

We have in Mary the model and guide for our path. ... Mary goes before us and accompanies us. Mary continues to be our dawn, our first fruit, and our hope. During her earthly life, she was a sign and pledge of future blessings; now, glorified together with Christ the Lord, is the image and fulfillment of the kingdom of God. To this, she calls us and in it, she awaits us.

Mary glorious in heaven continues to fulfill her maternal mission. She continues to be the Mother of Christ and our Mother, of the whole Church, which has in Mary the prototype of her motherhood.

Mary is the dawn, and the dawn announces in an infallible manner the coming of the Sun. For this reason, I recommend you, brothers and sisters, to venerate with deep love and to have recourse to the Mother of Christ and of the Church, the «powerful intercessor» so that she brings us every day a little more to Christ, her Son and our mediator (John Paul II, 1985).

A short silence

Guide: *Maria Bambina, Virgin mother of the Church, you nourish our responsibility of spreading the kingdom of God.*

All: **Pray for us,**
and grant to the young people the grace to realize the gift that they are to God, for the Church and for the whole world.

**From the cradle of Maria Bambina,
let us listen once more to the passionate invitation of pope Francis:**

*May no one steal from you the joy of following Jesus Christ and the courage to offer him to others as the way, the truth and the life. Let us break our fears!... let us get to work. Young people are waiting for us.
It's time to be on our way.*



NOVENA OF MARIA BAMBINA

***“DO NOT BE AFRAID, MARY,
FOR YOU HAVE FOUND FAVOUR WITH GOD” (Lk 1:30)***

Here below are the readings for each day of the Novena that substitute the Scripture reading of the Vespers: a reflection and a prayer in common follow the short biblical reading. Then it is continued with the short response.

Introduction

This **Novena**, at a juncture when the Church prepares itself for the synod of Bishops on the theme «**Young people, the faith and vocational discernment**», is a precious moment in our daily life to strengthen our commitment to prayer for the young generations, to rediscover our being sisters of charity who are with a «natural disposition to love young people» and - walking together with the whole people of God - discover in Mary's life the way to listen, the courage that faith generates, the depths of discernment and dedication to service.

Maria Bambina, «hope and dawn of salvation for the whole world» whom God chose as the Mother of his Son. She walks with us towards the Synod. We seek, together with her, to listen to the voice of God who inspires courage and bestows the grace needed to respond to his call: «Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God» (Lk 1:30).

Beginning of the prayer of the Vespers.

FIRST DAY – 30 August

BLESSED ARE YOU, MARY, HOPE AND DAWN FOR THE WHOLE WORLD

«Who is this that looks forth like the dawn, fair as the moon, bright as the sun, terrible as an army with banners?». I am the mother of beautiful love, of fear, of knowledge, and of holy

hope. In me is all grace of way and of truth, in me all hope of life and of strength (Song 6,10; Sir 24,18).

Mary is the first light who announces night's end, and above all, the impending day. Her birth helps us to understand the loving, tender, compassionate plan of love in which God reaches down and calls us to a wonderful covenant with him that nothing and no one will be able to break.

Mary knew how to transmit God's light, and she reflected the rays of that light in her home, which she shared with Joseph and Jesus, reflecting it also in her people, her country and that home which is common to all mankind: creation...Mary with her generous 'yes' permitted God to take charge of that history. We need to say yes with Mary, and sing with her «the wonders of the Lord» (Pope Francis, 8 September 2017).

A short silence

Guide: *Maria Bambina, «hope and dawn for the whole world»
You are for us a reminder of an attitude of simplicity and total self-surrender to the initiative of the Father.*

All: **Pray for us,
and turn your gaze of love on all the young people of the world.**

SECOND DAY – 31 August

BLESSED ARE YOU, MARY, VIRGIN DAUGHTER OF NAZARETH

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, «Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you». But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be (Lk 1:26-29).

... *The Annunciation of Jesus*, instead, happened in a remote place of Galilee, in a peripheral city and without a particularly good reputation (cf. *John 1:46*), in the anonymity of the home of a girl called Mary. The joy of salvation began in the daily life of the home of a girl of Nazareth. God Himself is the one who takes the initiative and chooses to insert Himself, as He did with Mary, in our homes, in our daily struggles, full of anxieties together with desires. And it is in fact within our cities, our schools and universities, squares and hospitals that the most beautiful announcement we can hear is fulfilled: «*Rejoice, the Lord is with thee!*». It is a joy that generates life that generates hope that is made flesh in the way we look at the

A short silence

Guide: *Maria Bambina, Virgin Mother, active in charity, you sustain our availability to share in the same compassion of Jesus for men.*

All: **Pray for us,
and help the young people to be concerned for the good of others.**

EIGHTH DAY – 6 September

BLESSED ARE YOU, MARY, VIRGIN DISCIPLE OF CHRIST

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, «Woman, here is your son». Then he said to the disciple, «Here is your mother». And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home (Jn 19:25b-27).

Woman of Intercession (cf. *Jn 2:3*), at the foot of the cross of her Son, united to the «beloved disciple», again accepted the call to be fruitful and generate life in human history. In her eyes, every young person can rediscover the beauty of discernment; in her heart, every young person can experience the tenderness of intimacy and the courage of witness and mission (*Preparatory document of the Synod 2018*).

A short silence

Guide: *Maria Bambina, Virgin disciple of Christ,
even when you could not understand, you believed in his word, sustain our yes to the Lord.*

All: **Pray for us
and grant to the young people the grace to receive you as Mother, at the foot of the cross.**

NINETH DAY – 7 September

BLESSED ARE YOU, MARY, VIRGIN MOTHER OF THE CHURCH

Then God's temple in heaven was opened, and the ark of his covenant was seen within his temple. A great portent appeared in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars (Rev 11:19; 12,1).

her Son turning his back on her, and at the age of 30 he leaves home;...till the last,the most tragic and unfathomable why, the why of the Cross.

Mary had understood, right from the beginning, that it wasand is important to let God act, or rather, it is better to let oneselfbe possessed by him, surrender oneself to the power of his HolySpirit who renders fruitful.

The ‘yes’ of Mary should encourage us to utter our‘yes’, to say our ‘yes’ to God, to renew it, to reaffirm it in prayer,every day, in a determined way,so as not to miss the appointment with God *(Domenico Sguaitamatti, NSdU, 2018-2).*

A short silence

Guide: *Maria Bambina, Virgin faithful in daily life, you sustain us in our life long fidelity.*

All: **Pray for us,
and teach the young people to keep their hearts open to
dreaminggreat dreams.**

SEVENTH DAY – 5 September

BLESSED ARE YOU, MARY, VIRGIN MOTHER, ACTIVE IN CHARITY

*On the third day, there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, «They have no wine». And Jesus said to her, «Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come». His mother said to the servants, «Do whatever he tells you» *(Jn 2:1-5).**

During the miracle at the Wedding at Cana, our Lady turned to the servants and said to them:«Do whatever he tells you». Jesus ordered the servants to fill the jars with water and the water became wine, better wine than that had been served before *(cf Jn 2:5-10)*. Mary’s intercession with her Son shows the care of the Mother for people. It is a care, which is attentive to our most concrete needs: Mary knows what we need! She takes care of us, interceding with Jesus and asking the gift of «new wine» for each one of us, i.e. the gift of love, of grace, which saves us. She is always interceding and praying for us, especially at the hour of difficulty and weakness, at the hour of distress and confusion, and especially at the hour of sin. That is why, in the prayer of the Hail Mary, we ask her: «Pray for us sinners» *(Pope Francis, 9 November 2013).*

morrow, in the attitude with which we look at others. It is a joy that becomes solidarity, hospitality, and mercy towards all. All that is happening exacts from us that we look at the present with audacity, with the audacity of one who knows that the joy of salvation takes shape in the daily life of the home of a girl of Nazareth ... As yesterday, God continues to seek allies; God continues to seek hearts like Mary’s *(Pope Francis, Homily, 25 March 2017).*

A short silence

Guide: *Maria Bambina, Virgin daughter of Nazareth, you introduce us into the mystery of God.*

tutte: **Pray for us
and grant to the young people courage to take charge of their life.**

THIRD DAY – 1 September

BLESSED ARE YOU, MARY, HUMBLE SERVANT OF THE LORD

*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore, the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. ... Then Mary said, «Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word» *(Lk 1, 35.38).**

In this Gospel passage, we notice a contrast between the promises of the angel and Mary’s response. What the angel says is a ‘long’ revelation, which opens unprecedented possibilities. ...On the other hand, Mary’s reply is a ‘short’ sentence that does not speak of glory. It does not speak of privilege but only of willingness and service: «Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word». Mary does not exalt herself before the prospect of becoming the mother of the Messiah, but rather remains modest and expresses her acceptance of the Lord’s plan. Mary does not boast. She is humble and modest. She recognizes that she is small before God and she is happy to be so. At the same time, she is aware that the fulfilment of God’s plan depends on her response, and therefore she is called to accept it with her whole being *(cf Pope Francis, Angelus, 24 December, 2017).*

A short silence

Guide: *Maria Bambina, humble servant of the Lord, you sustain our availability to cooperate with freedom of faith with the mystery of redemption.*

All: **Pray for us, and grant to the young people courage to aim for the most beautiful and profound things of life.**

FOURTH DAY – 2 September

BLESSED ARE YOU, MARY, THE POOR AND HUMBLE OF THE LORD

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation (Lk 1,46-50).

In this song of praise, Mary places herself wholly before God and recognizes him to be her Saviour. Under his gaze, she realizes her own condition with wonder: humble servant in whom the Lord has done great things. Entering into the heart of God, Mary understands his secrets: He favours the poor and the little ones, therefore looks upon with a special love on this daughter of Nazareth. The exultance of Mary is prepared by her listening to the Word and adhesion to it in faith, by the silence that treasures in heart every experience. Mary confesses with joy the faithfulness of God; she discovers infinite/limitless horizons of love and from her soul breaks forth a song of praise to narrate the way God acts in her life and in the history (cf LG 55).

A short silence

Guide: *Maria Bambina, Virgin poor and humble, you teach us to keep our hearts free to enjoy spiritual things.*

All: **Pray for us, and grant to the young people the grace to keep their hearts always free and joyful.**

FIFTH DAY – 3 September

BLESSED ARE YOU, MARY, VIRGIN MEEK AND DOCILE

While he was saying this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, «Blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you!». But he said, «Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it!» (Lk 11:27-28).

The synodal process is entrusted to Mary. In the course of this process, the Church is self-examining herself on how to accompany young people to accept God's call to the joy of love and the fullness of life. Mary, the young woman of Nazareth, who in every stage of her existence accepted the Word, and preserve it, pondering it in her heart (cf Lk 2:19) was the first to fulfill this journey. In her «lowliness», the Virgin betrothed to Joseph, experienced human weakness and difficulty in understanding the mysterious will of God (cf Lk 1:34). She also was called to live by an exodus from herself and her plans by learning to trust and to confide. Recalling the «great things» which the Almighty accomplished in her (cf Lk 1:49), the Virgin did not feel alone, but fully loved and supported by the «Fear not» of the Angel (cf Lk 1:30). Knowing that God is with her, Mary opened her heart to «Here I am», and thus began the Gospel journey (cf Lk 1:38) (Preparatory document of the Synod 2018).

A short silence

Guide: *Maria Bambina, Virgin meek and docile, you teach us to keep the Word in our hearts and to unite ourselves to him, so that through us, too, Christ may be formed in our brethren.*

All: **Pray for us, and grant to the young people the grace to find companions on journey who would help them to discern the real good to realize a proper plan of life.**

SIXTH DAY – 4 September

BLESSED ARE YOU, MARY, FAITHFUL VIRGIN IN THE DAILY LIFE

Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour (Lk 2:51-52).

Rather it speaks of 'co-responsibility', which demands from Mary the willingness to be ever more a woman like all others, woman at our side, in solidarity with our frailties and weaknesses. Her 'yes' certainly brings joy, yet in no way she is exempted from hardships, difficulties and pain, to grow in her faith. The angel departs and from now onwards, the responsibility lies on her, on her own she has to consider what takes place day-by-day in her life, to read in these events the fulfillment – not always evident, or easy and clear - of the will of God... However, she has to find out on her own, the convincing answer to many disturbing 'why' of her faith. The 'why' of many doors closing on her face; the 'why' of such adoring childbirth; the 'why' of a hasty escape; the why of