

New Brighton, 3rd December 2022

Novena for the Immaculate Conception

Mary, Mother most pure and most chaste

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

“Thy cheeks are beautiful as the turtledove's, thy neck as jewels.”¹

If the Holy Ghost, true author of the sacred text of the Bible, proclaims Mary as beautiful as the white and immaculate dove, it is because of her purity and chastity.

Woman was created pure by the Lord. Taken from the man, perfect in his friendship with God, the woman was also a perfect creature. But unfortunately, the original sin came, and all the beauty and purity became wasted and ruined.

Before the Redemption, this opportunity of purity was impossible. Anything coming down from Adam's race was marked with the stain of the sin.

But as the Lord in his creation can produce the whitest snowflake from the darkest cloud, He decided to start the mystery of the Incarnation with the purest of creatures.

Mary was created immaculate from Her conception. The original sin is always transmitted to us at the conception of our human being. But as the stain of this sin was about to contaminate this soul God predestinated to become His mother, His powerful arm protected Her and She was adorned of the grace we are celebrating throughout this novena.

Whiter than snow, illuminated by the sun, Mary reigns over us, and the white colour calls to our memory the holy thought of her purity. Mary is white and shining from the root of Her conception till Her coronation in glory. She's the reference for this colour, one of the three white entities from the dream of Saint John Bosco.

All the enemies of the Church could say whatever, the Immaculate Conception is answering to a deep desire of our broken nature, but still capable of God. The Immaculate Conception is giving us the perfect example of the perfection, of the unspoiled and unbroken creature.

Mary goes over the whiteness of the world. She attracts them. She inspires them. Our humanity is so poor; but what it would be if, above us, this white and shining star was not radiating?

This purity of Mary is not only a negation of all defects, imperfections, and sins. In Mary, purity means a perfect righteousness, which is unity and simplicity of her soul.

Our soul, still marked with the consequences of the original sin, is divided with the passions, torn with temptations of the devil. The original sin broke apart this unity of the original creation, which made the human soul with harmony, innocence and joy.

¹ Cant., I, 9

Being spared of this evil, Mary is all with God in Its simplicity. God's Charity is Her life. The soul who only belong to God is perfect. Purity lives in it, not as a cold virtue, but as a warm furnace of fire, the fire of the Love of God.

We often read that Mary is shining like the stars. But she is the Morning Star. Her whiteness, Her purity, is the cause, and also the result, of Her heart full of the love of God.

Like a star in the heavens is a warm globe of fire giving light all around, so is Mary with us. As our mother in heaven, she is showing us the way, giving us Her light and sharing with us Her charity, Her warmth, to guide us on our path to heaven.

On this way, one of the major difficulties we will encounter, is purity and chastity. More than ever today, this battle is everywhere, as the temptation can now be found anywhere. The devil put his whole strength to attack and lose more souls.

But here again, our beloved Mother is bending over us to protect us and guide us with the light of Her virtues. She also shows us the example of Her life of chastity. Of course, She was preserved from any sins, but She didn't neglect the three devices Jesus gave us to fight the evil: fasting, avoiding the occasions of sins, and prayer. All through she was especially protected. She practised these three penances to become the mother most chaste we invoke today.²

Through fasting, we may understand the general mortification Our Lady practised all along her life, especially the mortification of the tongue. As you probably notice, the Holy Gospel doesn't account many words of Our Lady. She's the silent presence all along, she doesn't speak much, She remains unnoticed. She's always here, following the steps of Her Son, but so discreetly that it seemed that the evangelist forgot to mention she was there. But that was the best way to pay homage to Our Lady and Her strong silent presence.³

She also avoided the occasions, showing us what to do with the temptation. In this battle, as used to say Saint Philip Neri, the victory belongs to the cowards, those who flee from the battlefield. And so did Our Lady. We just said the Evangelists doesn't mention Her much in the sacred text. But that's also because She wanted to remain unnoticed, as testifies Her visitation to Her cousin Elizabeth. "She went into the hill Country with haste"⁴, which means she went quickly through a hidden path out of the sight of men.⁵

And finally, the great way of prayer. Would it be even useful to affirm Our Lady prayed all along her life? She was keeping all the words, "pondering them in her heart."⁶ Her prayer was a continuous offering of Her life for the contemplation of the salvation of the world. If She wasn't saying much words, it was because all of them were already given to the Lord, the Only One who truly deserved Her unique attention and affection.⁷

In this difficult battle of purity and Chastity, Mary is truly our mother who is helping us to avoid the temptation, protecting and defending us against the traps of the devil, helping us to stand again if we unfortunately failed, being both a support and a comfort in this vale of tears⁸.

² Saint Alphonsus Liguori, *The Glory of Mary*, 4th part, the Virtues of Our Lady

³ *ibid*

⁴ Luke, I, 39

⁵ Saint Alphonsus Liguori, *The Glory of Mary*, 4th part, the Virtues of Our Lady

⁶ Luke, II, 19

⁷ Saint Alphonsus Liguori, *The Glory of Mary*, 4th part, the Virtues of Our Lady

⁸ *Salve Regina*

Like a mother would help her child to walk while he's doing his first steps, Our Lady is next to us, guiding our frail feet to not hurt any thorn or stone. She is also the model of perfection to follow and to praise.

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