

## **NOVENA TO THE IMMACULATA 2016**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The novena to the Immaculata, prayed at the beginning of Advent, prepares us for the celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord. We desire to fix our gaze, with the whole Church, on the mystery of the incarnation of the Son of God in the womb of a Virgin – The Immaculata, who was in the mind of the triune God from all eternity and prepared by Him to become the worthy home of the Word of God.

Accompanying us in this novena are sentiments of praise, joy, and gratitude for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Militia Immaculatae, the movement founded by St. Maximilian, and of the Madonna's apparitions in Fatima. (1917-2017)

Let us be enlightened by the Word of God, reflections of St. Maximilian Kolbe, and words of Father Luigi Faccenda.

#### ***"Who are you, O Immaculata?"***

*She is therefore a creature of God, the property of God, the semblance of God, the image of God, the daughter of God... She is God's instrument. In full awareness, she lets herself be guided by God. She conforms to His will. She desires only what He wants; operates in accordance with His will and in the most perfect way possible, without the slightest blemish, without any deviation of her will from His."* (KW 1320)<sup>iii</sup>

### **Daily Prayer**

#### **Opening Hymn**

##### **Prayer to the Holy Spirit**

I adore you, O heavenly Father,

Because you have placed your only begotten son in the most pure womb of Mary.

I adore you, O Son of God,

Because you have deigned to enter her womb and become her real, true Son.

I adore you, O Holy Spirit,

Because you have deigned to form the body of the Son of God in her immaculate womb.

I adore you, O Most Holy Trinity, O God one in three,

For ennobling the Immaculata in such a divine way.

And I will never cease, each day, upon waking, to humbly adore you, O divine Trinity, with my face to the ground, repeating: "Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning is now and will be forever. Amen."

### **Prayer of the Day**

#### **Final Prayer**

Allow me to praise You, O holiest Virgin.

Allow me to praise You with my personal duties and sacrifice.

Allow me to live, work, suffer, consume myself and die for You, only for You.

Allow me to lead the entire world to You.

Allow me to contribute to an always greater exultation of You,

To the greatest possible exultation of You.

Allow me to render you such glory that no one has yet rendered You.

Allow others to overcome me in zeal for your exultation, and me to overcome them,

So that in this noble emulation your glory will grow always more profoundly,

Always more rapidly, always more intensely,

as He desired, who raised You up in such an ineffable way above all beings.

In You alone God has been adored without parallel, more than in all His saints.

For you God has created the world. For You God has called me into existence.

What did I do to merit this fortune? Allow me to praise You, O holiest Virgin!

### **Final Song**

The consecration to Mary leads us to an encounter with the Trinity to live in a profound communion of love with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

### **From the book of Genesis (3:1-15)**

Now the snake was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the LORD God had made. He asked the woman, "Did God really say, 'You shall not eat from any of the trees in the garden'?" The woman answered the snake: "We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden; it is only about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said, 'You shall not eat it or even touch it, or else you will die.'" But the snake said to the woman: "You certainly will not die! God knows well that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods, who know good and evil." The woman saw that the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eyes, and the tree was desirable for gaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; and she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made loincloths for themselves.

When they heard the sound of the LORD God walking about in the garden at the breezy time of the day, the man and his wife hid themselves from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. The LORD God then called to the man and asked him: Where are you? He answered, "I heard you in the garden; but I was afraid, because I was naked, so I hid." Then God asked: Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat? The man replied, "The woman whom you put here with me—she gave me fruit from the tree, so I ate it." The LORD God then asked the woman: What is this you have done? The woman answered, "The snake tricked me, so I ate it."

Then the LORD God said to the snake: Because you have done this, cursed are you among all the animals, tame or wild; On your belly you shall crawl, and dust you shall eat all the days of your life. I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; They will strike at your head, while you strike at their heel.

### **From the Writings of St. Maximilian Kolbe**

**(L)eaders.** Let us, therefore, come closer and closer to the Immaculata each day; then, through that, we shall come ever closer to the Heart of Jesus, to God the Father, to the entire Most Holy Trinity, because no other creature is as close to God as the Immaculata. (KW 577)

*Silence*

### **From the writings of Father Luigi M. Faccenda (*La prese con sé*, pgs. 23-24)**

**L.** The heart of Mary is the natural place where the soul unites with the three Persons of the Trinity. With the Father, who made Mary the most perfect creature in whom he finds the most perfect correspondence to his Will. With the Son, who took from her flesh – the same flesh that he offered and cooperated in redemption. With the Holy Spirit, the Spouse who made her fruitful with the fullness of love, making her the Mother of the Word and all the living. Feel the presence of Mary, refer all to her that we may be found in her with God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Because finding us in her is to find us in union with the Most Holy Trinity.

**Echo**

**Final Prayer**

## **2nd day THE IMMACULATA IN THE WILL OF THE FATHER**

The true greatness of Mary consists in her conformity to the saving will of God. We take our place in the plan of salvation when we respond to our vocation and adhere to the will of the Father, which is a will of pardon, mercy, and salvation.

### ***From the book of the prophet Zephaniah (3:14-17)***

Shout for joy, daughter Zion! sing joyfully, Israel! Be glad and exult with all your heart, daughter Jerusalem! The LORD as removed the judgment against you, he has turned away your enemies; The King of Israel, the LORD, is in your midst, you have no further misfortune to fear. On that day, it shall be said to Jerusalem: Do not fear, Zion, do not be discouraged! The LORD, your God, is in your midst, a mighty savior, Who will rejoice over you with gladness, and renew you in his love, Who will sing joyfully because of you...

### **From the Writings of St. Maximilian Kolbe**

1L. The Immaculata never had any stain of sin, which means that her love was always full, without flaws. She loved God with all her being, and love united Her with God in this perfect fashion from the first instant of her life, such that on the day of the Annunciation, the Angel could address her saying: "Full of grace, the Lord is with you" Luke. 1:28.

She is therefore a creature of God, the property of God, the semblance of God, the image of God, in the most perfect way possible for a mere human being.

2L. She is God's instrument. In full awareness, she lets herself be guided by God. She conforms to His will. She desires only what He wants; operates in accordance with His will and in the most perfect way possible, without the slightest blemish, without any deviation of her will from His. (KW 1320)

### **Reflection and Sung Refrain**

#### **From the writings of Father Luigi M. Faccenda**

L. God the Father, that we might know him and see him, sent his Son, who lives with the Father, communicates the life of the Father, knows the Father and who the Father loves above all else. The Holy Spirit is the living expression of the love that proceeds from the Father and the Son, the spark that is released by this infinite love that the Father has for the Son, and the Son has the Father. Walking with Mary, we come close to Jesus. Mary introduces us to her Son, she leads us to love His Son, and in His Son the Father.

### **Echo**

### **Final Prayer**

### **3rd day THE IMMACULATA: MOTHER OF THE INCARNATE WORD**

Immaculata! Mother of God and of all people! We come to you to venerate the stupendous work that the Most Holy Trinity has done in you, by the generation of Christ, Redeemer of the world and your Son.  
(Pope St. John Paul II)

#### **From the letter of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians (4:4-7)**

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption. As proof that you are children, God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God. But when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to ransom those under the law, so that we might receive adoption. As proof that you are children, God sent the spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" So you are no longer a slave but a child, and if a child then also an heir, through God.

#### **From the Writings of St. Maximilian Kolbe**

L. Human words cannot describe who the one is, who became the true Mother of God. Of course taken by herself, she is merely a creature. Yet, she was raised up so high by God that one would need to understand who God is to comprehend who the Mother of God is.

Also, she is the true Mother of God. It is a dogma of faith.

Although the dignity of divine motherhood accounts for most of her privileges, the first grace she received from God was her Immaculate Conception, her exemption from any blemish, even from original sin, since the first moment of her existence.

Such privilege moreover must be very dear to her, for in Lourdes she named herself: "I am the Immaculate Conception." (KW 1292)

#### **Reflection and Sung Refrain**

##### **From the writings of Father Luigi M. Faccenda (*Sulle strade con Maria*, pg. 153)**

L. Mary's attitude of listening and her life of prayer made it so that the Holy Spirit could work in her and make her Mother. Her maternity is both the specific vocation that God gives her, and the fruit of the fullness of the Spirit within her. (...) When we listen, when we say "yes" to the will of God, we too will know how to become "mother" like Mary, like the Church. Our hearts (...) will embrace everyone, giving life also to those we will probably never know.

#### **Echo**

#### **Final Prayer**

#### **4th day THE IMMACULATA: DWELLING OF THE SPIRIT**

The Immaculata, so united to the Holy Spirit, is a torch that burns without end. She is the first creature, totally inhabited by the charity of God. Our hearts become fully enflamed with just contact with the Immaculata. As on Pentecost, a certainty invades us, as an intense flame, and pushes to communicate her irrevocably. (Father. Luigi M. Faccenda)

#### **From the book of the Prophet Isaiah (62:1-5)**

For Zion's sake I will not be silent, for Jerusalem's sake I will not keep still, Until her vindication shines forth like the dawn and her salvation like a burning torch. Nations shall behold your vindication, and all kings your glory; You shall be called by a new name bestowed by the mouth of the LORD. You shall be a glorious crown in the hand of the LORD, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. No more shall you be called "Forsaken," nor your land called "Desolate," But you shall be called "My Delight is in her," and your land "Espoused." For the LORD delights in you, and your land shall be espoused. For as a young man marries a virgin, your Builder shall marry you; And as a bridegroom rejoices in his bride so shall your God rejoice in you.

#### **From the Writings of St. Maximilian Kolbe**

L. (The Immaculata) is joined in an ineffable manner with the Holy Spirit, because she is His Bride, but she is so in a sense incomparably more perfect than that word can convey in creatures.

Of what kind is that union? It is above all inner union; it is the union of her being with the being of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells in her, He lives in her, and that from the first moment of her existence, always and eternally.

What does this life of the Holy Spirit in her consist of? He Himself is love in her, the love of the Father and of the Son, the love with which God loves Himself, the love of the whole Most Holy Trinity, fruitful love... (KW 1318)

#### **Reflection and Sung Refrain**

#### **From the writings of Father Luigi M. Faccenda (*La prese con sé*, pg. 112)**

L. Through the mediation of her who is the Mother of the Church and our Mother, we the strength so that our Fiat will not be lacking, never, whatever the cost, always adhering to his will, always ready to operate fully in the Spirit of God, always open to its demands, its inspirations, always ready to make those choices that may require generosity, no doubt, and sometimes heroism; great sacrifice, overcoming the lack of needs, things and values, that seem necessary for everyday life.

#### **Echo**

#### **Final Prayer**

## **5th THE IMMACULATA: THE PILGRIMAGE OF FAITH**

Mary is so close in the life of grace, she almost grabs us by the hand to lead us on her journey towards God, the fullness of Christ. (Father Luigi M. Faccenda)

### **From the Gospel of Luke (1:39-45)**

During those days Mary set out and traveled to the hill country in haste to a town of Judah, where she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth, filled with the holy Spirit, cried out in a loud voice and said, "Most blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For at the moment the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the infant in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

### **From the Writings of St. Maximilian Kolbe**

**L.** Life on this earth is not long. It is only a matter of preparing well for eternity. Even this speck of dust in the middle of the Universe, which is called the earth, will come to its ends together with all its problems, including the most important ones. Let us be led by the Immaculata and help should know her and love her, so that an ever-increasing number of hearts may be joined, through love, more and more closely to her and, through her, to the Most Sacred Divine Heart. (KW 936)

### **Reflection and Sung Refrain**

**From the writings of Father Luigi Faccenda** (*La prese con sé*, pg. 104. 99).

**1L** The path to holiness is long and difficult, and whoever wants to travel it, must realize it and seek guidance. There is, in fact, an experienced and caring guidance. It is a guide and a mother. The most perfect, the most tender, the most loving of all mothers: Mary! How nice to take Mary as guide, the Mother of the Lord, the true mother of God! She knows so well the path of holiness! Hiding in her arms, clench her hand and walk, looking at her for a lifetime.

**2L.** With the consecration to Our Lady you put yourself in the wake of many travelers, a large number, that is, the holy men and women who have made this journey before you; indeed, tighten your hand in the that of the Queen of heaven and earth, and let yourself be led by her in all your ways.

### **Echo**

### **Final Prayer**

## **6th day THE IMMACULATA: SHE WHO HAS GIVEN JESUS**

It is certain that God has raised the Immaculata very high, and has entrusted her with a great mission, organically linked to the plan of the Incarnation and Redemption. (Father Luigi M. Faccenda)

### **From the Gospel of Matthew (1:18-21a)**

Now this is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about. When his mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found with child through the holy Spirit. Joseph her husband, since he was a righteous man, yet unwilling to expose her to shame, decided to divorce her quietly. Such was his intention when, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home. For it is through the holy Spirit that this child has been conceived in her. She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

### **From the Writings of St. Maximilian Kolbe**

L. In (the Immaculata) there takes place the miracle of God's union with creation. To her, as to His bride, the Father entrusts the Son, the Son descends in her virginal womb, becoming a son to her, while in her the Holy Spirit prodigiously shapes the body of Jesus and comes to dwell in her soul. ... From the moment such a union took place, the Holy Spirit grants no graces, the Father, though the Son and the Spirit, infuses no supernatural life into the soul except through the Mediatrix of all graces, the Immaculata, with her consent, with her cooperation. (KW 1310)

### **Reflection and Sung Refrain**

#### **From the writings of Father Luigi Faccenda (*La prese con sé*, pg. 34)**

L. Personal consecration, and that of humanity in general, is the logical consequence of the chains that link man to Mary in the story of redemption and in his spiritual life. Mary is the Mother of Jesus and our Mother. We have received our Savior through her, and she has collaborated with Christ in our redemption so that, from the moment of the annunciation to Calvary, she was closely associated with the suffering of her Son, cooperating efficiently and maternally in our redemption.

### **Echo**

### **Final Prayer**

## **7th day THE IMMACULATA: SHE WHO HAS GIVEN THE BREAD OF LIFE**

In the Eucharist the Church is completely united to Christ and his sacrifice, and makes her own the spirit of Mary. This truth can be understood more deeply by re-reading the Magnificat in a Eucharistic key. The Eucharist, like the Canticle of Mary, is first and foremost praise and thanksgiving. When Mary exclaims: "My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour", she already bears Jesus in her womb. She praises God "through" Jesus, but she also praises him "in" Jesus and "with" Jesus. This is itself the true "Eucharistic attitude". (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia*, John Paul II, 58).

### **From the book of Isaiah (25:6; 55:1-5)**

On this mountain the LORD of hosts will provide for all peoples A feast of rich food and choice wines, juicy, rich food and pure, choice wines...All you who are thirsty, come to the water! You who have no money, come, buy grain and eat; Come, buy grain without money, wine and milk without cost! Why spend your money for what is not bread; your wages for what does not satisfy? Only listen to me, and you shall eat well, you shall delight in rich fare. Pay attention and come to me; listen, that you may have life. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, the steadfast loyalty promised to David. As I made him a witness to peoples, a leader and commander of peoples, So shall you summon a nation you knew not, and a nation\* that knew you not shall run to you, Because of the LORD, your God, the Holy One of Israel, who has glorified you.

### **From the Writings of St. Maximilian Kolbe**

**1L.** Who would dare to imagine that You, O infinite and eternal God, have loved me for ages, and more than that, from before the ages? In fact, your love for me exists, as long as You exist as God, so it follows that You have loved me and will always continue to love me!... to show me that You really love me tenderly, You descended from the pure delights of heaven to this degraded world full of tears. You led a hard life in poverty and suffering; finally, despised and derided, You chose to be hung up on a base scaffold in terrible pain between two thieves... O God of love, You redeemed me in this terrible but generous way.

**2L.** Alas, You were not content with this, knowing that I would appear here on earth 19 hundred years after this moment of the effusion of Your revelations of love, You have provided even for this! Your heart did not consent that I would be nourished only by the memory of Your immeasurable love. You remain upon this miserable world in the Most Holy and exceedingly admirable Sacrament of the altar, and now you come to me and unite Yourself intimately to me as nourishment. ... Now, Your Blood already flows into mine, Your Soul, O incarnate God, penetrates my soul, strengthening and nourishing it. ...

**1L.** Your Heart, inflamed with love for me, suggested to You another gift, yes, yet one more gift!... You asked us to become children, if we wish to enter the heavenly kingdom (cf. Mt. 18:3). You well know that a child needs a mother: You Yourself established this law of love. Your goodness, Your mercy, therefore, created for us a Mother, the personification of Your goodness and infinite love. From the cross, on Golgotha, You offered her to us and us to her... (KW 1145)

### **Reflection and Sung Refrain**

**From the writings of Father Luigi Faccenda (*E mi segue*, pg. 28)**

**L.** The Christian who wants to be faithful to the Eucharist and wants to bring the food of life to his brothers and sisters, must be so enamored by the Eucharist to take the Virgin Mary as the model of this love. How would the Virgin have loved her Son while he became flesh within her? And, even after he had gone to heaven, what would her relationship have been with the Eucharistic Jesus?

### **Echo**

### **Final Prayer**

Every Christian must look to Mary to understand and implement his mission, whatever it is. (Father Luigi M. Faccenda)

**From the book of the prophet Isaiah (52:7-10)**

How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of the one bringing good news, announcing peace, bearing good news, announcing salvation, saying to Zion, “Your God is King!” Listen! Your sentinels raise a cry, together they shout for joy, for they see directly, before their eyes, the LORD’s return to Zion. Break out together in song, O ruins of Jerusalem! For the LORD, has comforted his people, has redeemed Jerusalem. The LORD has bared his holy arm in the sight of all the nations; All the ends of the earth can see the salvation of our God.

**From the Writings of St. Maximilian Kolbe**

L. Let us reawaken within us all, without exception, a wise concern for the salvation and the sanctification of our neighbor, whether he is nearby or far away, including even those who are complete strangers to our nationality and race, and let us carry out all this through the Immaculata, Mediatrix of all graces, of any grace of conversion and sanctification. We are actually all brothers and sisters, since we have one common heavenly Mother, the Immaculata, one common Father who is in heaven, and one common elder Brother, Jesus, Man and God. (KW 1218)

**Reflection and Sung Refrain**

**From the writings of Father Luigi M. Faccenda (*La prese con sé*, pg. 119)**

L. Who consecrates themselves to the Immaculata, is concerned and feels the need to make others participants in happiness, so that also these may be attracted to Mary. And Mary will illumine their hearts, warm them with the love of her maternal Heart, she will enflame him with the fire of charity that burns in divine Heart of Jesus. This is the proof of the depth of our experience of consecration: that it radiated to others!

**Echo**

**Final Prayer**

**9th Day Vigil**

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<sup>i</sup> KW = Kolbe Writings

<sup>ii</sup> *The Writings of St. Maximilian Maria Kolbe (Vol. I and II)*, Nerbini International (via Riviera 1 – CH 6900 Luganao, ITALY) 2016; translation: Associazione Pubblica Internazionale Milizia dell’Immacolta, Rome, Italy, 2016