

Novena to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart



30 May 2020
Feast of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart

MEMORARE TO
OUR LADY OF THE SACRED HEART

Remember, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart
The great things the Lord has done for you

He chose you to be His mother

He wanted you close to His cross

He gives you a share in His glory

He listens to your prayer

Offer Him our prayers of praise and thanksgiving

Present our petitions to Him

Let us live like you in the love of your Son

That His kingdom may come

Lead all people to the source of living water

That flows from His Heart

Spreading over the world

Hope and salvation

Justice and peace

See our trust in you

Answer our prayer

Show yourself always our mother

Amen



Day 1:

Remember, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, the great things the Lord has done for you...

Scripture: “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. Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the mighty one has done great things for me and holy is his name.” (Luke 1:46-49, NRSV)

Reflection:

Today, we begin this novena to Our Lady of the Sacred Heart using as a guide the *Memorare*. This prayer begins with an injunction to “Remember.” We are asking Mary, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, to remember the great things the Lord has done for her. In asking her to remember, we ourselves bring into our minds, not only the great things the Lord has done for her but also the great things the Lord has done for us, as individuals, as families, as communities, as Congregation, as Church, as creation. With her, we remember and we give thanks.

In the *Magnificat*, we hear a young Mary proclaim “*the mighty one has done great things for me and holy is his name.*” What great things was she talking about? We know that this young woman’s world was turned upside down when she received a very disturbing message from the angel. She had been told that she would become the mother of God’s Son! When she asked “how” it can be, she was not given a step by step explanation of the way it would happen. No! Instead, she was given the assurance of God’s love and protection – *the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the most high will overshadow you.* You will be filled with the Holy Spirit and, like a cloud by day, the power of God will be overshadowing you, protecting you, as you journey on. You will not be alone. With this assurance, the young woman said “*let it be done unto me as you have said.*” The Lord had

done great things for her – the Lord had filled her with his Spirit, the Lord had overshadowed her with his power!

How about you? What great things has the Lord done for you? In what ways have you experienced the Holy Spirit coming upon you and the power of the most high overshadowing you? As we begin this novena, recall your experiences of God’s love and protection. (Pause for some moments of reflection and, if desired, sharing in community.)

Prayer:

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, like you, our world has recently been turned upside down. What we first thought to be “just a flu” a few months ago has turned into a deadly pandemic that until now is still very much a mystery to us. Like you, many of us are afraid and confused...how can this be? When will this end? What will happen next? What will it be like the day after? Although the future was still unclear to you, although you still did not fully understand, you believed in the assurance of God’s love and protection. We come to you during this novena that we may have a share in your faith and in your courage.

Today, we pray for all the scientists working in different parts of the world to create a vaccine and/or a cure for covid-19. May they be guided by God’s wisdom and strengthened by God’s love. Remember.... (end with the Memorare)



Day 2:

He chose you for his mother; He wanted you close to his cross...

Scripture: *“Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and*



Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, here is your son.’ Then he said to the disciple, “Here is your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.” (John 19:25-27, NRSV)

Reflection:

Mary, the woman chosen to be the mother of Jesus, was one of the witnesses to her son’s violent death. In the gospel of John, we see her standing at the foot of his cross, on death watch, together with some of his friends. What pain does a mother suffer when her child dies before her? What does it mean for one to lose a beloved one to death? In this hour of pain, her son acknowledges her presence and speaks to her giving her a new mission, *“Woman, here is your son.”* From this day on, you will not only be a mother to me, you will be a mother to my beloved disciples. The same love you have for me, I now ask you to give to them. And to his beloved disciple, Jesus says, *“here is your mother.”* To you, my friends and disciples, I give my mother. Love her as I have loved her. Love one another as I have loved you. Receive my spirit!

In the recent months, our world has seen thousands of deaths. From covid-19 alone, as of early May, there were already more than 250,000 recorded deaths all over the world. We know that there are many other deaths that are unrecorded or not covid related. There are also many deaths, maybe even more, from wars and various acts of violence and injustice. Each person who has died is a beloved to another – a father,

a mother, a son, a daughter, a sister, a brother, a friend. Each person who has died is personally and intimately known and loved by God.

Like the little community of believing disciples gathered at the foot of the cross, we stand before suffering that is beyond our understanding. We have lost and are losing people beloved to us. Jesus says to us now “love one another as I have loved you.” Be a mother to each other, ready to give of yourself that others may have life. Treat one another like you would your own mother, with love, tenderness and respect.

Think of the thousands who have died recently. You may know some of them personally. Remember at least one person and remember the gift of that person’s life. (Pause for some moments of personal reflection and, if desired, sharing in community.)

Prayer:

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, our Mother, you know the pain of losing one beloved to you. We remember the many who have gone before us, particularly those who have fallen victim to the pandemic. We remember the loved ones they left behind who did not have the opportunity to care for their sick and to gather in order to mourn their dead. When your son was crucified, you were there, standing at the foot of his cross. We come to you during this novena that we may have a share in your strength and enduring love.

Today we pray for all those who have died because of or during this pandemic. May they rest in the peace of God’s embrace. We also pray for the people who loved them. May they find consolation in their grief. Remember.... (end with the Memorare)



Day 3:

He gives you a share in his glory, He listens to your prayer...



Scripture:

“When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, ‘They have no wine.’ And Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come.’ His mother said to the servants, ‘Do whatever he tells you.’ Now standing there were six stone water jars... Jesus said to them, ‘Fill the jars with water.’...When the steward tasted the water that had become wine...the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, ‘Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine... But you have kept the good wine until now.’ Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory...” (John 2: 1-11, NRSV)

Reflection:

In the Cana story, we meet the mother of Jesus, a middle aged woman with an adult son. We see her as a woman who is sensitive to the needs of others. Having seen an urgent need, she acts on it and points it out to Jesus, *“they have no wine,”* making an implied request for Jesus to do something about the situation. She responds to Jesus’ initial refusal with courage, perseverance and firmness, *“do whatever he tells you.”* At the end, Jesus turns water into wine and reveals his glory. Jesus gives his mother a share in his glory and listens to her prayer.

The corona virus pandemic has revealed to us many situations of grave need, many situations of inequality, many instances of injustice and suffering. Mary’s implied request *“they have no wine”* is heard in many of our streets. With the absence of a vaccine or a cure, most nations in the world had no choice but to lockdown cities and towns in order to contain the virus and stop its spread. The lockdowns meant that millions of people lost their jobs and sources of income. Millions experienced hunger and extreme poverty. In some countries, the heavy

handed implementation of the lockdown measures also meant that many of the poor became victims of violence as they searched for ways to get food for their families. Before these situations of great need, we hear Mary say to us “*do whatever he tells you.*”

In the context of this pandemic, what needs do you see around you? What different forms of suffering do you perceive? Respecting the limitations imposed on us by this situation, how are you being called to respond to these needs and situations of suffering? (Pause for some moments of personal reflection and, if desired, sharing in community.)

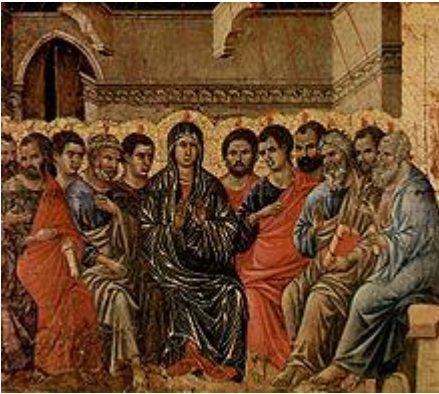
Prayer:

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, we hear you say to us “*they have no wine.*” Thank you for telling us to open our eyes, our minds and our hearts to our neighbours and their needs. Thank you for making us more aware of the resources that we have at our disposal. As you exhort us to do what Jesus tells us, pray for us, that we may be gifted with creativity as we find ways to respond to the needs of others and the call of Jesus to love. We come to you during this novena that we may have a share in your sensitivity and active concern for those in need.

Today we pray for all those suffering from the containment measures being implemented in the different countries of the world. Although not infected by the virus itself, they too are victims of this pandemic. We pray for the poor, the hungry, the unemployed. We also pray for the lonely, the locked down, victims of domestic and all kinds of violence. Remember...

(end with the Memorare)





Day 4:
Offer Him our prayers of praise and thanksgiving; present our petitions to Him...

Scripture: “When they had entered the city they went to the room upstairs where they were staying, Peter and John, and James, and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Mathew, James son of Alpheus, and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. All these were constantly devoting themselves to prayer, together with certain women, including Mary, the mother of Jesus, as well as his brothers.” (Acts 1:13-14)

Reflection:

After Jesus’s death and resurrection, Mary became a member of the first Christian community, a disciple in a community of believing disciples. In the first chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we see her in this community as they gathered together in prayer. It was the early days and they were being persecuted by the Jews. Many of the members of this community would eventually be martyred. To live and proclaim their belief in the Risen Christ was a dangerous thing to do. They were afraid and so regularly they gathered in the upper room to pray. They show us the value of community and the strength of a people who are united as one body.

Now, more than ever, we experience the truth that we are one human family. How many times have we heard it said “we are in this together” and that “our lives are in each other’s hands”? More than three million people all over the world have already been infected by this virus and even as we pray many more are catching it. More than one million have already recovered and for this, we offer prayers of praise and thanksgiving. Majority of the people infected are experiencing mild symptoms and are recovering in their homes. But still many are in hospitals and in intensive care units, not knowing

whether they will survive or not. Our whole human family is being called to act in solidarity in order to protect and save the lives of the most vulnerable members of our communities. We cannot allow this virus to just spread and let the strongest survive. No, we are one human family where the stronger ones are called to make sacrifices in order to protect the weaker ones.

Is there someone you personally know who have tested positive for covid 19 and has not yet recovered? Do you know anyone who is in intensive care and fighting for her/his life? In what way are you being invited to be in solidarity with these people as this time? (Pause for some moments of personal reflection and, if desired, sharing in community.)

Prayer:

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, our model of discipleship, your presence in the upper room as a member of the first Christian community encourages us. This pandemic has made it very clear that we need to work together as one human family to defeat this virus. No one individual, not even one country, no matter how rich and powerful it is, can do it on its own. Solidarity and cooperation is what is necessary. Now is a time when we are called to be constantly aware of our responsibility to protect the vulnerable members of society. We come to you during this novena that we may have a share in your strong sense of oneness with others.

Today we pray for all those who are infected with the corona virus – those in hospitals and intensive care units, that they may experience God’s healing touch; those recovering at home, that they may be gifted with complete healing; and those who are asymptomatic, that they may practice prudence in their dealings so as not to pass on the virus to others. Remember... (end with the Memorare)



Day 5:

Let us live like you in the love of your Son that his kingdom may come...



Scripture: “Then his mother and his brothers came; and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him and they said to him, ‘Your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside asking for you.’ And he replied, ‘Who are my mother and my brothers?’ And looking at those who sat around him, he said, ‘Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother.’” (Mark 3:31-35, NRSV)

Reflection:

In this gospel scene, we meet Mary as the concerned mother of Jesus. People have been saying that Jesus is out of his mind. His family knows that there are people who are not pleased with his preaching and who want to silence him. As he comes back to their village, his concerned mother takes the opportunity to bring him home, for his safety and protection. In doing this, she risks shame and rejection, from neighbours, from authorities, even from her own son. But she does it anyway, her son is in danger, she will do what she can to protect him. We pray that we may live like Mary in the love of her son. Like her, we pray that we may learn to forget ourselves and do what we can in order to protect the ones we love.

This pandemic has shown us people who love like Mary did, people risking their own lives in order to save others; men and women who do the will of our God who is love. They are our modern day heroes, the front liners in this “war” that we are currently fighting – our health workers, doctors, nurses, carers in nursing homes, all the staff working in hospitals, clinics, testing and quarantine canters. Outside the health care setting, there are also many people who are not able to stay home

in order to keep the society running – workers in supermarkets, pharmacies and other essential services, cleaners of public spaces, security personnel and others who maintain peace and order. They too are directly exposed to the virus and many of them do not have the necessary protective equipment. We also know of thousands of volunteers, religious men and women, priests who are responding not only to the material but also to the psychological, emotional and spiritual needs of people in this time of pandemic. In the loving service that they show, we see God’s kingdom of love incarnated in our midst.

Remember at least one particular person or group of persons who are “front liners.” Picture them in your mind - where are they, what are they doing, how are they? How are you called to support this person or group of persons at this time? (Pause for some time of personal reflection and, if desired, sharing in community.)

Prayer:

Mary, love unites you to your Son, your love for him and his love for you. It is because of this love that we call you “Our Lady of the Sacred Heart.” Like you, may we be people who do the will of our God who is love. May we not be blind to the one who needs our compassion most, whether this person is a neighbour or an enemy. May we not be stingy in the help and service that we provide. May we not give up on our loving when we encounter obstacles on our way. Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, we come to you during this novena that we may have a share in your persevering and concrete care for others.

Today we pray for all “front liners” in the health care field as well as in essential community services. We thank them for their heroic care and beg the Lord to protect and sustain them in these difficult times.

Remember ... (end with the Memorare)



Day 6:

Lead all people to the source of living water that flows from his Heart...

Scripture: *“But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once blood and water came out. He who saw this has testified so that you also may believe. His testimony is true and he knows that he tells the truth. These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, ‘None of his bones shall be broken.’ And again another passage of scripture says, ‘They will look on the one whom they have pierced.’” (John 19:33-37, NRSV)*



Reflection:

The biblical image of Our Lady of the Sacred Heart is Mary, standing at the foot of the cross, looking on Him whom they have pierced. It is Mary contemplating Jesus, the Sacred Heart. Our founder Fr Jules Chevalier writes “from the adorable Heart, torn by the lance from which life had gone, another life appeared to us...and from the Heart of the Incarnate Word pierced on Calvary, I see a new world emerging, the world of those he has chosen” (SC, p145, from *Daily Readings*, July 6). Mary, Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, invites us to stand with her at the foot of the cross and be part of the new world, the new community, born from the open Heart of Christ.

Today, we are collectively experiencing grief that comes with the death of loved ones. We feel anxiety and fear in the face of uncertainty. As part of the social distancing measures to contain the virus, neither are we permitted to physically gather as Church, as people of God. Liturgical and sacramental celebrations, even funerals, have been prohibited since early March in many places. For the first time in our lifetime for most of us, we celebrated Holy Week and Easter in our homes. As Church, we are the body of Christ and as we experience this body being pierced anew, we see a new world

emerging. In the midst of this pandemic, spirituality is deepening. For many, there is a more profound sense of being Church, of being one pilgrim people of God, of being truly brothers and sisters in Christ. With the closing of our churches, we have seen our homes becoming places of prayer and encounter with God and with one another. With the impossibility of touching physically, we have found creative ways of connecting and being in solidarity. Through this pandemic, many of us have found ourselves drinking the living water that flows from his Heart.

What has happened with your relationship with God during this time of lockdown or community quarantine? How is your life of prayer? How are your relationships with others, those near and those far? (Pause for some moments of personal reflection and, if desired, sharing in community)

Prayer:

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, hold us close to you as we stand with you at the foot of the cross. We pray for a deepening of our relationship with you and with your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ. May the obstacles that are currently being imposed on us truly become means enabling us to grow more profoundly as disciples of Jesus and missionaries of his love. We come to you during this novena that we may have a share in your fidelity to Christ.

Today we pray for all the faithful who are unable to physically gather as one people of God, to worship together, pray together, break bread together. May this time of lockdown deepen their relationship with God and with one another. Remember... (end with the Memorare)





Day 7:
*Spreading over the world,
hope and salvation, justice
and peace...*

Scripture: *“When the day
of Pentecost had come,
they were all together in
one place. And suddenly*

from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.” (Acts 2:1-4, NRSV)

Reflection:

On the day of Pentecost, Mary is in the upper room with the disciples of Jesus. They were gathered in prayer when the Spirit came upon them, filling them with courage, wisdom and power. Filled with the Spirit, they went out to preach with both their words and their lives that God’s love is alive, that Christ has truly risen! By the power of that same Spirit, their message has echoed all over the world and through all generations. Today, the same Spirit is empowering men and women of our time to continue the work of evangelisation. Through their living and their preaching, they spread hope and salvation, justice and peace in our broken wounded world.

We, people who share in the charism given to Fr Jules Chevalier, MSC, are called to be spirit-filled men and women who proclaim with our lives that God is love. We have experienced this compassionate love of God ourselves and we cannot but share it with others. Today, as the corona virus spreads to people all over the world, our call to spread the love of God has become even more urgent. Let us be bearers of peace and givers of joy. Where there is despair, let us spread hope. Where there is anxiety and fear, let us spread trust in God’s saving love. Where there is injustice, let us fight for what is right. On

our own, we are nothing but with God's Spirit empowering us, nothing is impossible.

How are you called to spread over the post-covid world hope and salvation, justice and peace? In this new world that is emerging before our very eyes, what does it mean to be a missionary of the compassionate love of Jesus? To whom are you being sent at this time? (Pause for some moments of personal reflection and, if desired, sharing in community.)

Prayer:

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, you are a spirit-filled woman. Together with the early disciples of Jesus, you went out to share with the people of your place and time God's redeeming love revealed in the risen Christ. Like you, we feel called to be missionaries of the love of Jesus, here and now. Intercede for us that we may open ourselves to the power of the Holy Spirit and become carriers of hope, salvation, justice, peace and love. We come to you during this novena that we may have a share in your docility and openness to the Spirit.

Today, we pray for the leaders in our society – presidents and prime ministers, governors and mayors, leaders of civic organizations, religious institutes and churches – leaders who are making the necessary and difficult decisions for our societies at this time of the pandemic. We also pray for the various experts who advise them. In their decision making, may they be guided by God's Spirit. May they uphold the values of love, justice and concern for the common good. Remember... (end with the Memorare)





Day 8:

See our trust in you, answer our prayers...

Scripture: *“But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.” (Luke 2:19, NRSV)*

Reflection:

The evangelist Luke presents Mary to us as the model believer, one who treasures things in her heart and acts on God’s word. Like most of us, many times she did not understand what was happening. Scripture shows her amazed, confused and even anxious. After the birth of her son and the shepherds came telling them about their vision of angels, *“all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds told them, but Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.”* When the boy Jesus was left in the temple in Jerusalem and after three days of searching for him, Mary said *“Child, why have you treated us like this? Look, your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.”* Jesus replied, *“but they did not understand what he said to them...His mother treasured all these things in her heart.”* Like good soil, Mary accepts the seed of God’s word that comes to her through various life experiences, she ponders this in her heart, and the seed grows and bears much fruit.

Many of us are now slowly going back or preparing to go back to normality of living. After many days, even months, of lockdown, many are now finally seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. The time of the pandemic is far from over, we all know this. But the time of the strict lockdowns are now coming to an end. We are now beginning to re-engage with each other and reconnect physically. This pandemic has brought with it many lessons which we are enjoined to treasure in our hearts. The lessons are not apparent, they are hidden behind experiences of pain and suffering, but they are lessons that humanity

needs to learn and never forget: lessons of unity and solidarity; lessons of care for the weak and vulnerable; lessons of respect for nature and all of creation...

What lessons have you learned from the corona virus pandemic? How have these lessons come to you? What are the implications of these lessons to the way you live your life, the way you relate with others, and the way you fulfil your mission? (Pause for some moments of personal reflection, and, if desired, sharing in community.)

Prayer:

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, model believer, how many times in your life have you come across situations that were difficult to make sense of and accept? Thank you for showing us a wise way of dealing with such situations – the way of pondering. See our trust in you and in your example. Pray for us that that we may be able to follow you. This pandemic has, on the one hand, exposed us to so much uncertainty, but on the other hand, has also given many of us much time to stop and to ponder. May the lessons of this time not pass us by and may they bring about real and permanent change in our lives, in our relationships, in our world. We come to you during this novena that we may have a share in your contemplative stance towards life.

Today we pray for all of us, in whatever stage of the pandemic and containment measures we may find ourselves in. As many slowly move out of strict lockdown measures, may we exercise care and prudence so that we can avoid the return of the pandemic. We pray especially for those who are vulnerable and at risk, the elderly and those with weak immune systems, may we all be united in protecting them. Remember.... (end with the Memorare)





Day 9:

Show yourself always our mother.

Scripture: *“On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage.” (Matthew 2:11, NRSV)*

Reflection:

It is the last day of our novena, the end of our 9-day journey with Our Lady of the Sacred Heart. At this point, we join the magi as they knelt down and paid homage before the child and his mother. We began this novena remembering, we now end it in thanksgiving. We thank Our Lady for being always a mother to us, accompanying us every step of the journey, modelling for us the way of discipleship. We thank her for bringing us to her Son Jesus, telling us to do whatever He tells us, inviting us to stand with her at the foot of His cross. With her, we thank Jesus, for loving us and for sharing with us his mission of loving. Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, to you we offer our prayers of praise and thanksgiving.

Of the more than three million people who have been infected with the corona virus all over the world, more than one million people have now recovered. Those who have recovered are said to have developed some kind of immunity to the virus. Although we do not know yet how strong this immunity is and how long it will last, this gives us hope. Scientists are trying different kinds of treatments and a few success stories are being shared. Some persons who have recovered from the virus are donating their blood to help cure others who are still infected. In many countries, there are now more recoveries than new infections per day. We are also seeing the decrease of the number of people dying. The famous curve that everyone is talking about is now showing a downward trend, worldwide. As the work for developing a vaccine continues, scientists have no difficulty looking for volunteers on whom possible vaccines can be tested. Many are going out of themselves to help others. The lockdown measures have also given our common home, the earth, a much needed rest. Birds are singing more

freely nowadays. Air and noise pollution have gone down in some of the major cities of the world. It is true, good things can come out even from the most devastating of situations. After death, resurrection comes!

As we come to the end of this novena, what are you grateful for? Spend some time of silence to allow images, persons, situations, to come to your minds and fill your hearts with gratitude. After some moments of silence, share your prayers of thanksgiving.

Prayer:

Our Lady of the Sacred Heart, we thank you for showing yourself always to us as our mother. Thank you for leading us to your Son. Thank you for taking us to His Heart. Thank you for bringing our petitions to him. Now, stay with us as we offer him our prayers of praise and thanksgiving. With you we proclaim “My soul glorifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my saviour.” We came to you during this novena and we will continue coming to you that we may have a share in your joy that comes from a heart that is grateful.

Today we pray in thanksgiving for all people who have recovered from the virus. May their healing bring them to an experience of God’s love and empower them to share that love and healing with others. We thank the Lord for the fruits of the different measures implemented to deal with this pandemic. Bless our efforts Lord that they may continue to bring about the healing of our human family. Remember.... (end with the Memorare)

