



*Here below we have - for each day of the Novena – a Gospel text and the reflections related to it in the place of the Scripture Readings of Vespers. It will be followed by the short responsorial.*

### **Introduction**

In our journey, during these days of Novena of Maria Bambina, let us reflect on Virgin Mary, a woman capable of probing the horizon and the meaning of life in the light of the fullness of God. As the need to restart, to get up, to find anew the meaning of the goal of one's existence is present in each one's life, the whole of human family needs to renew its aspiration towards the common goal towards which it has set out.

We are living in uncertain and difficult times due to war and violence. Many are terrified thinking of an ambiguous present and future, aggravated by social situations of injustice triggered by the deficit of global economy.

Mary as a mother, always vigilant and attentive in her heart, directs us towards her son Jesus. She reminds us of a Presence that never forsakes us.

Let us offer our heart to her, so that she may take us by her hand and sustain us with a gaze of encouragement and hope, capable of dispelling the darkness of distrust, loneliness and abandonment.

### **Vespers**

#### **FIRST DAY - 30 August: *MARY, HORIZON OF FAITH***

R1 *Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word (Lk 1:38).*

R2 Mary exercises her freedom with an utmost responsibility. She has the possibility of accepting or refusing a great Good that can strengthen her relationship with God. Her availability and her humility are expressions of values and new horizons that bring to light her deep faith. She was called Blessed because she *believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord (Lk 1:45).*

We find it hard to accept the unexpected, because we wish at all costs to draw up the plan of our life. Mary teaches us to reverse this perspective to let ourselves to be led by the Providence of God.

**ALL *Holy Mary, horizon of faith, enlighten our journey.***

**SECOND DAY - 31 August: *MARY, HORIZON OF BEATITUDES***

R1 *My spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for ... he has scattered the proud ...has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy...(Lk 1:46-55).*

R2 Mary invites us to treasure in the heart the “beatitudes” expressed in the *Magnificat*. They are a reversal of the human priorities and criteria that leads us to a serious and deep reflection.

Jesus, her Son will bring to fulfilment these promises.

Mary urges us to believe that the suffering of the voiceless and their cry for help for many injustices present in the world do not escape the eyes and the heart of God. Mary is certain that God can do great things because holy is his name.

**ALL *Holy Mary, horizon of the beatitudes, enlighten our journey.***

**THIRD DAY - 1 September: *MARY, HORIZON OF LIFE***

R1 *She gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn (Lk 2:7).*

R2 Mary *gifts* us what she has received, the fullness of life: Jesus, Son of the Most High and the Omnipotent. Mary invites us to take care of life *enveloping it* with love and with that tenderness that make us feel at home.

She *lays* this precious treasure in our poor and fragile existence, because God has chosen the last, the marginalised who are in need of everything. God continues to have trust in his creatures.

Looking at Mary, we learn to reserve a place and time for the Author of life and Lord of history, who asks nothing of us but to dwell in the heart of every person.

**ALL *Holy Mary, horizon of life, enlighten our journey.***

**FOURTH DAY - 2 September: *MARY, HORIZON OF THE FAMILY***

R1 *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).*

R2 The family of Nazareth is the school of the Gospel. Here everything has one voice, one meaning. Here we understand the sacred and inviolable character of living in family that is communion of love, dialogue, respect, human and religious formation.  
We learn here the value of work and that it can't have an end in itself, but is meant to elevate the dignity of every person, so that the words of the Scripture might come true in us: *let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven* (Mt 5:16).

**ALL *Holy Mary, horizon of the family, enlighten our journey.***

**FIFTH DAY - 3 September: *MARY, HORIZON OF LISTENING***

R1 *Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart* (Lk 2:18).

R2 Life of Mary is overturned by the grace of God that erupts into her simple and humble daily life. From the Annunciation of angel and thereafter, Mary places herself in an interior listening in order to understand what God desires to accomplish with the freedom of her yes.

It happens to us as well to be protagonists of situations that challenge us and oblige us to take a stand: either of closure and indifference or of openness and involvement.

In front of what the Providence opens before us, may Mary help us to be like her: capable of interior listening for a renewed response, directed towards a continual seeking of the Lord. Enveloped by his light, may we be credible witnesses of a life lived in justice, peace and fruitfulness of love.

**ALL *Holy Mary, horizon of listening, enlighten our journey.***

**SIXTH DAY - 4 September: *MARY, HORIZON OF WATCHFULNESS***

R1 *His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you"* (Jn 2:5).

R2 Something is always lacking in the heart of humanity, if it does not know to recognise itself to be a beggar of love... of that Love that fills its fragility with the mercy and its loneliness with the certainty of being always accompanied and sustained by a real Presence that never forgets nor forsakes us.

Mary, handmaid and Mother of God, always watchful of our needs, teaches us that we are called to give ourselves totally over to those words: *Do whatever he tells you*, pronounced with an absolute faith, anchored in the sure harbour of God's love.

**ALL *Holy Mary, horizon of watchfulness, enlighten our journey.***

**SEVENTH DAY - 5 September: *MARY, HORIZON OF A PRESENCE THAT IS CLOSE TO US***

R1 *Mary, a sword will pierce your own soul too* (Lk 2:35).

R2 No one is exempt from suffering. All of us are beaten, wounded and robbed by someone or something. Suffering does not grant concession and does not turn its face to other side but leaves a sign and changes, at times radically, one's existence. Mary herself had made an experience of it.

For this reason, we can feel her close to us in moments of trial and of pain that languish within. May her choices and her attitudes be of support and relief when suffering generates discomfort and discouragement, failure, delusion and bitterness.

**ALL *Holy Mary, horizon of a presence that is close to us, enlighten our journey.***

**EIGHTH DAY - 6 September: *MARY, HORIZON OF ONE WHO PRAYS***

R1 *All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers (Acts 1:14).*

R2 Mary is full of grace and of Holy Spirit. Mary, cradle and temple of God, cultivates continually her intimate relationship with Him. She, together with the whole Church, teaches us to recognise from where the blessings we experience daily come from, if we live in thankfulness for what we have.

Prayer is not a loss of time, as some believe, but is a fulfilment of the time, offered and consumed as a candle lit before the throne of the Father.

Loss of this foundation or cornerstone leads to an interior emptiness.

May Mary, as the best of one who prays, help us to meditate and to safeguard this vital sap, without which we cannot find ourselves.

**ALL *Holy Mary, horizon of one who prays, enlighten our journey.***

**NINETH DAY - 7 September: *MARY, HORIZON OF ETERNAL GLORY***

R1 *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 12:1).*

R2 Mary has preceded us into the horizon of eternity. She is the Mother of the Church and Mother of all humanity whose presence comforts us, helps us continually, and sustains us in our earthly pilgrimage.

Let us trustfully bow before Her, Queen of heaven and earth, and let us implore her to guard us under her powerful motherhood so that we may know how to direct ourselves towards the infinity of God, where the true joy is.

**ALL *Holy Mary, horizon of eternal glory, enlighten our journey.***