



## NOVENA TO MARIA BAMBINA 2023

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** (for the first day)

*“I lift up my eyes to the hills, from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth. He will not let my foot be moved... The Lord is your keeper...the Lord is at your right hand...he will keep your life” (Ps 120).*

Yes, Lord God, in the dismay and uncertainty of our “nights”, we want to lift up our gaze to heaven. In the darkness that grips us, we seek for light, the only one star that is capable of showing us the way to find ourselves again and return home: Christ Jesus, your Son. Only his light can dispel the hardness of our heart, the blindness of our gaze, the pride of our reason.

By grace, his love lifts us up from our weak human condition to the dignity of being children of God.

Jesus went beyond; in his extreme act of love, he has gifted us Mary, his and our Mother. We venerate her in the features of her childhood, who receives everything from her Creator.

In this Novena, we want to turn to **her** so that she may show us

- *The wisdom of heart*
- *The purity of gaze*
- *The truth of the journey.*

With and like Mary, let us learn **to treasure the Word in our heart**, to let ourselves **be enlightened, guided** and involved by it, **to choose always life**.

**Vespers.**

## THE WISDOM OF HEART

**FIRST DAY – 30 August: *MARY, THE DISCIPLE***

R 1 *My child, if you accept my words and treasure up my commandments within you, making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding; if you indeed cry out for insight...if you seek it...and search for it as for hidden treasures then you will understand the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God (Prov 2:1ff.).*

R 2 Wisdom, described to us by the Sacred Scripture, calls for involvement of the whole of our existence to create harmony between our doing and our being.

Mary, seat of wisdom, teaches us to remain before Jesus, listening to his Word so that we may be able to understand what God has prepared for us, in comparison to what we can or know to do for Him.

Like Mary, let us say “yes” to the unfathomable mystery of the will of the Lord, remaining open to his design of salvation. He is at the door of our heart and awaits only our desire to make friendship with Him.

ALL ***Mary, teach us the wisdom of heart.***

**SECOND DAY – 31 August: *AT THE SCHOOL OF MARY***

R 1 *Lord, teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart (Ps 90).*

R 2 This invocation provokes a response either of presence or of absence. The wisdom of heart should be desired with all our strength and sought for both in the adversity of seasons and in the simplicity of an ordinary fruitful life.

Mary helps us to detoxify ourselves from greed, hypocrisy, falsity and teaches us that wisdom goes beyond the calculations of our mediocrity and superficiality. She invites us to be *present* and to be *protagonists* in our daily life, with the choice for common good, justice, forgiveness, respect and acceptance of others.

ALL ***Mary, teach us the wisdom of heart.***

**THIRD DAY – 1 September: *MARY, THE WAY THAT LEADS TO JESUS***

R 1 *Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labour in vain (Ps 127).*

R 2 The wisdom enshrined in this verse is a true wisdom. Our modern day robs us of the capacity of questioning ourselves of the direction in which we are going. Others decide for us. The “disposable” functionality on people’s feelings, the idolatry of their own body and power, the illusory prospect of an easy gain are short and temporary paths, on which the absence of God is

increasingly evident. Excessive well-being and progressive self-centeredness are leading us astray, making us lose all direction.

May Mary teach us to rediscover the vertical dimension in our relationship with one another, with our personal and universal history, because without the presence of the Lord we are wandering within the fragmentation of our limitation, with the risk of repeating the error: "... there is no place for Him in our hearts".

ALL ***Mary, teach us the wisdom of heart.***

## [The purity of gaze](#)

**FOURTH DAY – 2 September: *MARY, HUMAN CREATURE***

R 1 *My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant (Lk 1:46-47).*

R 2 The humility of Mary's pure heart is generated by the awareness that God is pleased with the one who trusts in Him.

Let us ask her to help us to be significant presence through our life and to have a passionate look at the true life, in which God dwells.

ALL ***Mary, teach us the purity of gaze.***

**FIFTH DAY – 3 September: *MARY DWELLS UNDER THE GAZE OF GOD***

R 1 *O Lord, my heart is not lifted up, my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvellous for me (Ps 131:1).*

R 2 The heart of Mary, her whole existence manifest this interior attitude. At times, we Christians “see in colour but think in black and white” (*Stephen Littleword*). We choose contention and competition; nurture the desire to prevail over the other. We consume ourselves in following our needs, losing sight of what really matters.

Mary teaches us to look at ourselves, others, the world and the circumstances with the eyes of God. This transformation of the gaze is necessary to let down the “guard” of our vainglory to participate in the wisdom of God, who manifests himself in Jesus Christ. He alone guarantees us choices aimed at good and at service towards others.

ALL ***Mary, teach us the purity of gaze.***

**SIXTH DAY – 4 September: *MARY WALKS THROUGH THE HISTORY***

R 1 *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God (Mt 5:8).*

R 2 God places before our eyes “visible signs”, burning lamps to indicate to us the justice, the truth and the mercy of his heart.

Mary, full of grace, is the silent and maternal presence that directs us to what God wants to reveal to us. She, the guardian and her Son’s treasure chest, indicates to us the justice and Mercy of a pure heart, capable of binding our wounds and that of others, she points to us the truth, guarantee of a heart free from every slavery and dependence.

May Mary enable us to see in the heart of each one a small “sign” of the presence of the Kingdom of God.

ALL ***Mary, teach us the purity of gaze.***

## The truth of the journey

### SEVENTH DAY – 5 September: **MARY, WOMAN OF CHRISTIAN MATURITY**

R 1 *I will show you what someone is like who comes to me, hears my words, and acts on them. That one is like a man building a house, who dug deeply and laid the foundation on rock; when a flood arose, the river burst against that house but could not shake it, because it had been well built (Lk 6:46-47).*

R 2 Never are we alone if we have within us the certainty that God's gaze is on our littleness and he saves it, if we are ready to present it to him. How can we be alone, when a young girl has believed in that Word: "Nothing is impossible for God", which is also addressed to us?

Never are we alone when FAITH enlightens our difficulties and discouragement, when HOPE makes us perceive the Invisible presence in the darkness of our resignation and disappointment, when LOVE takes care of the life of each person, in every situation.

May Mary, Mother of the humanity, take us by her hand; walk with us and in the midst of us, so that we are sure, that no headwinds can send us adrift, protected by her maternal blessing.

ALL ***Mary, teach us to choose always the truth.***

### EIGHTH DAY – 6 September: **MARY, GOD'S ECHO**

R 1 *His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:5).*

R 2 On the path of each person, love cannot be lacking. God has created us for happiness, for the fulfilment of his creation. We are sure that in moments of

greater difficulty He gives us always the opportunity to return/get up, because his promises are not illusory.

Mary invites us to believe in Love. Her own journey of discipleship teaches us to see with the heart of God and points to us what is lacking in us to live full happiness. She is the model on whom we should look at always, certain also of her intercession.

ALL ***Mary, teach us to choose always the truth.***

<b>NINETH DAY – 7 September: <i>MARY, “EPIPHANY” OF GOD’S GLORY</i></b>
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R 1 *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).*

R 2 We believe we are self-sufficient, but we no longer have certainties, distracted by so many dazzling lights; well-being and an idealized image of ourselves blind us and distance us from those in solitude, in pain; individual and collective indifference project us into a world of functional relationships, not supported by universal values. In these situations, we are given a sign, a “right measure” to find the fullness of life in the gift of ourselves.

Mary, “icon of love” who receives and gives, “bright star” teaches us to choose bonds of justice, forgiveness, peace and mercy, to commit ourselves with constancy to offer an evangelical witness in our journey as believers.

ALL ***Mary, teach us to choose always the truth.***

**Sweet Child Mary,**

who, being destined to be the Mother of God,  
has also become our beloved Queen and Mother,  
for the numberless graces  
you have obtained for us,

**listen to my humble prayers.**

All my hope is upon you,  
in all the needs which surround me.

**O Holy Child,** by the merits and privileges  
which have only been given to you,  
be merciful to me.

Show that the source of the spiritual treasure  
you give out is inexhaustible.

For the profusion of graces  
Almighty God has given you,

**O heavenly Child, grant my prayer  
and I will praise your goodness forever. Amen.**