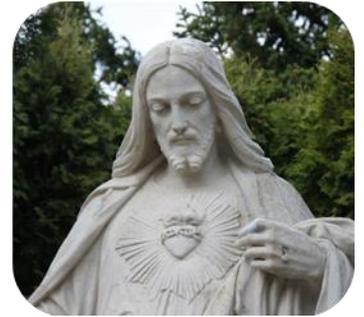


Novena to the Sacred Heart 2018



The inspiration for this Novena comes from chapter three of Pope Francis' newest Apostolic Exhortation, *Rejoice and Be Glad!*.

May 29 - Warm-Up to the Novena to Sacred Heart of Jesus

2. ...the Lord has chosen each one of us "to be holy and blameless before him in love" (Eph 1:4)

11. The important thing is that each believer... bring out the very best of themselves, the most personal gifts that God has placed in their hearts (cf. 1 Cor 12:7)... We are all called to be witnesses, but there are many actual ways of bearing witness.

12. I think, too, of all those unknown or forgotten women who, each in her own way, sustained and transformed families and communities by the power of their witness.

13. This should excite and encourage us to give our all and to embrace that unique plan that God willed for each of us from eternity: "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you" (Jer 1:5).

C #979. Dear Sisters, are we encouraged and enthused to receive the gift of God who works in us and to follow the road to holiness in collaboration with Him and with determination? It is a sometimes arduous, tiring journey, but it is possible when the heart is open and if it is a community journey, "a theological space in which we can experience the mystical presence of the risen Lord" (*Consecrated Life* 42). Our *Constitutions* invite us to build communities where 'we tend together toward holiness' (*Consecrated Life*, 42) and to walk with the young on the road of holiness (cf C 5).

Dear Sisters, now is the time to listen with a new heart to the call to be, not alone, but as educating communities, people able to give light again...

Day 1 - May 30 - Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

15. Let the grace of your baptism bear fruit in a path of holiness. Let everything be open to God; turn to him in every situation. Do not be dismayed... holiness, in the end, is the fruit of the Holy Spirit in your life (cf. Gal. 5:22-23). When you feel the temptation to dwell on your own weakness, raise your eyes to Christ crucified and say: "Lord, I am a poor sinner, but you can work the miracle of making me a little bit better".

16. This holiness to which the Lord calls you will grow through small gestures. Here is an example: a woman goes shopping, she meets a neighbour and they begin to speak, and the gossip starts. But she says in her heart: "No, I will not speak badly of anyone"... This is a step forward in holiness. Later, at home, one of her children wants to talk to her about his hopes and dreams, and even though she is tired, she sits down and listens with patience and love. That is another sacrifice that brings holiness. Later she

experiences some anxiety, but recalling the love of the Virgin Mary, she takes her rosary and prays with faith. Yet another path of holiness. Later still, she goes out onto the street, encounters a poor person and stops to say a kind word to him. One more step.

18. In this way, led by God's grace, we shape by many small gestures the holiness God has willed for us, not as men and women sufficient unto ourselves but rather "as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (1 Pet. 4:10).

Heart of Jesus, of Infinite Majesty, may we truly serve others for love of You.

Heart of Jesus, Sacred Temple of God, may we praise the Father continually by our lives.

Heart of Jesus, Tabernacle of the Most High, have mercy on us.

Day 2 - May 31 - Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

In the Beatitudes, we find a portrait of the Master, which we are called to reflect in our daily lives.

67. The Gospel invites us to peer into the depths of our heart, to see where we find our security in life.

68. ...Jesus calls blessed those who are poor in spirit, those who have a poor heart, for there the Lord can enter with his perennial newness.

69. This spiritual poverty is closely linked to what Saint Ignatius of Loyola calls "holy indifference", which brings us to a radiant interior freedom: "We need to train ourselves to be indifferent in our attitude to all created things, in all that is permitted to our free will and not forbidden; so that on our part, we do not set our hearts on good health rather than bad, riches rather than poverty, honour rather than dishonour, a long life rather than a short one, and so in all the rest".

70. Luke does not speak of poverty "of spirit" but simply of those who are "poor" (cf. Lk 6:20). In this way, he too invites us to live a plain and austere life. He calls us to share in the life of those most in need, the life lived by the Apostles, and ultimately to configure ourselves to Jesus who, though rich, "made himself poor" (2 Cor 8:9).

Being poor of heart: that is holiness.

Heart of Jesus, Beloved Son of the Eternal Father, keep us faithful to our dignity as children of God.

Heart of Jesus, Formed by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary, keep us free and open to the Spirit.

Heart of Jesus, Word of God, have mercy on us.

Day 3 - June 1 - Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

71. ...in a world that from the beginning has been a place of conflict, disputes and enmity on all sides, where we constantly pigeonhole others...[where] pride and vanity [reign], where each person thinks he or she has the right to dominate others.... impossible as it may seem, Jesus proposes a different way of doing things: the way of meekness.

72. Christ says: "Learn from me; for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your

souls” (Mt 11:29). If we are constantly upset and impatient with others, we will end up drained and weary. But if we regard the faults and limitations of others with tenderness and meekness, without an air of superiority, we can actually help them and stop wasting our energy on useless complaining. Saint Thérèse of Lisieux tells us that “perfect charity consists in putting up with others’ mistakes, and not being scandalized by their faults”.

73. Paul speaks of meekness as one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit (cf. Gal 5:23). He suggests that, if a wrongful action of one of our brothers or sisters troubles us, we should try to correct them, but “with a spirit of meekness”, since “you too could be tempted” (Gal 6:1). Even when we defend our faith and convictions, we are to do so “with meekness” (cf. 1 Pet 3:16).

74. Meekness is yet another expression of the interior poverty of those who put their trust in God alone.... For his part, the Lord trusts in them: “This is the one to whom I will look, to the humble and contrite in spirit, who trembles at my word” (Is 66:2).

Reacting with meekness and humility: that is holiness.

Heart of Jesus, House of God and Gate of Heaven, have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, Burning Furnace of Charity, help us to combat every form of hatred and tendency to dominate.

Heart of Jesus, Abode of Justice and Love, have mercy on us.

Day 4 - June 2 - Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

75. The worldly person ignores problems of sickness or sorrow in the family or all around him; he averts his gaze. The world has no desire to mourn; it would rather disregard painful situations, cover them up or hide them. Much energy is expended on fleeing from situations of suffering in the belief that reality can be concealed. But the cross can never be absent.

76. A person who sees things as they truly are and sympathizes with pain and sorrow is capable of touching life’s depths and finding authentic happiness. He or she is consoled, not by the world but by Jesus. Such persons are unafraid to share in the suffering of others; they do not flee from painful situations. They discover the meaning of life by coming to the aid of those who suffer, understanding their anguish and bringing relief. They feel compassion for others in such a way that all distance vanishes.

Knowing how to mourn with others: that is holiness.

Heart of Jesus, Full of Goodness and Love, make us the Church a living sign of Your mercy.

Heart of Jesus, Abyss of all Virtues, may we reflect Your diving image in ourselves.

Heart of Jesus, Most Worthy of All Praise, have mercy on us.

Day 5 - June 3 - Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

77. Hunger and thirst are intense experiences, since they involve basic needs and our instinct for survival. There are those who desire justice and yearn for righteousness with similar intensity. Jesus says that they will be satisfied, for sooner or later justice will come. We can cooperate to make that possible, even if we

may not always see the fruit of our efforts.

78. Experience shows how easy it is to become mired in corruption, ensnared in the daily politics of *quid pro quo*, where everything becomes business.

79. True justice comes about in people's lives when they themselves are just in their decisions; it is expressed in their pursuit of justice for the poor and the weak.

Hungering and thirsting for righteousness: that is holiness.

Heart of Jesus, in Whom are all the Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, grant us courage to witness to You.

Heart of Jesus, in Whom dwells the Fullness of Divinity, thank You for the gift of the Trinity within us.

Jesus, King and Center of our Hearts, have mercy on us.

Day 6 - June 4 - Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

80. Mercy has two aspects. It involves giving, helping and serving others, but it also includes forgiveness and understanding. Matthew sums it up in one golden rule: "In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you" (7:12). The Catechism reminds us that this law is to be applied "in every case", especially when we are "confronted by situations that make moral judgments less assured and decision difficult".

81. Giving and forgiving means reproducing in our lives some small measure of God's perfection, which gives and forgives superabundantly. For this reason, in the Gospel of Luke we do not hear the words, "Be perfect" (Mt 5:48), but rather, "Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful. Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you" (6:36-38). Luke then adds something not to be overlooked: "The measure you give will be the measure you get back" (6:38). ...We should never forget this.

82. We need to think of ourselves as an army of the forgiven. All of us have been looked upon with divine compassion. If we approach the Lord with sincerity and listen carefully, there may well be times when we hear his reproach: "Should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?" (Mt 18:33).

Seeing and acting with mercy: that is holiness.

Heart of Jesus, in Whom the Father was well-pleased, may we hold steadfastly to the Father's will.

Heart of Jesus, of Whose fullness we have all received, help us to live for You rather than for ourselves.

Heart of Jesus, Desire of the Everlasting Hills, have mercy on us.

Day 7 - June 5 - Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

3. ...those whose hearts are simple, pure and undefiled,... a heart capable of love admits nothing that might harm, weaken or endanger that love. The Bible uses the heart to describe our real intentions, the things we truly seek and desire, apart from all appearances. "Man sees the appearance, but the Lord looks into the heart" (1Sam 16:7). God wants to speak to our hearts (cf. Hos 2:16); there he desires to

write his law (cf. Jer 31:33). In a word, he wants to give us a new heart (cf. Ezek 36:26).

84. "Guard your heart with all vigilance" (Prov 4:23). ...The Father, "who sees in secret" (Mt 6:6), recognizes what is impure and insincere, mere display or appearance, as does the Son, who knows "what is in man" (cf. Jn 2:25).

85. ...the Lord expects a commitment to our brothers and sisters that comes from the heart. For "if I give away all I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have no love, I gain nothing" (1 Cor 13:3). ... From the heart's intentions come the desires and the deepest decisions that determine our actions.

Keeping a heart free of all that tarnishes love: that is holiness.

Heart of Jesus, Patient and Most Merciful, make our hearts like unto Thine.

Heart of Jesus, Enriching all who invoke You, may we approach You with confidence and love.

Heart of Jesus, Fountain of Life and Holiness, have mercy on us.

Day 8 - June 6 - Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

87. This Beatitude makes us think of the many endless situations of war in our world. Yet we ourselves are often a cause of conflict or at least of misunderstanding. For example, I may hear something about someone and I go off and repeat it. I may even embellish it the second time around and keep spreading it... And the more harm it does, the more satisfaction I seem to derive from it. The world of gossip, inhabited by negative and destructive people, does not bring peace. Such people are really the enemies of peace; in no way are they "blessed".[73]

88. Peacemakers truly "make" peace; they build peace and friendship in society. ...And if there are times in our community when we question what ought to be done, "let us pursue what makes for peace" (Rom 14:19), for unity is preferable to conflict.

89. It is not easy to "make" this evangelical peace, which excludes no one but embraces even those who are a bit odd, troublesome or difficult, demanding, different, beaten down by life or simply uninterested. It is hard work; it calls for great openness of mind and heart, since it is not about creating "a consensus on paper or a transient peace for a contented minority", or a project "by a few for the few". Nor can it attempt to ignore or disregard conflict; instead, it must "face conflict head on, resolve it and make it a link in the chain of a new process". We need to be artisans of peace, for building peace is a craft that demands serenity, creativity, sensitivity and skill.

Sowing peace all around us: that is holiness.

Heart of Jesus, Bruised for our offenses, have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, Obedient unto death, have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, Pierced with a lance, have mercy on us.

Day 9 - June 7 - Novena to the Sacred Heart of Jesus

90. Unless we wish to sink into an obscure mediocrity, let us not long for an easy life, for "whoever would save his life will lose it" (Mt 16:25).

91. In living the Gospel, we cannot expect that everything will be easy, for the thirst for power and worldly interests often stands in our way. ...the Beatitudes are not easy to live out; any attempt to do so will be viewed negatively, regarded with suspicion, and met with ridicule.

92. Whatever weariness and pain we may experience in living the commandment of love and following the way of justice, the cross remains the source of our growth and sanctification. We must never forget that when the New Testament tells us that we will have to endure suffering for the Gospel's sake, it speaks precisely of persecution (cf. Acts 5:41; Phil 1:29; Col 1:24; 2 Tim 1:12; 1 Pet 2:20, 4:14-16; Rev 2:10).

93. Here we are speaking about inevitable persecution, not the kind of persecution we might bring upon ourselves by our mistreatment of others. The saints are not odd and aloof, unbearable because of their vanity, negativity and bitterness. The Apostles of Christ were not like that. The Book of Acts states repeatedly that they enjoyed favour "with all the people" (2:47; cf. 4:21.33; 5:13), even as some authorities harassed and persecuted them (cf. 4:1-3, 5:17-18).

94. Persecutions are not a reality of the past, for today too we experience them, whether by the shedding of blood, as is the case with so many contemporary martyrs, or by more subtle means, by slander and lies. Jesus calls us blessed when people "utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account" (Mt 5:11). At other times, persecution can take the form of gibes that try to caricature our faith and make us seem ridiculous.

Accepting daily the path of the Gospel, even though it may cause us problems: that is holiness.

Heart of Jesus, Source of All Consolation, grant strength to all who suffer.

Heart of Jesus, Our Life and Resurrection, keep the Church faithful to her mission.

Heart of Jesus, Our Peace and Reconciliation, have mercy on us.

June 8 - Solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus

See p. 152, *FMA at Prayer* - Prayer Before the Eucharist

21. The Father's plan is Christ, and ourselves in him. In the end, it is Christ who loves in us, for "holiness is nothing other than charity lived to the full". ...Every saint is a message which the Holy Spirit takes from the riches of Jesus Christ and gives to his people. ...Every saint is a message which the Holy Spirit takes from the riches of Jesus Christ and gives to his people.

23. You, too, need to see the entirety of your life as a mission. Try to do so by listening to God in prayer and recognizing the signs that he gives you. Always ask the Spirit what Jesus expects from you at every moment of your life and in every decision you must make, so as to discern its place in the mission you have received. Allow the Spirit to forge in you the personal mystery that can reflect Jesus Christ in today's world.

24. May you come to realize what that word is, the message of Jesus that God wants to speak to the world by your life. Let yourself be transformed. Let yourself be renewed by the Spirit, so that this can happen, lest you fail in your precious mission. The Lord will bring it to fulfilment despite your mistakes

and missteps, provided that you do not abandon the path of love but remain ever open to his supernatural grace, which purifies and enlightens.

C #979. During my visits to various realities, I have met Daughters of Mary Help of Christians, young people and adults, who live daily holiness naturally, simply, and in some situations, even heroically.... Sisters and brothers who know how to mark their everyday life with concrete gestures... A community that safeguards and expresses small loving gestures, where we take care of each other, where together we create an evangelizing space of deep breath, becoming a place of the presence of the Risen One, who step after step, sanctifies it according to the Father's plan.

Heart of Jesus, Victim for our sins, impress Your heart upon ours.

Heart of Jesus, Salvation of all those who hope and die in You, have mercy on us.

Heart of Jesus, Delight of all the Saints, let us live in You.

[June 9 - Immaculate Heart of Mary](#)

176. I would like these reflections to be crowned by Mary, because she lived the Beatitudes of Jesus as none other. She is that woman who rejoiced in the presence of God, who treasured everything in her heart, and who let herself be pierced by the sword. Mary is the saint among the saints, blessed above all others. She teaches us the way of holiness and she walks ever at our side. She does not let us remain fallen and at times she takes us into her arms without judging us. Our converse with her consoles, frees and sanctifies us. Mary our Mother does not need a flood of words. She does not need us to tell her what is happening in our lives. All we need do is whisper, time and time again: "Hail Mary..."

C #979. Don Bosco and Mother Mazzarello can be rightly called engravers, artisans of saints: adults and young people who have enriched society and the Church with their credible witness, capable of going against the current, up to martyrdom if necessary. They wrote a page in the history of the Church that still perfumes it and fills it with prophecy, hope, and evangelical resourcefulness.

So, dear sisters, what could be greater in our mission than the awareness that we are all called to be educators of holiness in a reality like the current one that is ever thirstier for God?

Let us entrust ourselves to Mary, the saint par excellence, the blessed one, who lived like no other, the Beatitudes of Jesus. She shows us the way of holiness and accompanies us on this journey.