

NOVENA TO MARY IMMACULATE YEAR 2024



“Mary, the mother who cared for Jesus, now cares this wounded world with maternal affection and pain” (LS,11)



Novena to the Immaculate Conception

Dear Sisters,

In a hopeful way, the liturgy introduces us to the new liturgical year, and touches our hearts, putting us in an attitude of alert and vigilance.

In this same context as a Congregation, and with whom we walk together, we prepare to Celebrate the Feast of Mary Immaculate.

This year we felt it appropriate to connect the third call of the XVIII General Chapter with the role of Mary, Our Mother, in the care of the Common Home.

We suggest that the Celebration of the Novena be a quiet space of prayer, of conversation in the spirit. Therefore, we are invited to step into sacred ground and allow ourselves to be surprised by Mary in Her care. It is important not to overload this moment with other prayers, but to "feel and taste" the prayerful encounter and the experiences in the Spirit, shared.

Each community and apostolic platform can use the material according to its particularities and needs, and use the songs proper to the place.

We thank the Spirituality Team that has prepared the Novena 2024 with care, dedication and attention.

Let us meet in the prayer of these days in the light of the Marian experience of our Founders, praying for one another with Mary Immaculate, Virgin and Mother of care for our common home.

HAPPY FEAST!

A fraternal embrace

The Spirituality Team

Rome 25th November 2024

Day 1

Mary, caring for the creation

! Contemplation!

On this first day of the novena to our mother Mary, we want to invite you to contemplate and care for Creation because our Lord Jesus Christ "united himself to this earth when he was formed in Mary's womb" (LS 238). Contemplating Mary in creation makes us say like her at the Annunciation "I am the handmaid of the Lord, let it be done to me as you have said" (Lk.1,38).

Pope Paul VI in the Angelus of December 8, 1972 tells us about Mary "in our times, this practical and positive aspect of our devotion gives us courage to help defend the truth of love, the integrity of the family, the nobility of the spectacle, the morality of life in all aspects, the "ecology" of our civilisation which must neither blush nor forget that it is Christian; and therefore we have the Immaculate Virgin-Mother Mary, clothed with the sun, as an emblem of our own hope and our own salvation".

And how does Mary act in creation?

"Mary, the mother who cared for Jesus, now cares for this wounded world with maternal affection and pain. Just as she wept with pierced heart for the death of Jesus, so now she has compassion for the suffering of the crucified poor and the creatures of this world ravaged by human power. She lives with Jesus completely transfigured, and all creatures sing of her beauty. She is the Woman "clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head, a crown of twelve stars"¹. Raised to heaven, she is Mother and Queen of all creation. In her glorified body, together with the risen Christ, part of creation reached the fullness of its beauty. She, not only keep in her heart the entire life of Jesus, which she carefully "preserved,"² but she also now understands the meaning of all things. That is why we can ask her to help us look at this world with wiser eyes."³

¹ Rev 12;1

² Lk 2; 19.51

³ Pope Francis, encyclical letter Laudato Si' about care for our common home, n° 241.

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For our founders, who is Mary?

Our founders recognize Mary as the star that illuminates and accompanies us on the way. Claret in his prayers says about Mary: "O most holy Mary, conceived without original sin, Virgin Mother of the Son of the living God, Queen and Empress of heaven and earth! Since you are the Mother of pity and mercy, deign to turn your tender and compassionate eyes towards this unhappy exile in this valley of tears, anguish and misery, who, although unworthy, has the great happiness of being your son. Oh, my Mother, how much I love you! How I love you! Oh, and firmly trust that you will grant me perseverance in your holy service and grace until death!"⁴

Orientation for this day of novena....

Taking Mary's example, what can we do in our mission to be caretakers of creation?

- Recall those experiences you have as a protector of creation:
 1. Think of the beauty of creation
 2. Contemplate what God has created around you and how He has cared for it.
 3. Reflect on the figure of Claret and Paris, their great love for our Mother Mary.
- Meditate on the following biblical text: Gen. 1 and 2.
- What does it mean for my consecration to be created in the image and likeness of God?

Close this first day of the novena with a gesture, look for an object in the midst of nature that reflects God's creation and then share with your community what you have reflected on that sign.

Song

⁴ Father Claret, Autobiography n° 154.

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Who would be this woman who inspired so many beautiful poems of love?

Music and light, marble, word and color honor her.

the saint as well as the sinner.

Mary is that woman whom the Lord has always prepared for himself,

to be born, like a flower,

in the garden that God fell in love with.

Who would be this woman radiant as the sun, clothed with radiance?

The moon at his feet, the sky all around, and angels singing their love to him.

Who is the humble woman who lived in a small town?

Loving without miracles, living by her faith, Joseph's ever-joyful wife.



Day 2

Mary caring for the common home

!Protection!

We do not find on this second day, to ask the God of life, and the Blessed Virgin, for the situation that our sister and mother earth is living. *"This sister cries out for the damage that we cause her because of the irresponsible use and abuse of the goods that God has placed in her. We have grown up thinking that we were its owners and dominators, authorized to plunder it. The violence in the human heart, wounded by sin, is also manifested in the symptoms of disease that we see in the soil, in the water, in the air and in living beings. For this reason, among the most abandoned and mistreated poor is our oppressed and devastated earth, which "groans and suffers labor pains"⁵. We forget that we ourselves are earth⁶. Our own body is made up of the elements of the planet, we breath her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.⁷ .*

And how does Mary care for our Common Home?

The figure of Mary in the care of the common home joins the words of Pope Francis in *Laudato Sí*, when he tells us: *"at the end we will find ourselves face to face with the infinite beauty of God⁸ and we will be able to read with admiration and happiness the mystery of the universe, which will share with us in the endless plenitude. Yes, we are journeying towards the Sabbath of eternity, towards the new Jerusalem, towards the common home in heaven". Jesus tells us: "I make all things new"⁹. Eternal life will be a shared experience of awe, in which each creature, resplendently transfigured, will take its rightful place and have something to give those poor men and women, who will have been liberated once for all.*

In the meantime, we come together to take charge of this house entrusted to us, knowing that all good that exists will be taken up in the heavenly feast. Together with all creatures, we journey through this land seeking God, for, *"if the world has a beginning and if it has been*

⁵ Rom 8;22

⁶ Gen 2;7

⁷ Pope Francis, encyclical letter *Laudato Si'* about care for our common home, n° 2.

⁸ 1 Cor 13,12.

⁹ Rev 21, 5

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created, we must enquire who gave its beginning, and who was its creator.¹⁰ Let us sing as we go. May our struggles and our concern for this planet not take away the joy of our hope".

For our founders, what does it mean to care for the common home?

In Mother Antonia's experience, to care for the common home, is to care for one's neighbour. She reflects it especially in her dealings with the students: "The virtue that should shine most in the teacher should be the fervent zeal for the salvation of souls, for which she should not spare any work, fatigue or weariness, in imitation of our Lord Jesus Christ, trying to copy in her heart those virtues that are so necessary to our institute, charity, humility and meekness"¹¹.

In her autobiography she tells us: "On the day of the Assumption of Mary Most Holy, I gathered the young women whom I had admitted as companions, as I have mentioned, and we all received communion with great devotion and tenderness, offering ourselves to God with a vow to cross the seas and go to any part of the world without making any division among us, nor departing in any thing from the opinion of our Superior"¹².

Orientation for this day of the novena...

After Mary's example, How can we care for our common home in daily life?

- **Meditate on the following text: Gen. 2:15** "God entrusted his creative work to the human being to cultivate it and keep it".

- 1- How are we taking care of God's work?
- 2- Of the biodiversity that existed in our community, what plants and animals have disappeared?
- 3- What world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to the boys and girls who are growing up?

- Reflect on the first chapter of the Encyclical "Laudato Sí": What is happening to our Common Home.
- Act from a personal commitment to care for the common home.

Close this second day of the novena with a gesture, look around for elements of nature: water, earth, flowers, or a plant, and a sign with the phrase: "The God of life entrusted his creative work to the human being to cultivate it and keep it" (cf. Gen 2:15).

¹⁰ Papa Francisco, Carta Encíclica Laudato Si' sobre el cuidado de la casa común, nº 243-244.

¹¹Const.1869, Trat. IV Chap. 2 nº10.

¹² María Antonia París, Aut. nº 121.

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Concluding Prayer

All: Hail Mary most holy daughter of God the Father, in you are the hopes of all those who suffer the pollution of air and water, caused by large industries, you are full of grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you among all women and blessed is the fruit of your womb Jesus.

All: Holy Mary, Mother of God...

2.- Hail Mary Most Holy Mother of God the Son, Queen of our peoples, walk in our struggles for a less polluted earth and more full of life, full of Grace, the Lord is with you, blessed are you among all women and blessed is the fruit of your womb Jesus.

All: Holy Mary, Mother of God...

3.- Hail Mary Most Holy, Most Pure Bride of God, soften hard hearts so that they become sensitive to the realities of environmental pollution, Full of grace The Lord is with you, blessed are you among all women and blessed is the fruit of your womb Jesus.

All: Holy Mary Mother of God...



Day 3

Mary is attentive to the manifestation of God

Availability!

*From a very young age, Mary has been **attentive** to the way in which God manifests himself, how he reveals himself in her daily life. Because of this **capacity for attentive listening** to God, she is **able to** accompany Jesus throughout his pilgrimage and even on the road to salvation. The art of listening in Mary is not a simple, superficial listening, but it is listening with attention, acceptance and **availability** to God¹³.*

On this third day of the novena, we can ask Mary to teach us **to work on a listening heart** that leads us to **total availability to God**.

“I am the handmaid of God, let it be done to me according to your word”

*Pope Francis, in his latest document "Dilexit Nos", stresses that people in contemporary society "run the risk of losing their center to the self center". Indeed, the men and women of our time often find themselves confused and torn apart... There is no room for the heart¹⁴. We have experienced this reality in our daily lives. **The lack of encounter** with God can cause us to lose our way, to be **unable to hear his voice** clearly and **to have no idea** what our purpose in life is. Therefore, we need to **rediscover the importance of the heart**.¹⁵*

*Mary, from the mystery of the Incarnation, reveals to us her intense love for God and, therefore, her interior life, is capable of responding to God's salvific plan because she lives and develops deep intimacy with Him. Her contemplative heart was nourished as **she learned to pray and to listen to God, treasuring all the words and meditating on them in her heart** even then¹⁶. What Mary "kept" was not only the memory of what she had seen and heard, but also those aspects she did not yet understand.¹⁷ She continued to listen to events and lived attentively to the*

¹³ Lk 1; 1-2, 38

¹⁴ Pope Francis, encyclical letter *Dilex Nos*, n° 9, 2024.

¹⁵ Pope Francis, encyclical letter *Dilex Nos*, n° 2, 2024.

¹⁶ Lk 2; 19.51

¹⁷ *Ibíd.*, 19

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concrete reality that God was proposing to her. The secret of the interior life is to learn to remain. Mary teaches us how to remain in God with a single word: YES.

Mother Antonia was confronted with the concrete reality of the Church in need of renewal. It **moved her** to pray for the needs of the Holy Church and even to offer her life. "...one night while I was in prayer asking Christ crucified for the remedy of the Church...I **offered him my life** in sacrifice...I beg him **to deign to teach me** what I must do to give him pleasure and glory by fulfilling his most holy will.¹⁸" With this, we can feel that Mother Antonia offers herself completely with **all her availability** to the service of the Church¹⁹, as she also expressed: "Our Lord has given me this disposition, that as soon as I know the will of God, there is nothing difficult for me²⁰".

Father Claret from his childhood was endowed with a great capacity for reflection; he lived **in dialogue with God**. The first and decisive listening to God dates back to the age of five, when he thought about eternity: "This idea of a lost eternity that began to move me so vividly... is the mainspring and the goal of my zeal for the salvation of souls"²¹. This missionary call burns his heart and leads him to proclaim the Gospel by every available means: "...this idea has made me work in the past, it makes me work still and it will make me work as long as I live"²².

Let us spend a few moments in silence, asking the following questions in our hearts....

Orientation for this day of the novena...

What attitudes of Mary I find in my vocational life?

¹⁸ Aut. MAP, 2

¹⁹ Const. N° 7.

²⁰ Aut. MAP, 7

²¹ Aut. PC, 15

²² Ibid., 9b

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Concluding Prayer

Mary, woman of listening, keep our ears open;
Help us to listen to the word of your Son,
Among the millions of words of this world;
Help us to listen to the reality in which we live,
In each person we meet,
Especially in the poor, the needy and those in difficulty.
Mary, woman of decision, enlighten our minds and hearts,
That we may know how to obey the Word of your Son Jesus, without hesitation;
Give us the strength to decide, not to let ourselves be carried away
And not to allow others to guide our lives.
Mary, woman of action, make our feet
And our hands move "in haste" for the others
To carry the love and charity of your Son Jesus.
Amen

Pope Francis 31/05/2013



Day 4

Mary in the integral ecology

“Communion”

*In the encyclical Laudato Si, Pope Francis mentions Mary, the Mother of God, in the context of ecology and **care for creation**. Although he does not focus specifically on Mary, but her figure is an example of how-to live-in **harmony with nature and with God**.*

*It reminds us that we must become aware that our human life is based on the three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships that are **with God, with our neighbor and with the earth itself**.²³ This interrelationship must take place in our daily lives to help us achieve the common good, as he says that **"we can all cooperate as God's instruments for the care of creation, each according to his or her own culture, experience, commitments and talents."**²⁴*

*As we enter this fourth day of the novena, let us pause for a moment ... to think: **What are our attitudes that weaken this sense of interrelatedness/fraternity?***

A sense of deep communion with the rest of the nature cannot be real if our hearts lack tenderness, compassion and concern for our fellow human beings.(LS91)

It is good to keep in mind that if we no longer speak the language of fraternity and beauty in our relationship with the world, our attitude will be that of **masters, consumers, ruthless exploiters, incapable of setting limits to their immediate needs**.²⁵ We then lose our sense of belonging as a family of creation because we think and act as more powerful, without realizing

²³ Pope Francis, encyclical letter Laudato Si' care for the common home, n° 66.

²⁴ Ibid., n° 14.

²⁵ Ibid., n° 11

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that we are all in the same boat.²⁶ Caring for creation implies a deep respect for the natural world and a commitment to safeguarding the environment. It is also important to increase our love for all of God's creation and to delight in the wonders that surround us.

For this reason, Pope Francis stresses the importance of **seeing creation as a gift from God** and invites us to care for it with **love and respect**. The image of Mary, creature, carrying Jesus, the Creator, represents this **unique relationship** between God and his creation. We can understand it in two ways:

- a. It is an icon of how the Lord cares for and loves his creation. He, who is divine by nature, enters the realm of creation, takes human nature as his own and grants it the call to divinity (the admirable exchange).
- b. It represents the love and care that Mary has nurtured, lived and embodied in her relationship with God and with creation. Mary makes it possible for creation to be elevated in its nature, becoming divine. So, creation must be given due respect because God himself is present in it.

For both founders, Father Claret and Mother Antonia emphasize fraternal union and charity as the main purpose that can make us live as one family and one heart as the Lord desires of us. Love allows us to create a big family, where we can all feel at home and safe²⁷.

Orientation for this day of the novena...

SHARING in the community:

How do you connect with nature?
With the people? With God?
What gives you hope?

²⁶ Pope Francis, Encyclical letter Fratelli Tutti on fraternity and social friendships, n° 30.

²⁷ *Ibíd.*, n° 62

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Concluding Prayer

A prayer for our Earth

Almighty God,

you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour upon us the power of your love,

that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor,

help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth,

so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives,

that we may protect the world and not detach it,

that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts of those who seek only profit at the expense of the poor and the poorest.

at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover the value of everything,

to be filled with wonder and contemplation,

to recognize that we are deeply united

to every creature as we walk towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray,

in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

Amen.

Song

<https://youtu.be/erZuM8rJWso?si=TllzjNtlN9WtfriS> Everyday God



Day 5

Mary in the service of the Gospel Let it

let it be done!

Mary's "Let it be done" was built throughout her life, so we recognize that she put all her trust in the Lord and gave herself to the Service of the Kingdom by following, as a disciple, the Way pointed out by Jesus: "*My mother and my brothers are those who hear the Word of God and do it*".²⁸

And how is Mary a Disciple at the Service of the Gospel?

Mary welcomes in her womb the Word that existed from the beginning²⁹, gives him flesh of her flesh and from his birth takes care of him, accompanies him and delivers him as the Light of the world.

Mary overflows with joy and sings the Magnificat. And she reveals us the God that she knows and in whom she believes: lover and caregiver of the poorest and most helpless. "Let us not be afraid to go forth to the existential and geographical peripheries," Pope Francis has told us³⁰.

Evangelist John tells us **Mary is attentive** to the needs of others and **intercedes (acts)**,³¹ so that there will be no lack of wine... Good wine, of the best quality... New life, that of the Kingdom, woven from justice, fraternity, mercy, forgiveness...

With Mary and Joseph, Jesus learns **to be attentive** to the needs of all, **and to look with love.** The Gospels bear witness...³²

²⁸ Lk. 8,21.

²⁹ Jn. 1,1.

³⁰ Pope Francis, Audience to the participants of XVIII General Chapter of the Religious of Mary Immaculate Claretian Missionary sisters, 24th July, 2023.

³¹ Jn. 2,1-12.

³² Pope Francis, Encyclical letter *Dilex Nos*, n° 39-42, 2024.

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*Mary is part of the first Christian community*³³

St. Anthony Mary Claret and the Venerable Mary Antonia Paris gave their lives to the service of the Gospel. List three aspects of the life of each that reflect this dedication.

Orientation for this day of the novena....

I (write your name) Disciple in the Service of the Gospel

- Recall those experiences you have as a disciple like Mary:
- 4. Surrender to Jesus as Light of the world in the day to day of our own surrender.
- 5. Sing joyfully to the Lord (When?, Where? and Why?).
- 6. Be attentive to the needs of others, like Jesus and Mary, offering the best... Remember Claret and Paris.
- Place yourself before that text of the Gospel that in a special way that guides you in your discipleship.
- You can ask yourself, What does it mean for me to be in Community like

Close this fifth day of the novena with a gesture that you will present at the Community Meeting. It can be a symbol, a Thanksgiving, a litany, a poem, or a song....

Concluding prayer

O Virgin and Mother of God,

I give myself up as your daughter.

I entrust myself to your motherly love

that you may form Jesus in me,

³³ Act 1;14

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*the Son and the One Sent by the Father,
the One Anointed by the Holy Spirit
to proclaim the Good News to the poor.*

*Teach me to keep, like you, the Word in my heart,
until I become a living Gospel.*

*intercede for the strength of the Spirit
to be witness of Christ among men.*

*Infuse in me with your motherly love
so that I may reveal the Father to them
and they may feel the joy of being children of God
in the fraternal communion of the Church.*

Mother, here is your daughter. form me.

Mother, here is your daughter. Send.

*Mother, here is your daughter. Speak for me.
Love for me.*

*Protect me, lest by preaching the Gospel to
others, I be excluded from the Kingdom.*

In you, my Mother, I have placed all my trust.

I will never be confused. Amen



Day 6

Mary in the contemplation and silence

Heart!

"Mary...looked with her heart. She was able to dialogue with treasured experiences by pondering them in the heart, giving them time: symbolizing and keeping them inside to remember... and what she kept was not only "the scene" she saw, but also what she did not yet understand and yet remained present and alive in the expectation of uniting it all in the heart." ³⁴

Today is a day to LOOK and LISTEN with the heart... And so, like Mary, "we come before the Lord in a humble and destitute spirit, as those who have nothing and expect everything from their Saviour"³⁵.

Listening... from Heart

Pope Francis reminds us that "Mary, the mother who cared for Jesus, now cares with maternal affection and pain for this wounded world... she grieves for the suffering of the crucified poor and the creatures of this world laid waste by human power. Hence, we can ask her to enable us to look at this world with eyes of wisdom."³⁶

Also, "Along with her, the figure of St. Joseph stands out. Through his work and generous presence, he cared for and defended Mary and Jesus, delivering them from the violence of the unjust by bringing them to Egypt. ...from his figure also emerges a great tenderness... proper to those... attentive to reality in order to love and serve in humility... He too can teach us how to show care, he can inspire us to work with generosity and tenderness in protecting this world which God has entrusted to us"³⁷.

For our Founders, love of God and love of the brother is the same love³⁸. Venerable Maria Antonia Paris and her companions took their first steps in the apostolic mission in Santiago de Cuba, by the hand of Father Claret, with a school that included negro girls, daughters of

³⁴ Papa Francisco, Carta Encíclica *Dilex Nos*, nº 19, 2024

³⁵ Const. 13.

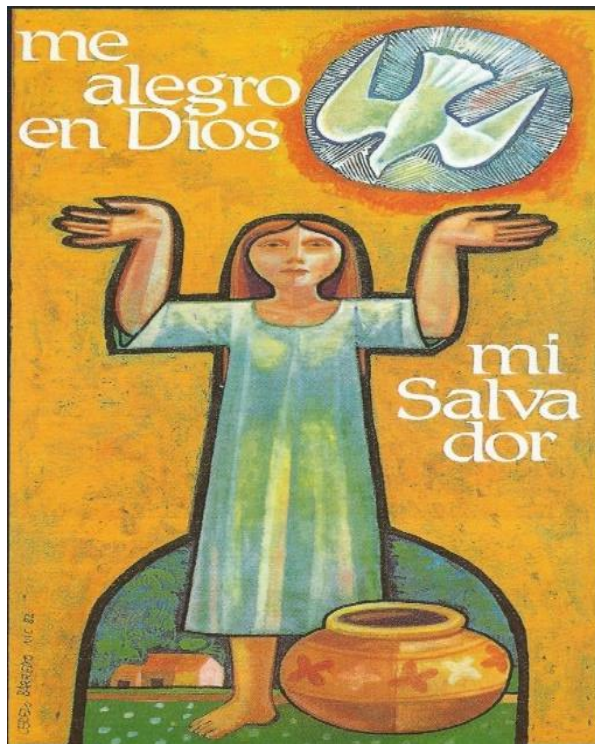
³⁶ Pope Francis, encyclical letter *Laudato Si'* on care of common home, nº 241.

³⁷ Pope Francis, encyclical letter *Laudato Si'* on care of common home, nº 242.

³⁸ Mk 12,29-31.

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slaves³⁹, and later in Baracoa. They took a risk in a society where only white girls could go to school.



In St. Anthony Mary Claret, following his autobiography, we find a deeply compassionate man⁴⁰, who works for justice, for equality among people; who tirelessly seeks to improve the quality of human life ... who loves his neighbor⁴¹, but also draws attention that among the means to refine his "practice of virtues" are animals ...: he learns prudence from ant; the crowing of rooster invites him to praise God at all times, in donkey he finds humility and in dog fidelity⁴²... , this is indicative of his experience of universal fraternity.

Orientation for this Novena day

Let us elaborate our Magnificat - which we will share in Community - with all that we have been pondering in our hearts, **connected with all of creation, with our hearts set on this Common Home. Like Mary, we will overflow with joy in the Lord.**

Look for the place that most inspires you and connects you with all that you have journeyed in these six days: the garden, a park, a square..., the chapel....

³⁹ Historia de la Congregación. Tomo I, pág. 232.

⁴⁰ PC, Aut. N° 9, 28, 32, 34, 50.

⁴¹ PC, Aut. N° 448.

⁴² PC, Aut 664, 666, 670.

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Closing Prayer

Mary Immaculate, Lady of maternal care,
we thank you that you know our weaknesses
and strengthen us with your tenderness.

Awaken our praise and gratitude for every created being,
feeling ourselves intimately united with all that exists.

Show us the way of mutual trust and dialogue,
to live fraternity.

Continue to point us to Jesus the missionary, the Samaritan;
as a teacher of humanization.

Teach us to keep the Word in our hearts,
to allow ourselves to be transformed by it.

Confirm us in our first mission,
which is life in communion.

Make us discover that attentive listening becomes acceptance.

Help us to welcome complexity and vulnerability
in order to be Samaritans in today's world.

Mary Immaculate, Lady of maternal care,
we thank you because you help us to free ourselves from all fears
going forth to the existential peripheries
and "make a missionary mess". Amen.



Day 7

Mary in Justice, peace and integrity of Creation

!Mirror of Justice!

To make justice and peace possible in our world today, let us be inspired by Pope Francis, in his fourth Encyclical "Dilexit nos" where he asks us to: "Let us change our perspective, our outlook, our goals because the world can only change from the heart, it is the heart that assembles the fragments and makes any authentic connection possible".

Hymn to the Holy Spirit

Mary, mirror of justice

Mary is all Immaculate, she is perfectly the righteous one, she is all "adjusted to God", she is the model of justice. In other words, from an interior, spiritual and mystical level, she is mirror of justice.

But this spiritual dimension is incarnated. Who better than the Mother of God to incarnate justice?

What does God's justice mean in the Bible?

There are many dimensions, but among so many meanings, justice is a forgiveness given unconditionally, without limit, exceeding the limits of the law without abolishing it. This merciful justice requires only faith, faith in a justice of God that is fulfilled in the forgiveness of sins and in God's love for each one of us.

God's justice is a source of love.

Psalm 84

R/ Lord, gather us in the peace of your love (sung)

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Lord, you have been good to your land,
you have restored Jacob's lot,
You have forgiven the guilt of your people,
you have buried all their sins,
You have restrained your wrath,
you have restrained the fire of thy wrath.

R/ Lord, gather us in the peace of your love.

Restore us, O God our Saviour;
cease thy rancour against us.
Will you always be angry,
or prolong your anger from age to age?
Will you not restore us to life?
that thy people may rejoice with thee?
Will you show us your mercy, O Lord, and give us your
salvation?

R/ Lord, gather us together in the peace of your Love.

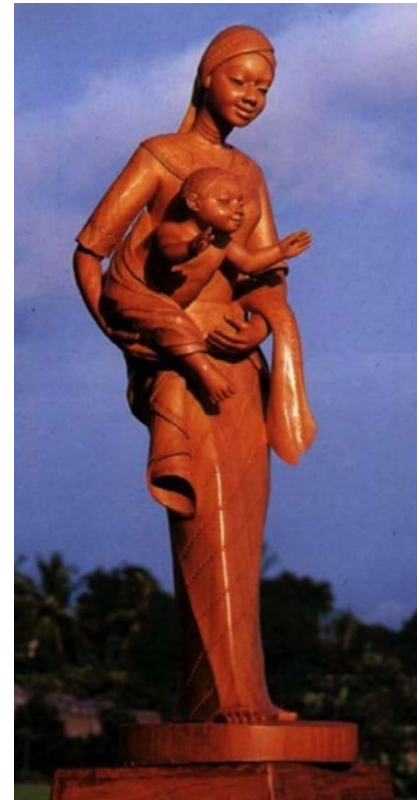
I will listen to what the Lord says:

"God proclaims peace to his people and to his friends
and to those who are converted from the heart".

R/ Lord, gather us together in the peace of your love.

Salvation is near to those who fear him,
and glory shall dwell in our land;
Mercy and faithfulness have met,
justice and peace embrace each other;
Faithfulness springs from the earth,
and justice looks down from heaven.
The Lord will give us rain, and our land will yield its fruit.
Righteousness will march before him, and his steps will point the way.

R/ Lord, gather us together in the peace of your love.



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Reflection

In the Encyclical Letter *Caritas Veritate*, On Integral Human Development in Charity and Truth, Pope Benedict XVI recalled that the Christian people to honor the Virgin Mary with the title "Mirror of Justice and Queen of Peace". This tells us that Mary as a mirror or model must be incarnated in society. It also reminds us that justice is the least of charity, because nothing has yet been given before having given (or rather given back) to one's neighbor what is one's own. And finally, he describes what justice should be in the context of the beginning of the millennium, marked by globalization, financial crisis etc.

Silence

Mary, Queen of Peace

Mary, loved by the Father, docile to the Spirit and very close to her Son Jesus, is a builder of peace in her daily life.

Peace is a fundamental requirement for social and economic development. Without peace, societies are often plagued by conflict, violence and instability, which can hinder progress and lead to loss of life and resources.

Mary is our intercessor before God to obtain the spirit of love, unity and reconciliation. Mary is the Immaculate Conception, a person at peace with herself and with God.

Mary helps us to work for the integrity of creation.

With respect to creation, we realize that we are not separate, but are one with nature, integrally linked to its sacred ecology. In this perspective, we are called to reaffirm our commitment to listen to the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth as if these voices speak within us, making their suffering deeply personal.

Mary, the mother who cared for Jesus, invites us to care for this suffering and sick world.



Silence with soft music

Orientation for this day of the novena...

Each community is invited to discuss these questions together or in small groups:

- ✓ How can we practice God's justice?
- ✓ Share an example from the Bible that motivates you to practice justice.

Novena to the Immaculate Conception

Closing Prayer

O Mary Immaculate, look upon our poor troubled and sick world;

You know our miseries and our weaknesses,

have mercy on us.

Lord Jesus Christ,

may these rivers of living water flow for us all from your holy heart,

healing the wounds we inflict on ourselves,

strengthening our capacity to love and serve,

and impelling us to learn to walk together

towards a just, supportive and fraternal world.

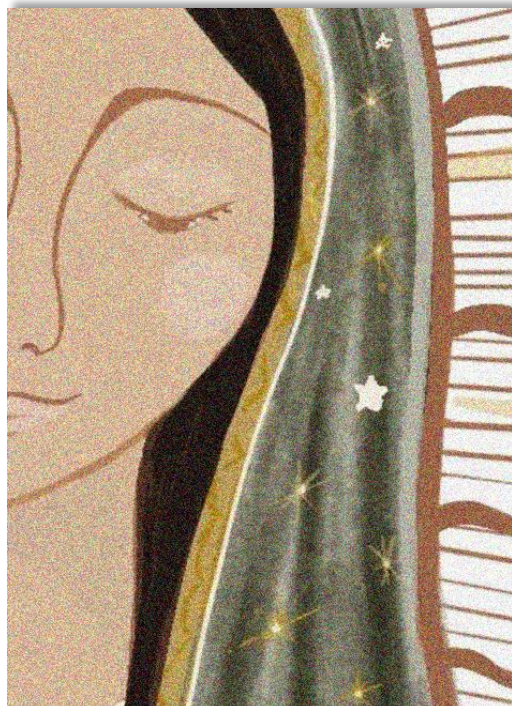
And this until we celebrate together, with joy, the banquet of the heavenly kingdom.

The risen Christ will be there,

harmonizing our differences

with the light that flows untiringly from his open heart.

Blessed be she.



Day 8

Vigil

Mary and our Founders

On this day we gather all the aspects meditated in preparation for the Feast. May it be a day of gratitude. Preparing the house for the feast, sharing with those with whom we walk together, decorating the spaces with detail. According to our customs... may the words and their echo in our hearts and conversations resound in each and every one of us.

St. Anthony Mary Claret and Mary Antonia Paris, have a very special love for Mary, and this will be reflected later even in the name of our religious Institutes.

St. Anthony Mary Claret: The Virgin Mary, star of my path.

"One day, while I was in bed, I had a terrible temptation. I immediately had recourse to the Blessed Virgin... then I turned to the other side of the bed to see if the temptation would leave me. Suddenly, I saw the Blessed Virgin Mary, who appeared to me very graceful and beautiful. Her dress was dark red and her cloak blue. I saw in her arms a great garland of the most beautiful roses... the Mother of God spoke to me: "Anthony," she said to me, "if you win the victory, this crown will be yours". And I saw that she was placing on my head a crown of roses which she held in her right hand".

Silence with soft music

Song: Ideal Missionary

"O Mary, my mother and my hope, consolation of my soul and object of my love, consider all the graces for which I have asked you in the past, all of which you have granted me. Shall I find that this ever-flowing stream has only now gone dry? No it has never yet been heard, nor shall it ever be, that anyone turns devotedly to you has ever yet been turned away.

My lady, you can see that all these things I ask you are for the greater glory of God and you, and for the good of souls. hence I hope to obtain them and I know I shall obtain them.

That you may grant this all the sooner, I do not offer you my merits, for I have none to offer. Rather I shall say that since you are the daughter of the Eternal Father, Mother of the Son of God, and Spouse of the Holy spirit, it is most becoming that you be filled with zeal for the honor of the Blessed Trinity, whose loving image man's soul is-an image, furthermore, that has been washed in the blood of God made man."

Novena to the Immaculate Conception

O Jesus and Mary! The love I bear you makes me long to be join with you forever in heaven; But this love is so intense it causes me to ask for a long life to win souls for heaven. Oh, love, love, love!⁴³

Maria Antonia Paris

Song: Apostolic Missionary

The presence of the Virgin Mary in the life of our Mother Foundress is united to the presence of Christ. In the most important moments of her life, the Blessed Virgin Mary is always present, as she is also present in our spirituality.



Since Mary is an example for us in all the virtues⁴⁴, our Foundress wanted us to make our own in a special way the mystery of her Immaculate Conception. This mystery is not only of beauty and contemplation, but of a commitment against what is opposed to God. That is to say, she wanted us to live with a special strength, the call to fight against evil in all its forms, as women who generate life and participate in her maternity.

We can make some echo, repeating expressions that are most resonated from what we heard.

Let us pray together

Mary, you who are the first to listen to the Word of God in order to put it into practice, you the attentive woman, the only one who notices the lack of wine, you who continually encourage us to be obedient, to do what Jesus tells us⁴⁵. Pray for us.

Through the mediation of Mary Immaculate, Lord, sustain our efforts, so that after our earthly pilgrimage we may be dwellers of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Mary, Immaculate Mother, obtain for us from your Son the grace that this novena may renew in each one of us the missionary zeal that animated our founders.

Lord our God, through the constant intercession of Mary Immaculate, Mediatrix of all grace, grant that we may listen attentively to the voice of your beloved Son each day to renew our adherence to you, our Father.

⁴³ Padre Claret, Autobiografía nº 162.

⁴⁴Const. Nº 9.

⁴⁵ Jn 2;5

Novena to the Immaculate Conception

We can add spontaneous intercessions....

Song: Magnificat

Closing Prayer

Immaculate Conception, Mary, my Mother,

Live me. Work on me.

Speak in and through me.

Put your thoughts in my mind.

Love through my heart.

Give me your dispositions and feelings.

Teach me, lead me, and lead me to Jesus.

Correct my path, illuminate my understanding
and open my heart for your love.

Take my soul. take possession of my whole personality and my life.

Replace it with your life.

Encourage me to constant worship and praise.

Pray in and through me, O Mother.

Let me live in you and always keep me in this communion of heart⁴⁶



⁴⁶ Prayer written by St. Maximiliano Kolbe and recited by St. John Paul II.

Day 9

Mary Mother of God :Motherhood!

In the dictionary we find that "mother" is the woman who begets. It is said of Mary that she is the mother of the one she begot. If we accept that she is the mother of Jesus and that He is God, then Mary is the Mother of God.

There should be no confusion between time and eternity. Mary, obviously, was not mother of the Son eternally. She begins to be Mother of God when the Eternal Son wanted to enter time and become man like us. In order to become man, He wanted to have a mother. "When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman" ⁴⁷. God became man without ceasing to be God, therefore Mary is the mother of Jesus, true God and true man.

God did not need a mother, but he wanted to have one in order to draw near to us with infinite love. God is the only one who could choose his mother and, to the dismay of some and the joy of others, he chose the Blessed Virgin Mary who is and always will be the Mother of God.

Mary: Mother of God - Theotokos - She who gives birth to God

The Greek word Theotokos means she who gives birth to God, like giving birth to a child, and was used to refer to Mary as the mother of Jesus. Mary is called Christotokos ("she who gives birth to Christ") in 431 by the Council of Ephesus in response to this idea. St. Augustine proposes that Mary's discipleship in Jesus is even more important than her being the mother of Christ. While this may seem like an exaggerated metaphor, it is important to recognize that both men and women participate in this relationship with Mary.

⁴⁷ Gal 4, 4.

Novena to the Immaculate Conception

Augustine preached, "We have the courage to call ourselves the mother of Christ," and theologian Elizabeth Johnson explains that "by carrying him in our loving hearts, we bring the Savior to the needy world."

As we celebrate this Marian Feast Day, we may want to reflect on who Mary is or has become for us. How do we relate to her today? Under what circumstances - pastoral ministries, contemplative reflection or prayer - do we experience this relationship with Jesus vibrantly in us today?

Who is Mary for Claret?

Claret tells us in his autobiography why he added the name of the Virgin Mary to his name: "I added the sweetest name of Mary, because Mary Most Holy is my Mother, my Godmother, my Teacher and my all, after Jesus".

Since I was a child, I and my sister Rosa, who was very devout, made frequent visit to the Shrine of the Blessed Virgin called Fusimaña, a league away from my house. I cannot describe the devotion I felt in that Shrine, I felt so emotional that tears of tenderness welled up in my eyes. We started saying the Rosary and kept praying until we reached the chapel. I have visited this shrine at Fusimaña whenever I could, not only as a child, but also as student, priest and archbishop, before I left for my diocese.⁴⁸

Orientation for this day of the novena....

We are going to pass through our hearts all the words that have accompanied us during these days of the Novena. We propose that each one of you write down the word that has most resonated and place it on the altar.

We have a moment of silence and contemplation. Then we share our reflection.

We pray three *Hail Mary*.

⁴⁸ Padre Claret, Autobiografía nº 49.

Novena to the Immaculate Conception

Closing Prayer

"Oh, my Virgin, Oh, my Mother!

I offer myself entirely to your Immaculate Heart

and I consecrate to you my body and my soul, my thoughts and my actions,

I want to be as you want me to be,

to do what you want me to do.

I do not fear, for you are always with me.

Help me to love your Son Jesus,

with all my heart and above all things.

Put my hand in yours that I may be with you always."

Amen.

