

New Brighton, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2022

## Novena for the Immaculate Conception

### Mary, Mother of the Church

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

“Now there stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen.”<sup>1</sup>

“All these were persevering with one mind in prayer with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.”<sup>2</sup>

From the Calvary to the day of the first Pentecost, Mary was the privileged witness, silent and praying actress of the drama of the birth of the Church.

Seeing her Son giving his life, while she couldn't do anything else than suffering with him, but in silence, Mary suffered with her Son through her compassion. These terrible moments, when the sword of Sorrow pierced her heart for the fifth time, is to be compared to the pains of childbirth. Her heart was broken and bruised at the sight of her beloved, innocent but so generous and obedient son, giving his life for the redemption of our sins.

Her sufferings were her participation to the birth of the Holy Church, who was born from the Sacred Heart of Jesus, opened with the spur of the soldier. As she was there, standing in the foot of the Cross, she deserved that title of Mother of the Church.

She was also present at the moment the existence of the church was revealed to the whole world: on the day of Pentecost.

Like a mother of the Earth is contemplating her newly born baby, Mary was praying for the Church on that day. But her work for the church was only starting. Nowadays, 2000 years later, Mary is still protecting the Holy Church, praying for her, and for all the souls who compose her, for all of them to follow God's will.

As a mother, seeing a child, is wishing a best for him, Our Lady did the same with a greater supernatural view, for the whole lot of the children of God, those who already were and moreover, those to come, which partly means us.

These past days were only the beginning of the church. Mary had a major place and she still has it. Jesus is the head of the Church. The Apostles and their successors are his deputies. We, the faithful, are the members of the mystical body of Christ. Mary being the mother of Jesus not only according to the flesh, but also following her special spiritual vocation, Mary is the Mother of the Church, mother of this spiritual assembly of brothers and sisters, all gathered around Christ, their Redeemer.

She was the first to give agreement to God's will. Her fiat was the turning point of the story of humanity. God was expecting the free acceptance of his creature before starting the full realisation of His Incarnation. Through Her fiat, everything started. Here also, Mary has a place

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<sup>1</sup> John, XIX, 25

<sup>2</sup> Acts, I, 14

as a principle. She is truly the mother, and, being so closely united to the Heart of Jesus, both human and divine, she is also at the heart of the Church.

All the members of the church are one with Her because Jesus wants them to be one with Him. And Mary is so close to Jesus, that their hearts are like one. Therefore who is the united to Jesus, is to Mary.

This particular Union of the two hearts, the two names, is mentioned everywhere in the liturgy, the name of Mary being very often said the first after Jesus, being mentioned twice in the Canon of the Mass.

This sweet presence and presidency of Mary over the church is doubled with an unexpected role of defence of the church. We can say of our beloved mother what St Francis de Sales used to say about motherhood.

“Mark, say the ancients, mark what love, what care, and what jealousy a mother-hen has for her chickens (for our Saviour esteemed not this comparison unworthy of his Gospel). The hen is a very hen, that is, a creature without any courage or nobility, while she is not yet a mother, but with her mothership she puts on a lion's heart: ever the head up, the eyes on guard, and darting glances on every side, to espy the smallest appearance of danger to her little ones. There is no enemy at whose eyes she will not fly in defence of her dear brood, for which she has a continual solicitude, making her ever run about clucking and plaining. And if any of her chickens come to die, —what grief, what anger! This is the jealousy of parents for their children, of pastors for their flocks, of brothers for their brethren,”<sup>3</sup>

of Mary for the Church whom she is the Mother.

Saint Francis de Sales, with this sentence, made read this quotation from the Cantic of the Cantic: “Thou art beautiful, O my love, sweet and comely as Jerusalem: terrible as an army set in array.”<sup>4</sup>

Mary is terrible with evil. It can't stand Her! Her beauty, Her virtues, Her loving heart, Her sweet welcoming, Her majesty and Her power make the evil flee.

As She always did in the past, She will continue to protect the Church, with Her tender love, keeping safe these doors Hell can't prevail against.

She's both at the heart and the doors of the Church. She cares for her children inside, She invites the lost souls to come in, but She closes the gates to anyone who dares to intend to harm her children.

Mother of the Church, She wants to have us nearby Her, protected with her large coat, like a cape, coming down from her shoulders and covering us, providing us comfort, consolation, but sometimes also maternal correction.

Pray for us, holy Mother of God, holy Mother of the Church! Watch over us, guide our steps, our hearts, where yourself are, mother of the Saints in Heaven!

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

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<sup>3</sup> St Francis de Sales, Treatise of the Love of God, Book X, chp 14, Of the Zeal or jealousy which we have for Our Lord.

<sup>4</sup> Cant.,VI, 3