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A NOVENA TO
MARY
IMMACULATE

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THE QUEEN'S WORK

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A NOVENA TO MARY IMMACULATE

Introduction

The oldest and most beautiful anagram in the world is based on the name of our Mother Eve (in the Latin, *Eva*). From that name, spoken slyly by the serpent, came all our woes. It is indeed a far cry from the word Eve to the word Ave, that heralded the salvation of all mankind. But the early Christians, meditating upon the salutation of the Angel Gabriel, noted the anagram; they took the Latin name *Eva*, transposed the letters, and cried "Ave!" "Eva" had become "Ave," and with that "Ave Maria" the New Law was begun and the joyous news of the coming Messiah was presented to the world.

Thus this novena is a prayerful consideration of the two Eves—the first Eve, who in the glorious paradise that was Eden turned from God to sin and drew Adam after her into ruin and the loss of his precious inheritance; the second Eve, Mary, who in the quiet of prayerful Nazareth turned to God with such limitless love that she drew the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity from heaven, and from the moment of the Incarnation played the second most important role in the drama of man's salvation.

The novena is to be made thoughtfully. Each consideration is really a meditation in which the imagination vividly reproduces the scene suggested, the mind thoughtfully considers the truths presented, and the heart speaks to Mary in the words of the closing prayer.

FIRST DAY

PURPOSE: *To obtain loyalty to God*

The First Eve Betrays Her Creator

Scene: Eve, at the clever solicitation of the serpent has stretched forth her hand to take the forbidden fruit. She knows that this is against the command of her Creator. Though surrounded by all the glory and beauty of paradise, she turns deliberately to sin.

CONSIDERATION

God had created Adam and Eve, His son and daughter, to be happy on earth and blissfully united with Him in eternity. In God's plan, as He first designed it, there was to be no sickness or tears, no wounds or death, no sin with its horrible train of human unhappiness and misery.

Garden of Delights

So He placed His children in a garden of delights. Everywhere about them was to be found whatever their hearts might crave or their appetites relish. Everything was to be theirs without the necessity for aging labor or discouraging failure. The animals were their trustful servants. Eden was their home. And between Adam and Eve God had placed the warmth of a love and understanding that made them one in heart and soul.

Never should they taste death. At the end of their earthly probation they were destined to be taken up, body and soul, into heaven, there to see God face to face, to possess Him

through intimate knowledge and love, and to share with Him the unending joys He had prepared for His beloved children.

Grace, that marvelous power which enables the limited creature to possess the limitless God, that will and testament which makes him heir of His kingdom, that proof of his rights as a child, that gift was given to our first parents. Immortality was their destiny. Happiness was their lot.

The Serpent

Then into the life of Eve came the inevitable temptation. In the manner of every tempter since, the serpent appealed to the one great human ambition: "You shall be as Gods." Brilliantly he argued with her as only Satan could argue: Why should she, charming and clever, obey? How dull the garden when one did not even know good and evil, evil especially! Life would be dreary until she had had experience.

Eve listened, resisted with slight courage—lingered on the delicious promises of knowing evil, of being free, of matching God Himself—and then yielded.

Sin

Sin entered her soul. She had disobeyed the Father who had made her and given her all she possessed. His command had meant nothing to her, His desires and wishes even less. The act in itself seemed trifling. She was richer by a single piece of fruit. But her hand, as it reached out for that fruit, stretched so far beyond!

It struck at God. It broke His simple, easy command. It flouted His law. It reached out in friendship to His bitter foe. With a single gesture Eve implicitly cried with the Evil Spirit who had tempted her, "I will not serve," the age-old cry of the rebel angels. She said in her heart: "Good as you have been to me, Father in heaven, generous and kind, loving and tender, I prefer my own will to your law. I believe your enemy rather than you. Even if my act means the loss of your friendship and your love, I still prefer to act my own way."

It was the first time a human sinner had said all this, but it set the miserable standard which human sinners from that day forward were to follow.

Yes, I among them.

PRAYER

Mother Mary, immaculate mother of the Son of God, who later undid the evil of Eve's sin, who am I to blame the sinful Eve? It is true that from my vantage point of history I can see the utter stupidity and folly of what Eve did. She flung away paradise for a silly act of disobedience. She lost her right to eternal happiness by an ambitious desire to flout the will of her Creator, to know from experience the meaning of evil, to be like God. I can see how in return she received tears and sorrow, labor and weariness, the loss of all that was sweet and precious in her life, the loss of grace and all its implications of eternal right and privilege.

Yet I, who have looked upon the stupidity

of my first mother, have been more stupid than she. Like her, I have been ungrateful for the limitless gifts which God has poured into my life. [*I pause to reconsider those gifts.*] I have flung my defiance into His face, betrayed His commands, broken His law, leagued myself with His sworn enemies. [*I pause to think briefly on my unnumbered treasons and sins against the good God who made me and has endowed me with more gifts than He gave to my first parents.*]

Mary, you never betrayed God. You never leagued yourself with the enemy. You never placed your ambitions and desires before His will and disobeyed. Never once, in thought or deed, did you sin.

Obtain for me, then, I beg of you, forgiveness for my past sins. Obtain for me a deep gratitude and a sense of loyalty to God, so that I may never voluntarily turn against Him, reach out for temptation, or join forces with His enemies.

I have been as disloyal as was Mother Eve. Do you, the second Eve, obtain for me somewhat of your intense loyalty to your Father and mine.

And in addition, through this novena, I beg of you to obtain for me [*here mention the particular personal request of the novena*] and for others [*here mention the favors you desire for others*].

SECOND DAY

PURPOSE: *To obtain a true sense of values*

The First Eve Betrays Man

Scene: Eve, like all other sinners, is not content to sin alone. We see her standing before her husband and relying upon his love for her, holding toward him the forbidden fruit. Adam pauses to regard all the joys of paradise, all the goodness of God, before he accepts the fruit from the hand of his wife and by that act joins her in her disloyalty.

CONSIDERATION

Eve had been given to Adam for a help-mate. She was to be his companion and, through her love and tenderness, her goodness and loyalty, she was to become for him a source of increased strength. God had made her wonderfully beautiful, and she captivated the heart of Adam. She was sweet and sinless, and hence quickly won his deepest love.

Eve Seeks Adam

All this she realized anew when she had sinned. Yet, although conscience now gnawed at her soul, she hurried away to tempt her husband. Sinners are never satisfied until they drag others down into their own unhappiness. They cannot keep their misery unshared.

Adam clearly knew the law and the command. Yet so deep was his love for his wife that he suddenly realized that he loved her more than he loved God. He preferred to

please her rather than to retain the friendship of the one to whom he owed everything.

The Fall

Besides, he felt his soul strangely stirred with ambitions: the desire to know and taste evil by an experience that had so strongly moved his wife; a distaste for obedience, suddenly flaming out in self-will; the desire to be no longer a grateful son but master and ruler, the hope that he could indeed be like God. And all this, united with his love for the wife who now begged him to join her in her sin, prevailed.

He reached out his hand and accepted the forbidden fruit. He, too, with that gesture, proclaimed his disloyalty, his rejection of God, his refusal to obey, his pact and league with the enemies of his heavenly Father and of his own soul. Human love triumphed over divine love. Ambition rose triumphant over obedience.

Adam's Guilt

Eve had sinned first. It is true that Adam's love for Eve made his temptation more violent and pressing than hers. Yet Adam's guilt was greater. For his was the greater strength. He knew, with the infused knowledge God had given him, that as head of the human race he was committing a terrible crime. He had a clear sense of relative values. Yet he rejected the love of God which had filled paradise with all beauty and perfection. He rejected that love

which had endowed him with every grace of soul and body: his own physical vigor, the sweet love of Eve, the clear knowledge of his mind, the steel strength of his will. He rejected that love which promised him immortality, an easy transition from earthly joy to unending joy. All this he flung away for a few unsubstantial ambitions for power, a dream urged upon him by his wife whom he loved unwisely.

Adam was the first man to be led into sin by love for a woman.

Eve was the first woman to use her beauty to draw a man away from God.

PRAYER

Mother Mary, the second Eve and loveliest of women, never did you lead anyone, man or woman, except to goodness and to strength. You were beautiful, but your beauty inspired men to purity. You were lovely, but your loveliness woke men and women to a love of the God who made you.

Always your life and course were determined by the clearest sense of values. You put God first. You put soul before body. You knew that the first commandment was to love God, and that even the pure love of man must come in second place. You knew that no desire, no ambition, should come between a man and God, his Creator.

Yet once more I realize that I am in no position to condemn Adam for his folly. A thousand times I have shown even a worse sense of values. I have preferred the love

of creatures to the love of God. My personal ambitions and desires have come before the will of the Almighty. I have used my God-given gifts to draw others to sin, as I have permitted others to lead me, through their fascination and charm, away from the Author and Source of all beauty.

Mary, first I beg you to obtain for me a right appreciation of God and of creatures. Never let me place the love of any of God's men or women or things before the love of the God who created them.

Then obtain for me the grace never to lead anyone—through love of me or desire to follow me—away from true happiness, which is found only in loyalty to God.

When temptation comes to me through the fascination of some attractive person, give me the strength to follow you and not the weak Adam. Never let the beauty or charm of any person blind me to the beauty and charm of God.

Finally, I ask for myself the special favor I desire to obtain through this novena [*briefly mention the favor*], and for others I ask [*mention the favors you wish to obtain for them*].

THIRD DAY

PURPOSE: *To obtain an appreciation of grace*

Adam and Eve Forfeit Grace for Their Children

Scene: Adam and Eve, driven from Eden, find the world rough, hard, and antagonistic to their happiness. They must wrest their food from the earth with bitter toil. The animals must be tamed to their use. The winds are cold and the elements unfriendly. And when Cain and Abel are born to Eve in the pain of childbirth, the parents realize that they have squandered what should have been the heritage of their children. They look at each other knowing what they have lost for their little ones.

CONSIDERATION

The chief gift of God that Adam and Eve lost through their rebellion was grace.

A Life Like God's

Grace is an extraordinary power. Men are finite, limited. They have of themselves no power by which they can see the Infinite God, no power by which they can possess Him, knowing and loving Him throughout all eternity. They have a merely human and natural life. They have no right to any life like the life of God.

Yet through grace they possess that life. God, in grace, gave to our first parents the power to live a life like His own. They were His son and daughter, and, limited and

finite though they were, there was added to their nature the blessed power of one day seeing Him face to face and of possessing Him eternally through knowledge and love. Their life was not to be confined to this world, beautiful as was the paradise that surrounded them. Their real life was an added life, an immortal existence in which they would see God and share His endless joy through a participation in His divine life.

The grace which God had given them meant all this. It meant, in addition, a power which held the passions of their lower natures in complete check. And grace assured them of a transition, without death, from the joys of Eden to the joys of heaven after they had proved their worth.

The Lost Heritage

All this they lost for themselves. But when Cain and Abel were born, the parents realized with fresh sorrow that they had lost these priceless gifts for their children as well.

They were prodigals, wastrels who had squandered their inheritance and who in consequence saw their children born into the world in utter poverty. They had killed in their own souls the supernatural life which entitled them to share the divine life of God in heaven.

Their children should have been rich. But the parents had flung away for themselves and for these children the title to these riches. Their children should have been born endowed with supernatural life. But

they were born supernaturally dead because their parents were supernaturally dead.

In place of the strong wills which, through grace, had controlled passion and lust, their children fell heir to wills weakened by the lack of grace. Neither parents nor children had any claim upon heaven or any assurance of God's interest or love.

Original sin was the terrifying heritage of these children; original sin which meant the loss of grace and its consequences, the death of that supernatural life which God had intended for them.

PRAYER

Mother Mary, it was your Son who restored to us our lost inheritance, who gave back to us grace, supernatural life, and a right to the joys of heaven.

Through Him we are able to participate in the divine life which God intended for His children. Through Him original sin has been destroyed and the losses incurred by our first parents have been wiped out.

So, though my inheritance was lost, it was restored to me by Jesus Christ, your Son, and presented to me again in baptism.

Mary, Mother of Grace, obtain for me an appreciation of the value of grace and supernatural life. Help me to understand that upon this proper appreciation depends my happiness for all eternity, that without grace and supernatural life I cannot see or possess God, I have no right whatsoever to heaven and am in very truth spiritually dead.

In times past I have been desperately careless of risking the loss of grace. I have myself flung it away through mortal sin. Some trifling, transient pleasure has seemed more precious to me than this grace which insures me an eternity of joy and a participation in the life of God Himself.

Obtain for me that I may never again risk my precious inheritance and with it all the real happiness of time and eternity. In the face of temptation may I remember the importance of grace and my eternal destiny bound up with grace and reject without hesitation the momentary fruitless and ultimately sickening pleasure of sin.

Teach me to safeguard myself against the loss of grace. Show me how I may assist others to obtain grace if they do not possess it. And never permit me to be the cause of anyone's losing even a trifle of his priceless inheritance of grace and supernatural life.

Finally, I beg the grace for which I am offering this novena [*here mention your own needed favor*]. And for others I beg [*mention the favors you wish for them*].

FOURTH DAY

PURPOSE: *To obtain hope*

God Promises a Woman to Undo the Evil Done by Eve

Scene: In the midst of their desolation Adam and Eve remember the glorious promise that a woman will crush the serpent's head. Although they are outcasts they look forward, hopefully, to the future. Together they face the sunrise, waiting for the dawn of hope, trying to imagine what beauty and majesty will be found in the woman whose son will repair the evil they have done the world.

CONSIDERATION

Realizing the consequences of their stupid rebellion, Eve was disconsolate, Adam was crushed and tormented with remorse.

God Has Pity

What hope was there for them or for their children? They knew that nothing they could do would save them. Their crime had been committed against an infinite God. They were too limited and imperfect ever adequately to make satisfaction for that crime. The breach between themselves and their Creator was as vast as the distance between heaven and earth. How could it ever be spanned again?

But even for His unworthy, rebellious children God had pity. He planted hope in the hearts of Adam and Eve. He promised that as the world fell through a woman, so the world would be restored through

another woman. To counteract the evil of the first Eve there would be the sweet sinlessness of the second Eve.

In the ears of our first parents rang God's glorious promise and prophecy:

The Promise

"I will put enmities between thee [the serpent] and the woman, and thy seed and her seed: she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." [Gen. III, 15.]

A woman, then, was promised, a woman who would be strong enough to crush the head of Satan himself. And in the war between the sons of Satan (all those evil people who accept him as their leader) and the son of the woman, the woman would see her son triumphant.

It was a glorious prophecy and promise. In the battle that had begun between good and evil, man might hope with confidence. The battle was begun by a woman, Eve. It would be brought to triumphant close by another woman. They did not as yet know her name. Her prophesied victory over Satan was insured beyond the possibility of doubt.

The Messiah

So, even from the gloom of the abyss into which they had fallen, Adam and Eve looked up and saw the light of hope. All was not lost. They would yet be saved. Their seed, the sons and the daughters they would beget, might be doomed for a time to pain and

woe, to labor and death; Mary's seed, the Messiah, now for the first time prophesied, would restore the balance Adam and Eve had upset, would make fitting and acceptable apology and reparation to the offended creator of the universe, would bring back to mankind the precious gifts that had been thrown aside. An Eve had brought about the fall. Another Eve would bring salvation.

The woman Eve looked forward hopefully, trustingly, to the woman Mary, who would not be born for long, dragging centuries. Adam, for a moment hopeless, found reassurance in the thought of Mary's seed, the Messiah. That hope was the salvation of Adam and Eve and of their descendants throughout the expectant centuries of the Old Law.

PRAYER

Mother Mary, we have seen you, not in hope and prophecy, but in lovely reality, as the woman who crushed the head of Satan and gave us the blessed seed, the divine Son who was to save the world. Mary, for centuries Satan, in dread and fear, awaited your coming. For centuries the weary world, tired of its sinning and hopeless of the men who had tried to save it, waited for you and the Son you were to bear.

Hope in the Savior to be born of your virgin purity was the means by which the saints of the Old Law were saved from eternal ruin. And the hope that some day the woman would come and crush the ser-

pent's head was the bright light that shone in the night four thousand years long.

Then you came. Hope was fulfilled. Expectation was more than realized. For you were fair as the aurora, beautiful as the rising dawn. Evil fled from your presence. And God, looking down from heaven, knew you as the mother of His Son, who was to conquer Satan and save the world.

Mary, there is perhaps nothing I need more in life than hope. You were the realization of the world's hope. To you I appeal to win hope for me.

When things seem irremediable and beyond enduring, Mary, obtain for me hope.

When life grows dark and all living seems futile, Mary, obtain for me hope.

When all appears lost and I realize my own powerlessness, Mary, obtain for me hope.

When God seems remote, pushed away from me by my sins, Mary, show me the hope that is your Son.

And in addition I ask, through your intercession, this special favor of this novena. [*Here mention your own favor.*] And for others I ask [*mention the favors you desire for them*].

FIFTH DAY.

PURPOSE: *To obtain joy*

Mary Comes

Scene: For centuries the Temple in Jerusalem had waited for the coming of its Ruler, High Priest, and Messiah. Now we see a little girl ascending its steps. It is Mary, a young maiden, coming to offer her services to the Temple prepared for her future Son. We see her sweetness, beauty, youthful charm, sinlessness. She is met by the priest, who welcomes her. She is the aurora that precedes the sun. The woman has arrived. Mary is offering herself to God in the Temple, and He has already accepted her.

CONSIDERATION

A second Eve, then, was needed to repair the evil done by the first Eve.

The Second Eve

Mary offered God an unswerving loyalty to replace that betrayed loyalty of the first woman. She loved God with a love that outbalanced betrayed love. Eve had led men into sin and evil; the second Eve led men away from sin and evil and back to goodness. If the first woman was sinful, this woman was immaculately sinless.

And if, through Eve, Adam was led into a rebellion that killed his own soul and lost for himself and for his descendants the grace and happiness and joy that God had meant them to possess, the new Eve led into the

world the new Adam, who restored all the precious gifts which had been thrown away and lost beyond the power of mere man ever to reclaim.

So Mary came. She was the promised woman whose foot was strong enough to crush the head of the serpent Satan. And her seed was to be the powerful Savior who would terminate in final victory the war between the descendants of Adam and Eve and the ruthless army of the devil.

Her beauty was that of a queen, for she was the daughter of the King of Heaven. But the beauty of her soul was rich beyond all dreams, fair enough to shelter the Son of God made man.

Her Early Dedication

As she mounted the steps of the Temple, she began happy years of devoted service of God. Already she had been an obedient daughter in her parents' home, fulfilling each smallest wish in reparation for the disobedience of the first Eve, loving God unswervingly and without a possible rival, in reparation for the disloyal love that had led Adam and Eve away from God. Now she began her years of patient, devoted service of God in His house, the Temple.

Her prayers were free from distractions. Tireless was her faithful performance of her duties near the sanctuary. Her mind was constantly upon God. Her hopes were centered in the Messiah, who she thought would be born to some other and, in her eyes, more worthy maiden.

Yet those who saw her could not go away without feeling that they had been close to incarnate purity. The sinlessness of her soul shone in her face. Her love of God made her tender and loving toward all His creatures. She walked among men and filled their hearts with joy.

Mary and Eve were both God's beloved daughters—one so faithless, the other so true; one the mother of all sin, the other the mother of the sinless Christ, conqueror of sin.

God's promise had been fulfilled. Joy had returned to the sorrowing world.

PRAYER

Mother Mary, how can I thank God that in you His promise was fulfilled? All our hopes of a woman who would crush the head of our enemy were realized when you came. With your coming, you restored the dignity of our fallen race, taught men once more the beauty of sinlessness, and loved God as He had never been loved since the creation of His first creatures.

Everywhere you went you brought joy and happiness to those about you. You filled their souls with the realization that God was indeed near to His creatures—near in grace, near in the fulfillment of the promises of the Savior to be born. Your beauty made them forget the transient garment which is a body and remember the immortal spirit which the body clothed. And through you men regained hope in humanity and

strength for their hope in the promises of a Messiah who would save the world.

You were, then, the world's first advocate with God. You begged humbly that the Messiah might be born of some worthy mother. And He came to you, the mother chosen from all womankind.

You prayed from your pitying heart that men might be forgiven. And a Savior came who would rescue men from the hopeless mire of their sins.

You begged for joy for a joyless world. And God gave us you, the cause of our joy; He gave us your Son, in whom all men rejoice. Then, that we might have perfect joy, you won for us, through Christ your Son, the assurance of eternal joy in heaven.

Mary, obtain for my soul this joy that was yours. Give me joy in sinlessness, joy in faith, joy in the love of God, joy in the realization that a Savior has been born for me.

And may I, wherever I go, bear witness to the joy that comes of the nearness of Jesus Christ to the soul.

May I also ask through this novena for [*here mention your personal favor*]? And for others may I also ask [*mention the favors you desire for others*]?

SIXTH DAY

PURPOSE: *To obtain personal sinlessness*

Mary, Immaculate Virgin and Mother

Scene: We go to Nazareth and look into the quiet room in which Mary prays. She is kneeling now at prayer. Her face is rapt in the joy of talking with God. She radiates purity. Then an angel stands before her, pure with all the spotlessness of his angelic nature. But he bows in the presence of Mary, for she is purer than he. He hails her, declaring that she is full of grace. He offers her the proud responsibility of mothering God. And at her consent the Son of God takes up His dwelling within her.

CONSIDERATION

To Eve went the sad distinction of being the first human sinner. She was the sad and sinful mother of our sad and sinful race.

To Mary went the joyous privilege of being the sinless mother who held within her arms the spotless Lamb of God and who, from that day to this, has mothered all the sweet, innocent, pure, or repentant souls who have offered themselves to God.

Tabernacle of God

Mary must of necessity have been immaculate. No slightest stain could have marred her soul. Why?

How pure must be the tabernacle of the all-pure God! Mary was that tabernacle. Her body supplied the flesh from which the

Holy Spirit fashioned the body of God. Her soul offered Him the love and devotion that warmed Him in the days of His exile in the midst of sinful men. Not the tabernacles of the Old Law nor those of the New could ever hold God as closely as did the body and soul of Mary. Could she, then, be other than immaculate?

Besides, hers was the task of crushing the head of the prince of sin and evil. No sinner could accomplish that feat. Only a foot driven by a perfect will that had never bowed to evil could crush the leader of the evil forces.

Finally, Mary was predestined to mother Christ's Holy Church, to inspire the saints to heroism, the virgins to whitest purity, the confessors to deepest faith.

Sinless

But her sinlessness took its rise in the merits of her Son. Because she was to mother the Son of God, from the moment of her conception she was free from all sin.

She was as sinless as Eve herself had been before the terrible moment of her disobedience.

Grace was infused into her soul at the instant of her conception.

Her soul was never dead to supernatural life; it was always capable of seeing and possessing God.

She was prepared from the beginning a worthy mother for Him who was the Son of the Most High.

Yet to this sinlessness which was the gift of God, merited for her by her Son, she added a personal sinlessness. Eve had been born free from sin and had turned to sin of her own accord. Mary was born free from sin and remained sinless by her own lovely choice.

No slightest thought of disloyalty turned her from God. No blemish soiled her body or soul. No pride or ambition made her lift rebellious eyes toward God. No false standards ever turned her from God's love.

She was born immaculate. She lived without sin.

PRAYER

Mother Mary, how sweet and beautiful was your sinlessness! How glad I am that you have taught me, so prone to sin, so easily tempted and so constant in my falls, that there is no joy save the joy of purity and no happiness except that of a sinless soul!

Eve, through her sin, found nothing but unhappiness for herself and for her children. All the agonies and woes of the world—its crimes and deaths, its diseases and selfishnesses—followed from the sin which Eve had taught her children.

But you, Mary, sinless yourself, taught us the happiness of the sinless soul. Not in the path marked out by Eve—except in her weary repentance—but in the glowing path of your immaculate feet will I find the happiness for which my heart craves.

Immaculate Mother, obtain for me an unhesitating loyalty to God my Creator and Lord.

Obtain for me stainless purity of body and soul, of mind and heart.

Show me the gracious way of your humility, that my ambitions and selfishness and pride may never lead me to put my will before the law of God.

And teach me, where sin is concerned, a true sense of values. When temptation is strong, remind me of the unhappiness that follows sin. When I grow weary of goodness, remind me that only along the path of sinlessness lies true peace, happiness, and joy.

May I be a not unworthy child of my sinless mother. And may I cherish grace in my soul with some of that appreciation which made you safeguard it as your most precious possession.

As the special grace of this novena, I beg for this favor. [*Pause and mention your favor briefly.*] And for others I ask [*here mention what you want and ask for them.*]

SEVENTH DAY

PURPOSE: *To obtain proper relationship
with God*

God Loved Mary So

Scene: The Blessed Trinity in solemn council determine to select Mary, out of all womankind, to be the mother of the divine Son. They summon the Angel Gabriel and send him to the little house in Nazareth to announce the most important news in history. Mary answers, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." But the Father calls her "daughter," the Son calls her "beloved mother," the Holy Spirit calls her "spouse."

CONSIDERATION

God endowed Eve with the greatest graces and blessings and enriched her with gifts far beyond her merit. But in the end this daughter proved unfaithful to Him, betrayed Him and His dearest interests, and went over to the side of His enemy.

So He searched the ages for a daughter who would prove faithful and worthy of His best gifts.

The Divine Choice

The divine vision fell upon the person of Mary. She was worthy and would not fail Him. She was a fit mother for His divine Son.

Unique among all women was Mary in her personal sanctity. For this, God loved her uniquely among all the daughters of the

human race. But still more remarkable was the relationship which, because of her purity, her humility, and her boundless love, Mary was to occupy toward the Blessed Trinity.

In the moments of her utmost faithfulness Eve was only God's favored daughter. She did not dream of the dignities that were one day to be heaped upon her daughter who was the second Eve. No one would have dreamed that a creature would enter into relationships of such dignity and responsibility with the Blessed Trinity itself.

God the Father chose Mary to be His best beloved daughter. He lavished His limitless love and graces upon her.

God the Son, selected Mary from among all women to be His mother. He entrusted Himself to her with all the confidence of a son who knows his mother to be the best of mothers.

God the Holy Ghost, in order that the Incarnation might be accomplished, selected Mary as His spotless spouse. She was His pure bride, immaculate as virgin, stainless as mother.

Relationship With the Trinity

So Mary, lifting her eyes to the Blessed Trinity, found herself daughter of the divine Father, mother of the divine Son, and bride of the Holy Spirit.

No other human being was ever to enter into this incredibly beautiful triple relationship. Mary was the second Eve; but she was so much more than merely another Eve.

Her sinlessness and loyalty and love had won for her a relationship with God that was beyond all human foreseeing or imagining.

And the whole human race was glad that one of its members had, by a triple relationship, repaired the disloyalty of its first mother and bound herself with far tighter bonds than those which had been broken by disloyal Eve at the dawn of history.

PRAYER

Mother Mary, my love for you and my confidence in you grow immeasurably as I realize how close you were and are to God. Not only are you "blessed among women"; you are unique among all human beings that ever lived or will live.

Because you devoted yourself entirely to the service of God and gave to God your whole heart, your whole love, your whole service, the Blessed Trinity took you into a glorious and astounding relationship.

As daughter, as mother, and as bride you fulfilled to the least and the greatest detail the desires of the Trinity. You were the most obedient and devoted of daughters, the most loving and unselfish of mothers, the most gracious and tender of brides.

Mary, how hard I find it to establish myself in correct relationship with God! I am restless, resentful, rebellious, unfaithful. I am hardly a good servant, much less a devoted and worthy child.

Yet I too am really a child of the heavenly

Father. I am the brother (sister) of Jesus Christ, and part of His Mystical Body. The Holy Ghost is the spouse of my soul. I am all this in far less measure than was true of you, of course, but with a reality that should give me deep joy and a sense of personal responsibility to the God who has taken so personal an interest in me.

Mary, whose every action was dominated by this loyalty to your Father, Son, and Spouse, help me to be a faithful child, a loyal brother (sister), a worthy spouse of the Blessed Trinity. Never let any action of mine betray this close personal relationship. May I follow your example by giving myself completely to this correct relationship with God.

And through this novena I beg for myself this special favor. [*Here mention the need or desire.*] And for others I also ask [*here mention the favors you wish for others*].

EIGHTH DAY

PURPOSE: *To obtain a love for Holy
Communion*

Mary Is Mother of God Incarnate

Scene: In Bethlehem Mary holds for the first time the Son of God and her little Babe in her arms. The cold and neglect and poverty are forgotten as she looks into the eyes of her Son and realizes that He has been born from her body, will rest trustingly on her bosom, and for all eternity will call her Mother.

CONSIDERATION

Eve was the mother of the whole human race. From her body, as from a single fountain, came forth all the races and peoples of the earth.

Mediatrice of All Graces

Yet, by her sin, Eve betrayed all her unborn sons and daughters and corrupted beyond human hope the fountain of the future. Because of her sinfulness men were born, not in the favor of God, but in the power of Satan. Together with Adam she had lost for the unborn sons and daughters of all time their priceless heritage of grace, the friendship of God, and their right to heaven.

Mary was the pure mother of all those who live under the New Law. From her body came forth, as from a crystal-clear fountain, divinity united with humanity in the person of the Incarnate God.

Because of her sinlessness, the conqueror of sin, Jesus Christ our Lord, entered the world. Her Son was to be the source of grace restored to humankind. Through Him the whole human race would regain its inheritance, the favor of God, and the possession of heaven. And she, the mother of the Source of grace, became the mother of grace itself, the fountain from which blessings untold flowed from God to man.

The sin of Eve drew an angel from heaven to banish her and her children from paradise. The sinlessness of Mary drew an angel from heaven to announce the coming of her Son, who would open for the sons and daughters of Eve the gates of eternal paradise.

Mother of the King of Kings

With bitter reproaches an angel drove Eve into the cruel world. With words of untold joy an angel announced the coming of the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity into the womb of a maid.

Since the world began, no privilege has equaled this. Other mothers bore and cared for one of God's adopted sons. Mary bore and nurtured the only begotten Son of the eternal God.

Hers was the honor of mothering the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity. Her body was His unstained, unspotted shrine. Her mantle wrapped the King of Glory close against the wintry winds. She could look upon her Babe and know that the little one

who seemed weakly to depend upon her and who confided Himself and all His infant needs to her was the creator of the universe, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

PRAYER

Mother Mary, I bow in humble gratitude to God for this almost incredible privilege that was granted to you. For, through the honor that was yours, honor has come to the whole human race. Your faithful mothering of God made man was recompense in full for the betrayal of her children by the world's first mother.

From my heart I thank you for the love with which you cradled Christ and the devotion that made you watch long hours beside His sleeping form, worshipping Him as God, loving Him as your little son.

Yet, Mother, with astonishment I realize that an almost equal privilege is mine. In Holy Communion I welcome the same Jesus Christ whom you welcomed at the moment of the Incarnation. My body too is the temple of God Incarnate. Mine is the privilege of holding the Savior of the world against my heart.

Keenly, though, I realize the terrible difference between you, devoted mother of the Savior, and myself. You were all love, all thoughtfulness, all devotion. I am cold, distracted, uninterested, thoughtless, and unimpressed.

May I ask through your intercession for some realization of the importance of my Holy Communion?

Obtain for me more faith, that I may realize how, after Holy Communion, I am close indeed to fulfilling the tremendously dignified and responsible office that was yours when you cradled the infant Savior.

Beg for me a little of the love that inflamed your heart, that I may not come to the Savior cold and uninterested, but eager to love Him for the loveless world and to serve Him in imitation of you who served Him so perfectly.

And may He who was eternally grateful to you for the welcome you offered Him in your heart find me not altogether unworthy of His readily bestowed gratitude. I shall try at Holy Communion to remember you, Mary, as you welcomed the Incarnate God. Help me with your intercession and your inspiration.

And obtain for me the grace I ask especially during this novena. [*Here mention the favors.*] And for others I beg [*mention the favors and graces you desire for others*].

NINTH DAY

PURPOSE: *To obtain confidence in Mary*

Mary Immaculate, My Hope

Scene: Either of two pictures will give me confidence: Mary at the wedding feast of Cana, obtaining from her Son a miracle before His time for miracles; or Mary, as Queen of Heaven, seated beside her Son in glory, with the crown of stars upon her head, the scepter of heaven in her hand, and in her heart a vast love inspiring her to beg from her divine Son all the graces and favors which her children need.

CONSIDERATION

Undoubtedly Mary is my hope.

Had the world's spiritual history ended with the unforgiven sin of Eve, after her successful temptation of Adam, 'how wretched would be my lot and the lot of all the world!

Handmaid of the Lord

But Mary undid the work of Eve and repaired the evil which Eve had wrought for her children.

Mary's foot crushed the head of the evil serpent and destroyed the dominion of Satan over the world.

Her words of consent spoken to the angel gave me my Savior, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, born for love of me and victorious in life and death over all the things which I

fear and which can endanger my happiness now or in eternity.

Mary has been the open gate through which untold grace has flowed out to the world. She has been the hope of humanity and my hope as well.

Well I remember how Jesus Christ gave me, in the person of St. John, this mother to be my mother too. At the time when He was waging His war unto death with the Satan who had tricked Eve, He chose to give us Mary, His mother, to be the true Eve who would mother the human race.

I remember, too, how Mary mothered the infant Church, how Peter fled to her for consolation after his shameful betrayal of his Master, how the disciples clustered about her in the upper room during the days of their terrors before Pentecost, how they returned from their apostolic labors to find strength and consolation in her intercession with her Son in heaven and in her personal interest in their triumphs and their failures.

The Son's Gratitude

I know that from her place in heaven she exercises an intercessory power that has no bounds except the bounds of Christ's infinite gratitude.

And what limits could there be to the gratitude of a Son who received from that mother nothing but love, service, and tireless devotion throughout the joys of His infancy and youth, the separation of His

public life, the agonies of the Passion, and the glories of His risen life?

All was lost through Eve, our first mother. From the hands of Eve slipped all those graces and blessings that had been entrusted to her as mother of the human race. She flung them away in stupid sin.

From the hands of Mary dropped all those graces and blessings that had been entrusted to her as the new and worthy mother of the human race. She flings them in measureless generosity upon her needy children.

From a grateful Son to a devoted mother, from an unselfish mother to her needy children of earth, pass the endless streams of graces and favors. All that Eve might have been to her children Mary actually is to us, her children. All this she is and vastly more.

PRAYER

Mother Mary, with utmost confidence we kneel at your feet. Through you Jesus Christ came into the world. With Him came the world's salvation. But Jesus Christ, your Son, loved you with the love of God for the world's most perfect soul and with the love of a man for the world's most perfect mother. He worked His first miracle for you upon earth. He has worked constant miracles for you in heaven.

With the utmost confidence, then, I kneel before you. For you are my mother too, as you are mother of the human race.

In your hands I place my multiplied needs of body and soul. Like a watchful mother,

you know them better than I. They are even closer to your interests than they are to mine. I am safe in simply commending them to you and, with supreme confidence, begging you to care for them.

But make me in every need repeat this act of confidence. Make me in every temptation recall your watchful care. In all that I do I shall count on your strength. In all my failures I shall trust in your sympathetic understanding. My successes will be sweeter because I can bring them to you.

Accept now this novena which I am completing. From it and because of it grant me the graces and favors which I need and for which I have neglected to ask. Especially do I need final perseverance and the assurance of heaven.

And grant too that particular favor for which I now pray. [*Here mention that favor.*] And for those for whom I beg, grant [*here mention these petitions for others*].

May I walk, Mary Immaculate, in your footsteps until they bring me safely to your Son.

May I follow your glorious example until I come happily to eternal joy.

May I move through life imitating the beautiful virtues of your soul.

Through Christ, our Lord and your beloved Son.

Amen.

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