels, as the holy Church sings: She was exalted above the choirs of angels in the celestial kingdoms. We know that we sinners are not worthy of having thee with us in the valley of darkness. But we know also, that thou in thy grandeur hast never forgotten us in our misery, and by being exalted to such glory hast never lost compassion for us poor children of Adam, but rather that it is increased in thee. From the high throne then, where thou dost reign, turn,

oh Mary, even upon us, thy pitying eyes, and take compassion upon us. Remember, too, that on leaving this world, thou didst promise not to forget us. Look upon us and succor us. See in what tempests and in how many dangers we are, and always shall be, till the end of our life arrives. By the merits of thy holy death, obtain for us holy perseverance in the divine friendship, that we may finally depart from this life in the grace of God, and thus come one day to kiss thy feet in paradise, and unite ourselves with the blessed spirits in praising thee, and singing thy glories, as thou dost merit. Amen.

Oh great, excellent, and most glorious Lady, prostrate at the foot of thy throne, we adore thee from this valley of tears. We rejoice at the immense glory with which our Lord has enriched thee. Now that thou art really queen of heaven and of earth, ah, do not forget us thy poor servants. Do not disdain from the lofty throne, from which thou dost reign, to turn thy pitying eyes towards us miserable sinners. As thou art so near the source of graces, thou art able so much the more to obtain them for us. In heaven thou seest more plainly our miseries, and therefore thou must pity and relieve us the more. Make us on earth thy faithful servants, that we may thus go to bless thee in paradise. On this day, when thou hast been made queen of the universe, we also consecrate ourselves to thy service. In thy great joy console us also this day, by accepting us for thy vassals. Thou, then, art our mother. Ah, most sweet mother! most amiable mother! thy altars are surrounded by many people who ask of thee, one to be healed of some malady, another to be relieved in his necessities, one prays thee for a good harvest, and another success in some litigation. We ask of thee graces more pleasing to thy heart. Obtain for us that we may be humble, detached from earth, resigned to the divine will. Obtain for us the holy love of God, a good death, and paradise. Oh Lady, change us from sinners to saints. Perform this miracle that will redound more to thy honor, than if thou didst restore sight to a thousand blind persons, or raise a thousand from the dead. Thou art so powerful with God, it is enough to say that thou art His mother, His most beloved, full of His grace; what can He then deny thee? Oh most lovely queen, we do not pretend to behold thee on the earth, but we desire to go and see thee in paradise: thou must obtain this for us. Thus we certainly hope. Amen, amen.

#### On the Feast of the Assumption of Mary into Heaven

1st. Mary dies; but how does she die? She dies entirely detached from any affection for created things, and dies consumed with that divine love with which her most holy heart was always and entirely inflamed. Oh holy mother, thou hast already left the earth; do not forget us, miserable pilgrims, who remain in this valley of tears struggling against so many enemies, who desire to see us lost in hell. Ah, by the merits of thy precious death, obtain for us detachment from earthly things, pardon of our sins, love to God, and holy perseverance; and, when the hour of our death shall arrive, assist us from heaven with thy prayers, and obtain for us to come and kiss thy feet in paradise.

2d. Mary dies, and her most pure body is carried by the holy apostles, and placed in the sepulchre, and is guarded by angels for three days, after which it is transported to paradise, but her beautiful soul entered, as soon as she expired, the kingdom of the blessed, accompanied by innumerable angels and by her Son himself. Having entered heaven, she humbly presents herself to God, adores Him, and, with unbounded love, thanks Him for all the graces which she has received from Him. God embraces her,

blesses her, and constitutes her queen of the universe, exalting her above all the angels and saints. Now, if the human mind, as the apostle says, cannot arrive at the comprehension of the great glory that God is preparing in heaven for His servants who have loved Him on this earth, what must be the glory that He gave to this His most holy mother, who on earth has loved Him more than all the saints and angels, and has loved Him with all her power! So that Mary alone, when she entered heaven, could say to God: Oh my Lord, if I have not loved thee on earth as Thou dost merit, at least I have loved Thee as much as I could.

3d. Let us rejoice with Mary in the glory with which her God has enriched her; and let us also rejoice for ourselves, for Mary, at the same time was made queen of the world, and appointed our advocate. She is so merciful an advocate, that she consents to defend all sinners who recommend themselves to her; and she is so powerful with our Judge that she gains all the causes which she defends. Oh our queen and advocate, in thy hand is our salvation; if thou dost pray for us, we shall be saved. Say to thy Son that thou dost wish us with thee in paradise. He denies thee nothing that thou dost ask. Oh our life, our sweetness, and our hope! Mary, pray Jesus for us.

## Other Feasts of the Blessed Virgin Mary

### The Seven Sorrows

Oh my afflicted mother! queen of martyrs and of sorrows, thou hast shed so many tears for thy Son, Who died for my salvation, and yet what will thy tears avail me, if I am lost? By the merits, then, of thy dolours, obtain for me a true sorrow for my sins, and a true amendment of life, with a perpetual and tender compassion for the passion of Jesus and thy own sufferings. And if Jesus and thou, being so innocent, have suffered so much for me, obtain for me that I, who am deserving of hell, may also suffer something for love of you. O Lady, I will say to thee with St. Bonaventure, if I have offended thee, wound my heart in punishment; if I have served thee, now I beg to be wounded as a reward. It is a shameful thing to see our Lord Jesus wounded, and thee wounded with Him, and I uninjured. Finally, oh my mother, by the grief thou didst experience on seeing thy Son before thy eyes bow His head and expire upon the cross, I entreat of thee to obtain for me a good death. Ah, do not cease, oh advocate of sinners, to assist my afflicted and struggling soul in that great passage that it has to make into eternity. And, because at that time it may easily be the case that I shall have lost the use of speech with which to invoke thy name, and that of Jesus, who are all my hope, therefore I now invoke thy Son and thee to succor me at that last moment, and I say: Jesus and Mary, to you I commend my soul. Amen.

### Another Prayer

Oh queen of paradise! mother of holy love! for thou art of all creatures the most lovely, the most beloved of God and His first lover; ah, suffer the vilest and most ungrateful sinner on the earth to love thee, who sees himself released from hell by thy intercession, and with out any merit of his own so blessed by thee, that he is enamored of thy goodness. I would wish if I could, to make known to all men who do not know thee,

how worthy thou art to be loved, that all might love and honor thee. I would willingly die for love of thee, in defending thy virginity, thy dignity as mother of God, and thy immaculate conception; if it were ever needful for me to die in defence of these thy great privileges. Oh my most beloved mother, graciously accept this my affection, and do not permit that one of thy servants, who loves thee, should ever become an enemy of thy God, whom thou lovest so much. Ah, unhappy me, such once was I when I offended my Lord. But then, oh Mary, I did not love thee, and I sought little to be loved by thee. Now, after the grace of God, I desire nothing else than but to love thee, and to be loved by thee.

I do not despair of this on account of my past offences, for I know that thou, oh most benign and grateful Lady, dost not disdain to love even the most miserable sinners who love thee, ever dost allow thyself to be outdone in love by any one. Oh most lovely queen, I wish to go to thee in paradise, there to love thee. There, at thy feet, I shall better know how amiable thou art, and how much thou hast done to save me; therefore I shall love thee there with greater love, and shall love thee eternally, with out the fear that I shall ever cease to love thee. Oh Mary, I have the certain hope of being saved through thee. Pray to Jesus for me. I have no other wish. It is thine to save me; thou art my hope. I will always exclaim, Oh Mary, my hope, thou must save me.

### Prayer of Saint John Eudes to Admirable Heart of Mary for Conversions

Hail Mary, Daughter of God the Father.

Hail Mary, Mother of God the Son.

Hail Mary, Spouse of the Holy Ghost.

Hail Mary, Temple of the Divinity.

Hail Mary, Immaculate lily of the resplendent and ever-peaceful Trinity. Hail Mary, Radiant rose of heavenly fragrance.

Hail Mary, Virgin of virgins, virgin most faithful, of whom the King of Heaven did will to be born.

Hail Mary, Queen of martyrs, whose soul was pierced with a sword of sorrow.

Hail Mary, Queen of the universe, to whom all power has been given in heaven and on earth.

Hail Mary, Queen of my heart, my mother, my life, my consolation, and my dearest hope.

Hail Mary, Mother most amiable.

Hail Mary, Mother most admirable.

Hail Mary, Mother of Mercy.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.

Blessed art thou amongst women.

And blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.

And blessed be thy spouse, St. Joseph.

And blessed be thy father, St. Joachim.

And blessed be thy mother, St. Anne.

And blessed be thy adopted son, St. John.

And blessed be thy angel, St. Gabriel.

And blessed be the Eternal Father who chose thee.