

MARY IN THE WORD OF GOD
A NOVENA IN PREPARATION FOR
THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR BLESSED MOTHER

Family Activity: Place a Bible on a table below the family altar throughout the novena. The Bible could be opened every day to the passage which is the main reading of the day. This passage (see “at a glance” below) could be read by a family member before the family rosary each day.

- Readings for each day are given – these are suggested readings and co-relate with the theme for each day
- Each day has a novena prayer – this Novena Prayer is to be prayed after the Post-Communion Prayer
- Prayers of the Faithful – are to be given to the Sunday School Class preparing the Novena for the day
- Daily Activity – to be carried out by the children & families

AT A GLANCE:

1 1. Themes for the Novena

Day One: Monday – The Annunciation (Lk 1: 26-38)

Day Two: Tuesday - The Visitation (Lk 1:39-45)

Day Three: Wednesday - The Magnificat (Lk 1:46-55)

Day Four: Thursday - The Presentation (Lk 2:22, 25-38)

Day Five: Friday - The Flight into Egypt (Mt 2:13-15)

Day Six: Saturday - The Finding of Jesus in the Temple (Lk 2:41-48)

Day Seven: Sunday - Mary at the Wedding in Cana (Days Readings)

Day Eight: Monday - Mary at the foot of the Cross of Jesus (Jn 19:25-27)

Day Nine: Tuesday - Mary at Pentecost (Acts 1:12-14, 2:1-4)

*Note: Children could act out the scene of each of the above events **before the start of Mass** in the form of a short skit/mime.

1 2. Ritual Activities for the Novena

These activities require prior preparation. Hence, the Sunday School team could inform the children of what needs to be done in advance.

Day One: A garland of flowers made out of coloured paper that may be lying around the house to be made in advance

Day Two: Identify a senior citizen in your building or from your SCC who is sick, or homebound or living alone. Pray for this person and send them a message comforting message

Day Three: Write a prayer/poem thanking God for all the blessings received

Day Four: Save up some pocket money to be contributed to the Church collection when churches open

Day Five: Each decade of the rosary to be offered for a specific group of people

Day Six: Read about some Marian Apparitions.

Day Seven: Make a special effort to do some extra house chores

Day Eight: During your personal prayer, look at the Crucifix and talk to Jesus on the Cross.

Day Nine: The Family can have a simple enthronement of the Bible by garlanding the bible or lighting candles around it and saying a prayer to thank God for His message which is found in the Bible.

DAY ONE: Monday, August 30

THE ANNUNCIATION

INTRODUCTION:

The Word of God found in the Bible is the primary source of our faith. It is held sacred because it is written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and has God as the author. The Word of God nourishes us through the Divine Message which it holds. Thus, we are called to experience the Word of God as a source of life, strengthening us as we are able to encounter the Lord in a more personal manner. Through prayer and meditation on the Word of God we communicate with our Creator – speaking to Him when we pray; hearing Him when we read the Divine words. (Dei Verbum 11; 25)

The Bible presents us with many models to emulate. The most favourite person and role model in scripture for many Catholics is our Blessed Mother. As members of the Christian family, we all have been given our dear Heavenly Mother whom we can always turn to. Mary encountered and experienced the Lord through her acceptance of the Word of God. She believed in the power of God's Word as we are told in the gospel according to St. Luke (1:45) – “Blessed is she who hoped that the Lord’s words to her would be fulfilled.

Mother Mary is blessed because she heard the Word of God, believed in it and lived her life according to His will. Who then could be a better model for us to follow than our dear Mother Mary?

During these nine days of preparation for her birthday, we will reflect on the role of Mary in the Gospels through various incidents in her life, and we will learn how the Word of God governed her entire life. We begin our journey with Mary in the bible where it all began – the Annunciation. (The skit showcasing the scene of the Annunciation is acted out followed by the entrance hymn).

Readings: 1Thes 4:13-18; Ps 96:1&3, 4-5, 11-13; Luke 1:26-38

Homily Hints: “I am the Lord’s servant. May it happen to me as you have said.” Mary was a simple, ordinary girl like any of us. And so, she was afraid when the angel told her that God would bless her with a child. She was troubled; she would have had many doubts and questions – what would her parents say? How would Joseph react? What would happen to her future? How would she face society?

Certainly, Mary was disturbed and afraid, but Mary had the confidence of approaching God with her doubt. She asks, “but how can this be since I am a virgin?” She made her decision supported only by God’s promise. It was a challenging task and she was free to refuse. Yet Mary said, “yes” to be the mother of Jesus. Her “yes” makes her the first disciple, to be nearest and closest to Jesus.

What do we do when God speaks to us through our parents, friends and teacher? Do we always do what God asks us to do or do we find excuses? Do we worry too much when we have to make a decision especially when we have to choose between right and wrong? Like Mary, do we feel confident to take our worries to Jesus who is always waiting to help us? Let us too, imitate our Blessed Mother and say “let it be done to me according to your Word”

Prayer of the Faithful:

Cel: God’s word is a lamp for our steps and a light for our path. Let us place before Him our petitions then trusting in His word. Our response will be: **Lord hear our Prayer**

- 1 1. For our Holy Father, Bishops, Priests and Religious: that they may always guide and govern the Church based on the sound principles of faith found in God's word.....We pray to the Lord....
- 2 2. For each of us who have begun this novena: that we may find solace and strength in the message of the bible and thereby live our lives as children of God....we pray to the Lord.....
- 3 3. For our parish community: that even though we have been away from each other for a long time, our bonds of fellowship may always be rooted in the message of gospel.
- 4 4. For all those affected by the pandemic: that the Word of God may be a source of solace and consolation in difficult times....we pray to the Lord.....

Cel: Thank you loving Father for listening to our prayers. We are confident that you will grant them to us through the intercession of our Blessed Mother.

Novena Prayer (After the post-Communion prayer): Mamma Mary, we thank you for saying “yes” to be the mother of Jesus. Because of your “yes” Jesus entered this world. Teach us dear mother to say Yes to Jesus’ request to enter whole-heartedly into the life of our family, our school, our workplaces, our parish and country. May our yes bring about new sunshine in the lives of our parents, grandparents, siblings and especially the elderly, sick, and lonely in our neighbourhood and Parish.

Oh, Virgin Mary, our mother. We humbly beseech you to obtain for us strength and tenderness, knowledge of God’s Will for me, and the courage to accomplish it always. Mary my mother, today I want to pray especially for the grace of(mention your petition)..... Heavenly Mother, take my petition to the heart of your Son Jesus and pray that I may receive the grace necessary to live like your child. I make this prayer through you to your Son Jesus who lives and reigns with the Father and Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen. (One Our Father, 3 Hail Mary’s and Glory Be)

Ritual Activity: Children could make a garland of paper flowers and after the family Rosary, the child will place the garland on the bible which is placed in a prominent place in the house. Each member of the family will then show reverence to the Holy Bible through an appropriate gesture.

DAY TWO: Tuesday August, 31

THE VISITATION

INTRODUCTION:

We continue journeying with Mary in the Word of God with her visit to her cousin Elizabeth. (a skit enacting the scene of the Visitation is carried out followed by the entrance hymn)

Readings: 1 Thes 5; 1-6, 9-11 Ps 27: 1, 4, 13-14; Lk 1: 39 - 45

Homily Hints: “Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb”. These words which are repeatedly prayed were first said by Elizabeth to Mary. “Blessed” means ‘special’ and Mary indeed is most special of all of God’s earthly children. She was special to God because she had surrendered herself to God’s will totally. Mary did not sit back and wait for others to come to her knowing that she was to be the mother of Jesus. Her qualities of humility and being of service proves that she is extraordinary. Her encounter with God filled her with grace.

Do we also reach out in loving service to others in need? Or do we wait till someone asks us for help? Do we believe that God is with us and in us? Can we recognize God in those around us, especially the underprivileged? Can we respond to God’s call and reach out in loving service to others like Mary did?

Prayer of the Faithful:

Cel: As we bring before the Lord our petitions today, we pray especially for the grace of humility and service saying: **Gracious Father hear our prayer**

- 1 1. For the pope, bishops, priests and religious: that imitating the Blessed Virgin Mary, they may always be examples of humility and service for universal Church....let us pray.....
- 2 2. For those in positions of authority: may they realize that as leaders it is their responsibility to serve the people under their care....let us pray.....
- 3 3. For each of us: that we may put aside our pride and egos and practice humble service in the footsteps of our Blessed Mother
- 4 4. For all health care workers: that they may continue to find inspiration and strength to selflessly serve the sick and dying....let us pray.....

Cel: God our loving Father, in Mary you chose the best example of loving service and humility for us to follow. May we always do our best to imbibe these virtues. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Novena Prayer (after post-Communion prayer): Mary our Mother, teach us to be ever alert to the needs of our friends and family members. Help us to be of service to everyone around in our own small ways. Inspire us to be of service in little things so that this world may be a better place for all.

Oh, Virgin Mary, our mother. We humbly beseech you to obtain for us strength and tenderness, knowledge of God's Will for me, and the courage to accomplish it always. Mary my mother, today I want to pray especially for the grace of(mention your petition)..... Heavenly Mother, take my petition to the heart of your Son Jesus and pray that I may receive the grace necessary to live like your child. I make this prayer through you to your Son Jesus who lives and reigns with the Father and Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen. (One Our Father, 3 Hail Mary's and Glory Be)

Ritual Activity: Children are encouraged to prepare a note/SMS/WhatsApp message with a bible quotation, to be sent to a sick or homebound person in their vicinity.

DAY THREE: Wednesday September, 01

THE MAGNIFICAT

INTRODUCTION

Joy is expressed in many ways. Some like to sing when they are happy, while others may like to paint. Mary experienced immense joy at being chosen to be the mother of the Son of God. Let us join her as she sings this song of joy (a girl dressed up as Mary could be asked to sing the Magnificat)

Readings: Col 1:1-8 Ps 52:10, 11 Lk 1: 46-55

Homily Hints: "My soul glorifies the Lord.... because the Almighty has done great things for me." At this moment Mary may have felt so close to God and was so grateful for His presence in her life that she was inspired to sing the praises of God. In her humility she realizes that she is nobody, yet God has chosen her and filled her with His grace and holiness. She draws strength from God and this song of Joy – the Magnificat – is her response to God's saving action. Her heart is full of gratitude for God's mercy to the weak and oppressed.

How often do we praise and thank God for the many things He does for us? Do we thank God on a daily basis for the gift of life He blesses us with? Do we think of Him when things are going well in life, or only when we face problems and worries? The air we breathe, the food we eat, the homes that shelter us, the people we have in our life are all blessings and miracles from God. Are our hearts full of gratitude for these daily blessings?

Prayer of the Faithful:

Cel: As we continue to thank God for the gift of Mary as our Mother, we bring to him our prayers singing: **Lord listen to your children praying.**

- 1 1. For the Pope, Clergy and Religious: that they may always find joy in their vocation and exude that joy in their ministry...we pray...
- 2 2. For all of us: that even in the darkest of times we may, like Mary, be able to experience Your presence...we pray...
- 3 3. For all humanity: that we may make courageous choices for a simple and environmentally sustainable lifestyle...we pray...
- 4 4. For those who find it difficult to be happy: that Mary, who found joy even in the midst of hardships, may be for them an inspiration....we pray....

Cel: God our source of eternal joy, we thank you for listening to our prayers through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Novena Prayer: Mary our Mother, help us to always be grateful to God first of all for our lives and for every blessing we receive big or small. May we constantly praise God keeping in mind that it is only through His grace that we are blessed with everything and everyone around us.

Oh, Virgin Mary, our mother. We humbly beseech you to obtain for us strength and tenderness, knowledge of God's Will for me, and the courage to accomplish it always. Mary my mother, today I want to pray especially for the grace of(mention your petition)..... Heavenly Mother, take my petition to the heart of your Son Jesus and pray that I may receive the grace necessary to live like your child. I make this prayer through you to your Son Jesus who lives and reigns with the Father and Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen. (One Our Father, 3 Hail Mary's and Glory Be)

Ritual Activity: Write a prayer/poem thanking God for all the blessings received. Be as detailed and specific as possible. Make this your morning/night prayer every day.

DAY FOUR: September, 02

THE PRESENTATION OF OUR LORD

INTRODUCTION:

The practice of our faith often requires us to conduct certain ceremonies. During biblical times, one such ceremony the Jews had to follow was presenting the new born infant in the Temple. Let us join Mary and Joseph as they bring the baby Jesus to the Temple. (The scene of the Presentation is acted out with Mary, Joseph and Simeon after which the entrance hymn is sung)

Readings: Col 1:9-14 Ps 98:2-3ab, 3cd-4, 5-6 Lk 2:22, 25-38

Homily Hints: Mary and Joseph were law-abiding people. The Law of Moses required that the first-born male child should be presented to the Lord as a sign of thanksgiving. In obedience to the Law, Mary and Joseph bring Jesus to the Temple and offer him to God. Both Mary and Joseph were amazed at the things Simeon said. Mary was also saddened and confused when she heard Simeon say that a sword would pierce her heart. However, she kept these words in her heart and pondered on them.

Like Mary, we also often come across situations when we do not understand why we are asked to do certain things when we would rather do something else. For example, when we are asked to study instead of chatting with our friends or spending time on social media. How do we react in such situations? Do we grumble and sit disgruntled with our books and not really study? Or do we accept what our parents, teachers and other elders tell us willingly? What is our attitude to the law of the land? Do we look at laws and commandments as restrictions? Can we look at them as guidelines to be followed so that all can live in harmony?

Prayer of the Faithful

Cel: Let us now approach God with our prayers and petitions saying, **God of love, hear our prayer**

1 1. For our Pope, Bishops, Clergy and Religious: that they may persevere through their vocation to believe what they read in the Word of God, teach what they believe and practice what they teach... for this we pray...

2 2. For all Christian Parents: that like Mary and Joseph, they may set an example for their children and live as law abiding citizens of both church and country...we pray...

3 3. For all humans: that we may grow in respect for the law and in so doing play our part in creating a society of harmony

4 4. For all of Christians: that we may learn to read, reflect and live the Word of God in our daily lives...we pray...

Cel: Heavenly Father, we thank you for the scriptures which enlighten us about your law of love. Help us grow in that love through the intercession of our Blessed Mother and in the name of Jesus our Lord. Amen.

Novena Prayer: Mary our mother, help us to keep ourselves open to God's Word, to ponder and reflect on it like you did. Help us believe and trust in your son Jesus even when we are faced with doubt and are troubled.

Oh, Virgin Mary, our mother. We humbly beseech you to obtain for us strength and tenderness, knowledge of God's Will for me, and the courage to accomplish it always. Mary my mother, today I want to pray especially for the grace of ... (mention your petition)..... Heavenly Mother, take my petition to the heart of your Son Jesus and pray that I may receive the grace necessary to live like your child. I make this prayer through you to your Son Jesus who lives and reigns with the Father and Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen. (One Our Father, 3 Hail Mary's and Glory Be)

Ritual Activity: Begin to save up some pocket money to be contributed to the Church collection when churches open.

DAY FIVE: Friday September, 03

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

INTRODUCTION:

Though Jesus was the son of God, life for him and his parents was not easy. Let us look at one major dangerous situation in the life of Mary, Joseph and Jesus. (Enact the scene of the flight into Egypt followed by the entrance hymn)

Readings: Col 1:15-20; Ps 100:1-5; Mt 2:13-15

Homily Hints: Mary and Joseph had to flee along with Jesus in the middle of the night. There was no time for preparation, no time for packing their belongings, no time for good-byes. Neighbours, friends and relatives, all had to all be left behind. Egypt was a foreign land. Mary and Joseph had no friends or relatives there, neither did they know the duration of their stay in Egypt. They had to live amidst people of a different culture and different faith. Yet they stayed loyal to their faith and belief of the God whom they knew.

This scene from Mary's life calls us to reflect on how we react to trials and sufferings that come our way. Sometimes we are challenged to move out of our comfort and complacency in order to stand for what is right and just. In doing so we may be isolated and made fun of by others. What do we do then? How do we treat migrants, refugees and labourers?

Prayer of the Faithful:

Cel: God does make a way where there seems to be no way. With faith and confidence therefore, we come once again to place our petitions saying, **Father of all, hear our prayer**

1 1. For our Pope, Bishops, Priests and Clergy: that they may always stand for justice and the rights of those who are marginalized and discriminated against....we pray...

2 2. For Social workers: that they may continue to find the strength and inspiration to reach out

to the lost and the last of society...we pray....

3 3. For our SCCs: that we may become truly inclusive and embracing of people from all backgrounds, castes, creed and orientations...we pray...

4 4. For migrants and refugees: that they may find hope and courage and not despair in tough situations...we pray....

Cel: Give us O Lord the same strength which you blessed Mary with to face the trials and sufferings in our life. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Novena Prayer: Dearest Mother, you accepted every situation in your life with patience and silence. Give us also the grace to accept life's challenges. Be with us so that fright and worry may not get the better of us. Teach us to place all our trust and hope in Jesus trusting at all times in His ever-comforting Word.

Oh, Virgin Mary, our mother. We humbly beseech you to obtain for us strength and tenderness, knowledge of God's will for me, and the courage to accomplish it always. Mary my mother, today I want to pray especially for the grace of ... (mention your petition)..... Heavenly Mother, take my petition to the heart of your Son Jesus and pray that I may receive the grace necessary to live like your child. I make this prayer through you to your Son Jesus who lives and reigns with the Father and Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen. (One Our Father, 3 Hail Mary's and Glory Be)

Ritual Activity: Offer each decade of the family rosary for migrants, refugees, outcastes, women and children in distress, and the homeless.

DAY SIX: SATURDAY September, 4th FINDING OF JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever lost or misplaced something special? Imagine how Mary must have felt when she realised that Jesus was lost. (Scene of the finding in the temple is enacted followed by the entrance hymn)

Readings: Col 1: 21-23; Ps 54:3-4, 6, 8; Lk 2: 41-48

Homily Hints: When Jesus was twelve years old, he went with Mary and Joseph on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. It was there that Jesus was lost. For three days Mary and Joseph searched high and low for him. Was he hurt? Kidnapped? Had he eaten anything? In the midst of all these fears, they find Jesus sitting and having a discussion with the learned men and teachers of the Law. When she asks Jesus why he had separated and stayed back, Mary receives a reply which she quite does not understand; yet puzzled though she was, she accepts it as God's will. How often do things that happen in our lives puzzle us? We wonder why God allows such things to happen to us even though we have been faithful and regular in prayer, attended Mass etc. How do we respond in such situations? Do we blame God? Or do the trials of our life make our faith in God stronger?

Prayers of the Faithful:

Cel: Placing our faith in the promises of God we stand now and pray for the intentions of the church, the world and our personal petitions singing, **Hear us O Lord, Hear our prayer O Lord**

1 1. For the Pope, Bishops, Clergy and Religious: That even in the midst of counter-gospel messages, they may stand firm and lead the Church toward knowing God's plan of salvation for all... we pray...

2 2. For all Christians: That moments of suffering and doubt in faith, may not lead them to despair but purify and strengthen their faith in God...we pray...

3 3. For those seeking clarity in life: That by reflecting on the Word of God, they may be led to realise their calling and mission in life... we pray...

4 4. For all of us: That even in the darkest of storms we may not lose sight of Jesus and always live in the realization of His presence among us....we pray....

Cel: May your Word, O Lord, always be a guide to enlighten the darkest of moments when we feel lost and abandoned. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Novena Prayer: Mary our Mother, help us never to lose sight of Jesus, even though He may seem far away when we face problems and sometimes appear to be absent completely in our life. Help us remember He is always there guiding us and guarding us. May we seek him in our family and friends so that like you we may also experience the joy of meeting Him.

Oh, Virgin Mary, our mother. We humbly beseech you to obtain for us strength and tenderness, knowledge of God's Will for me, and the courage to accomplish it always. Mary my mother, today I want to pray especially for the grace of ... (mention your petition)..... Heavenly Mother, take my petition to the heart of your Son Jesus and pray that I may receive the grace necessary to live like your child. I make this prayer through you to your Son Jesus who lives and reigns with the Father and Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen. (One Our Father, 3 Hail Mary's and Glory Be)

Ritual Activity: Every member of the family could read about a different Marian Apparition and then share it during dinner or prayer time.

DAY SEVEN: SUNDAY September, 05 MARY AT THE WEDDING FEAST OF CANA.

INTRODUCTION:

The Bible tells us that Jesus performed His first miracle at the request of Mother Mary. Let us look at this most famous of scenes from which we have lots to learn. (The enactment of the miracle is followed by the entrance hymn)

Readings, & Liturgy of 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time

Homily Hints: "Do whatever he tells you" (Jn 2:10) With these words, Mary expresses her faith and trust in her Son's ability to help people who are in a difficult situation. Mary was and is always concerned about people who are in trouble. She was of the criticism the family would have to face if there was no wine for the guests at the wedding reception, and the embarrassment that the newlywed couple would face. Like our mothers on earth, Mary, our heavenly Mother is concerned about us. When we face difficulties, Mary knows and understands our problems. She prays with us and for us like any mother for her children and pointing to Jesus, she tells us "Do what he tells you". She knows what it means, because she always followed God's advice. If we listen to her advice and put our trust in Jesus, we are sure to receive a renewal of our life.

Prayers of the Faithful:

Cel: God our ever-loving Father provides for our every need. With this assurance we come before Him time and again with our prayers and petitions singing, **Hear us O Lord, Hear our prayer O Lord.**

1 1. For our Holy Father the Pope, Bishops, Clergy and Religious: that heeding the advice of our Blessed Mother and prompted by the Holy Spirit, they may always "do whatever" Jesus would want of them...we pray...

2 2. For couples especially in difficult Marriage situations: that like the couple at Cana, they may find solace and reconciliation in the intercession of our Blessed Mother...we pray...

3 3. For all our families: that like Mary, we too may be alert and sensitive to the needs of others... we pray...

4 4. For all Christians: that through our participation in the Sacraments we may experience a renewal of life...we pray....

Cel: Father God, we praise and bless you for all that you do and provide for us. We ask you to grant the petitions we have just made through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Novena Prayer: Mother Mary, teach us to listen to your advice at all times. Lead us to Jesus and teach us to understand that Jesus is always ready and willing to help us even though we may not immediately receive an answer to our problems. May we learn to trust in the plan God has for us.

Oh, Virgin Mary, our mother. We humbly beseech you to obtain for us strength and tenderness, knowledge of God's Will for me, and the courage to accomplish it always. Mary my mother, today I want to pray especially for the grace of ... (mention your petition) Heavenly Mother, take my petition to the heart of your Son Jesus and pray that I may receive the grace necessary to live like your child. I make this prayer through you to your Son Jesus who lives and reigns with the Father and Holy Spirit, God for ever Amen. (One Our Father, 3 Hail Mary's and Glory Be)

Ritual Activity: Be alert to the needs of your home and family and make an effort to do some chores at home every day.

DAY EIGHT: MONDAY, September, 06 MARY AT THE FOOT OF THE CROSS.

INTRODUCTION:

Mary was truly the first and best disciple of Jesus because she followed Him even when he went up on the cross. (Enact the scene of the dialogue between Jesus, Mary and the disciple. The entrance hymn follows)

Readings: Col 1:24 – 2:3; Ps 62:6-7, 9; Jn 19: 26-27

Homily Hints: Mary was the first and true disciple of Jesus. She walked with Jesus to Calvary and when Jesus was dying on the Cross, even when all his friends abandoned him, when everyone around the cross insulted Him, Mary stood by the cross. How much pain and sorrow she must have experienced! Yet, she stood there silently, showing no anger or hatred against anyone. She just believed in her Son. She had faith and trust in God's word that was promised to her at the time of the annunciation. Jesus too must have felt some consolation on seeing His mother standing by Him in the most painful moments of His life. He loved His mother and He loved all of us too, hence he gave us His mother to guide us and take us closer to Him. As she stood by Jesus, Mary will also stand by us, come what may. All we need to do is put our trust in God and cling to our Mother's loving hand as she leads us to Jesus.

Can we imitate our Mother Mary and stand by the innocent and those to whom injustice is done? Are we willing to correct our friends when they do something wrong or are we afraid that we may lose our friends if we do so? What kind of disciple of Jesus am I?

Prayer of the Faithful:

Cel: The scriptures tell us that our God is a God of justice who always stands by the innocent. Let us bring our petitions now to this just God who we believe in saying, **God of justice, hear our prayer.**

1 1. For the Pope, Bishops, Clergy and Religious: that following the footsteps of Mary they may ensure that the Church always stands by the innocent by speaking up against injustice... we pray...

2 2. For world leader: that they may use their power to bring about a just society...we pray...

3 3. For those who fight for justice: that they may draw strength and inspiration from Mary to continue their mission of bringing justice to those falsely implicated...we pray...

4 4. For ourselves: that we may never shy away from speaking for justice and standing by the innocent... we pray...

Cel: Heavenly Father, we make these prayers through the intercession of Mary in the name of Jesus Christ your Son our Lord. Amen.

Novena Prayer: Mother Mary, thank you for being our mother. Help us follow your example. Give us your strength and courage to stand up for what is right. Help us be a source of support to those unjustly criticized. Intercede for us that we may have the grace and courage to always speak the truth and thus be true witnesses of your Son Jesus.

Oh, Virgin Mary, our mother. We humbly beseech you to obtain for us strength and tenderness, knowledge of God's Will for me, and the courage to accomplish it always. Mary my mother, today I want to pray especially for the grace of ... (mention your petition) Heavenly Mother, take my petition to the heart of your Son Jesus and pray that I may receive the grace necessary to live like your child. I make this prayer through you to your Son Jesus who lives and reigns with the Father and Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen. (One Our Father, 3 Hail Mary's and Glory Be)

Ritual Activity: During your personal prayer time look at the crucifix and pray for those who are innocent and yet in prisons.

DAY NINE: TUESDAY September, 07

MARY WITH THE DISCIPLES AT PENTECOST

INTRODUCTION:

After the death of Jesus, Mary takes upon herself the role of being the comforter of the apostles. She becomes their mother joining them in prayer and through the event of Pentecost, she becomes the mother of the Church. (Enact the scene of Pentecost using sound effects of a strong breeze to indicate the descent of the Holy Spirit. The entrance hymn follows)

Readings: Acts 1:12-14, 2:1-4 Ps 145: 1-2, 8-11; Lk 6:12-19

Homily Hints: Mary's presence with the apostles gave them hope and courage. With her support, they persevered in prayer and awaited the coming of the Holy Spirit. Mary helped them continue putting their trust in Jesus and his words and teachings.

Mary is present with each one of us even today. She is constantly with us giving us hope and courage, guiding us in our journey as we experience a new Pentecost every day of our lives. The Holy Spirit speaks to us through our teachers, parents, and our neighbours. Are we open to the Words of the Holy Spirit? Do we allow the Spirit to guide us in our studies, our relationships? Do we seek the help of the Holy Spirit in making decisions in life?

Mary shared with the apostles the mission of Jesus; she calls us too to take part in Jesus' mission here on earth and thereby prove to be worthy disciples of Jesus. She is ready to guide; are we ready to follow in her footsteps which lead to Jesus.

Prayer of the Faithful:

Cel: The Spirit that came down on Mary and the apostles at Pentecost is the same Spirit that prompts us to call upon God our Father in prayer saying, **Lord hear our prayer.**

1 1. For the Pope, Bishops, Clergy and Religious: that the decisions they take to govern the flock entrusted to them may always be guided by the Motherly advice of Mary and inspired by the Holy Spirit... we pray...

2 2. For those in positions of authority: that they may always be open to the Spirit of God to direct and influence their decision making...we pray...

3 3. For all of us who have participated in this novena: that following the example of our Blessed Mother, we may always take recourse to and trust in the Word of God through the inspiration and grace of the Holy Spirit.

4 4. For our personal and community need: (mention specific needs of the parish community)... we pray...

Cel: Heavenly Father, you give us Mary as a model of true discipleship and a believer in the promises you make to us in the scriptures. May we, like her, always be able to stand firm on your word and live a life pleasing to you. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Novena Prayer: Mary our mother, you were a source of strength to the apostles. Be with us as we pray for a renewed Pentecost in our lives. May we experience the power of the Spirit in all our efforts, may we be ever willing to listen to the guidance of the Spirit and thus like the disciples spread the Word of God everywhere we go.

Oh, Virgin Mary, our mother. We humbly beseech you to obtain for us strength and tenderness, knowledge of God's Will for me, and the courage to accomplish it always. Mary my mother, today I want to pray especially for the grace of ... (mention your petition)..... Heavenly Mother, take my petition to the heart of your Son Jesus and pray that I may receive the grace necessary to live like your child. I make this prayer through you to your Son Jesus who lives and reigns with the Father and Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen. (One Our Father, 3 Hail Mary's and Glory Be)

Ritual Activity: The Family can have a simple enthronement of the Bible by garlanding the bible or lighting candles around it and saying a prayer thanking God for His Word found in the Bible which is truly in the words of Ps 119:105 - "a lamp for our feet and light for our path".

MARY – A RAY OF SUNSHINE FOR THE GIRL-CHILD!

Liturgy for feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Day of the Girl-child

Prior Arrangements

- Narrator for the Tableau
- A one act tableau of Mary and girl children. The girl children could be various Indian/international Girl achievers. Since the Olympics have recently concluded women athletes who have professed their faith in God could also be portrayed e.g. Mary Kom, Grace McCallum, Sydney McLaughlin, Hidilyn Diaz as they have openly professed their belief in Jesus or Mary. Material on this is available on the internet.

At the moment when Mary enters the tableau, the girl-children gather round her holding rays of sunshine (cut outs/strips of yellow or gold paper). Feel free to be creative

Tableau:

Narrator: We see that even today, girl children are sometimes left out of the protective circle of love, care, compassion and concern (girl children doing household chores). Mary's Son, Jesus, showed women and children special care concern and love. (Mary enters to centre-stage) Turning to Mary as their Ray of Sunshine (characters in the tableau move to the required formation with the rays of sunshine around Mary as she enters and then freeze) can really inspire girl-children to achieve the heights of success. Each of the Olympians or Girl-achievers introduces herself and speaks about her faith in God or Mary.

End the tableau with the following prayer:

Mamma Mary we thank you/for giving new meaning/ to the term 'girl-child'/ for being our ray of sunshine/ teach us dear mother/ to share your concern/for girl children/less fortunate than we are/help us reach out/in love/ as you did/ we ask you/ to help us grow/ by developing our talents/ and shaping us/ into young/ and confident children/less concerned about our outer appearances/ and more focussed on/ how we look deep inside. Mother Mary/ help us find ways/to reach out to girl-children/ who have no parents/ especially those/ on the streets of our city/in a special way/be a mother to them/ a ray of sunshine. / May Jesus your Son/who dwells in our hearts/ always be the centre of our lives/Direct all our thoughts and actions to become little rays of sunshine to others. Amen.

Entrance hymn.

Readings: Mi 5:2-5a OR Rom 8:28-30; Ps 13: 6-7a; Mt 1:1-16, 18-23

Prayers of the Faithful:

Cel: On this joyful day when we celebrate the birth of Mary, we remember that she ushered in a new era of change. Let us bring forward our prayers and petitions for girl-children everywhere and place them before God saying, **Through the intercession of Mary our Mother, Lord hear our prayer**

- 1 1. That the Pope, Bishops, Clergy and Religious may actively support and encourage the empowerment and protection of girl-children....we pray...
- 2 2. That in our country, age-old harmful attitudes and prejudices toward the girl-child may cease thus giving a new lease of equality in growth to girl-children... we pray...
- 3 3. That unfair gender practices such as female foeticide and infanticide, trafficking and dowry deaths may cease and those perpetrators be brought to justice... we pray....
- 4 4. That girls in our family and parish community do not ever have to experience discrimination of any type ... we pray...

Cel: Loving God, we ask you to accept these petitions we make through the intercession of Mary our Mother. Grant them to us so that your Kingdom of equality and justice may truly become a reality here on earth as is it is heaven. Amen.