

another, and if anyone of you commits some slight fault, cover it with the ‘mantle’ of charity and observe all the duties prescribed by the Rule regarding fraternal correction.... How gladly I would hasten to your side and share in your toil if I had the health and strength for it! I do feel for you, though, and in my inability to do more, I recommend you constantly to the Lord, miserable though I am, and I keep all of you in mind, one by one (*VG*, 124-125).

8th DAY: Love one another

Love one another, bear with one another, and God’s blessing will be with you. In all that you do, don’t be anxious, but act with great simplicity and with the pure and right intention of pleasing God. What is the use of worrying so much? Where you cannot cope, your desire will make up for it, and God, who sees your good will, will not fail to reward you for it all the same. Bear your pain gladly for God’s sake, conforming to God’s will, to the end. The end crowns the work... May the Lord grant you the grace of making good use of your lifespan so that you may all together one day praise Him in Heaven (*VG*, 425-426).

9th DAY: Let’s feel the company of the Saints

Let us keep our gaze fixed on that dear homeland where our good God and heavenly Spouse is wholly intent on being the delight of his beloved brides. How greatly we shall rejoice, dear Sisters, when we shall meet again in Heaven! How comforting it is to keep such sweet realities in mind! And if the very thought of them brings us so much comfort, how will it be for us to be really there enjoying them! ... All this must be more precious than all other things, and so it is worthwhile to make every effort to win it. Please help me with your prayers and good advice and I will do the same for you, so that after loving one another so much here on earth, we may love one another for all eternity in Heaven! (*Scr I*, 53-54).



TOGETHER IN DOING GOOD

(cf *Scr I*, 110)

«Love also impels us towards universal communion” and it calls us to form a community composed of brothers and sisters “who accept and care for one another» (cf *Fratelli tutti*, 95-96).

In this Novena, we find ourselves in the company of our Saints who pray with us and intercede for us from the Lord the gift of a profound friendship among us and with everyone. “With the courage of Bartolomea and the prudence of Vincenza” let us commit ourselves to walk TOGETHER IN DOING GOOD.

For the Novena of Saints Bartolomea Capitanio and Vincenza Gerosa, some writings of Bartolomea and Vincenza are proposed to be read every day, after the short reading of the Vespers.

1st DAY: Let’s listen to the voice of the Lord

Your last letter brought me much joy, seeing that my advice had left a sweet impression on you. This is because your spirit is so receptive to the voice of our Lover Jesus who in various ways is calling you to follow him. I beseech you, Marianna, don’t let the most sweet calling of the divine Spouse fall on deaf ears, but respond at once, like Samuel: «Speak, Lord, speak, for your handmaid is listening»; And then, once you understand what the Lord expects from you, set about carrying it out with a rejoicing heart (*Scr I*, 15).

2nd DAY: Let's keep in mind our obligations

Would this affection for each other, at least, make of us both Saints by means of mutual admonishment, encouragement and advice! I learn from your last letter of the special grace - of the vow of charity - God has given you: do your best to profit from it, for this is a privilege that even Angels envy.

What must we do to respond to such love? Love can be returned only by love. Let us then love our most gentle Spouse; let us continue to do our best to draw other souls to him. I beg you to keep me mindful of the obligations we have towards our most loving Spouse, and at the same time to help me keep them by your prayer and timely reminders (*Scr I*, 28-29. 63).

3rd DAY: Let's speak like true sisters

I suppose you will see for yourself that I am speaking to you with utter sincerity and trust and that I love you as a true Sister and Friend. I would be happy if you could do the same with me, and if you know that any of the many spiritual deeds that you do are useful to me and not quite beyond my capacity, kindly propose them to me. Forget about humility where it is a matter of charity; pay no heed to human respect and get rid of it all, just think that you are helping a soul to give glory to God, and that will do. I will therefore wait and see the extent of your charity towards my poor soul. May God continue to grant you the grace of being totally his: that is my earnest wish for you (*Scr I*, 140).

4th DAY: Let's encourage each other

Come on, then, dear Marianna; let us try to outdo each other in loving God. I am sure you will win, but it doesn't matter. I will at least try to compete with you, and your virtue will encourage me to love God ever more passionately. There is something else that you must let me suggest to you... Pay heed to a friend, or rather a sister, who is speaking for your good. I can make out from your last letter but one how sure you are of my love for Jesus; if you think it is a good thing, let my example encourage you to do the same. Whatever you do for Jesus' sake will have an eternal reward (*Scr I*, 20. 21. 23).

5th DAY: Let our friendship entirely serve the purpose of benefiting each other

Let our friendship entirely serve the purpose of benefiting each other. Everything you know and think: «this might do good to Bortolamea as well», whether it be good advice, correction, some good inspiration, or devotional practice, or even your tenor or method of life, do not hesitate to share it with me: nor will I be niggardly in sharing such things with you, you'll see.

I want both of us to go to Heaven: let us then help each other to climb that rugged path, and to do that, let us have great trust in Mary. I will look forward to a long letter from you, written in all confidence; if you wish to know anything from me, don't hesitate to tell me (*Scr I*, 160. 161).

6th DAY: Let's hold dear our neighbours

Dear Sister, we are, it is true, in the midst of the perils of this world, surrounded by evil but let us take comfort in the thought that we have to stay in it just a little while, after all. However, let us make the best use of that little while, so that we may become the Lord's favoured ones. Let us do our best to draw souls to Him by word and example. I know you are already trying hard, and I am immensely glad. Let us have a preferential love for the poor. They are the living image of Jesus Christ. Let us help them as much as we can, even if it may cost us at times. Let us remember that in so doing we are sure to please our most loving Jesus. This should be a sufficient reason to urge us to do it promptly and eagerly (*Scr I*, 12. 13).

7th DAY: Know how to have compassion for one another

You have there a vast field of work, so many opportunities of winning souls for the Lord. Keep up your usual enthusiasm and courageous readiness for hard work. May the right intention to please God be your guide, and that you may truly please God, let there be in you deep humility, unflinching patience and boundless charity. Let there be among you peace, gladness and a holy harmony in all things. Have compassion for one