

DAY ONE – 7th August

O God, come to our aid.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Ant: *God was her help at the dawning of the day.*

Psalm 127(128) 1, 10-18

My heart overflows with noble words.
To the king I address the song I have made,
my tongue as nimble as the pen of a scribe.
The daughters of kings are those whom you favour.
On your right stands the queen in gold of Ophir.
Listen, O daughter; pay heed and give ear:
forget your own people and your father's house.
So will the king desire your beauty.
He is your LORD, pay homage to him.
And the daughter of Tyre shall come with gifts;
the richest of the people shall seek your favor.
The daughter of the king is clothed with splendor;
her robes are threaded with gold.
In fine clothing she is led to the king;
behind her are her maiden companions, brought to you.
They are escorted amid gladness and joy;
they pass within the palace of the king.
Sons will be yours to succeed your fathers;
you will make them rulers over all the earth.
I will make your name forever remembered.
Thus the peoples will praise you from age to age.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Ant: *God was her help at the dawning of the day.*

HOLY AND BLAMELESS

Let us contemplate the humble young girl of Nazareth, *holy and blameless before God in love* (cf. Eph 1: 4), in that 'love' whose original source is *God himself, one and triune*

In Mary's Immaculate Conception the Church sees projected and anticipated in her most noble member, the saving grace of Easter. In the event of the Incarnation the Church encounters Christ and Mary indissolubly united: 'he who is the Church's Lord and Head and she who, uttering the first fiat of the New Covenant, prefigures the Church's condition as spouse and mother' (*Redemptoris Mater, n. 1*).

To you, Virgin Immaculate, predestined by God above every other creature to be the advocate of grace and model of holiness for his people, today in a special way I renew the entrustment of the whole Church.

May you guide your children on their pilgrimage of faith, making them ever more obedient and faithful to the Word of God. May you accompany every Christian on the path of conversion and holiness, in the fight against sin and in the search for true beauty that is always an impression and a reflection of divine Beauty. May you obtain peace and salvation for all the peoples. May the eternal Father, who desired you to be the immaculate Mother of the Redeemer, also renew in our time through you, the miracles of his merciful love. Amen!

St John Paul II (1920-2005), Immaculate Conception, 2004

Hail Mary...

NOVENA PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF THE ASSUMPTION

Immaculate Virgin, Mother of Jesus and our Mother,
we believe in your triumphant Assumption into heaven
where the angels and saints acclaim you
as Queen of Heaven and earth.

We join them in praising you
and bless the Lord who raised you above all creatures.
With them we honour you.

We are confident that you watch over our daily lives
and we ask that you intercede for us now.

(Mention your request)

We are comforted by our faith in the coming Resurrection
and we look to you for prayers and comfort.

After this earthly life, show us Jesus,
the blessed fruit of your womb,
O kind, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

O Queen Assumed into Heaven, pray for us. **Amen.**

DAY TWO – 8th August

O God, come to our aid.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Ant: I am the servant of the Lord; let it be as you have said.

Psalm 126(127)

Alleluia!
Praise, O servants of the LORD,
praise the name of the LORD!
May the name of the LORD be blest
both now and forevermore!
From the rising of the sun to its setting,
praised be the name of the LORD!
High above all nations is the LORD,
above the heavens his glory.
Who is like the LORD, our God,
who dwells on high,
who lowers himself to look down
upon heaven and earth?
From the dust he lifts up the lowly,
from the ash heap he raises the poor,
to set them in the company of princes,
yes, with the princes of his people.
To the childless wife he gives a home
as a joyful mother of children.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Ant: I am the servant of the Lord; let it be as you have said.

LET US COME TO HIS MOTHER

Let us come to his bride, let us come to his mother, let us come to the best of his handmaidens. All of these descriptions fit Blessed Mary.

She is our mother, mother of our life, of our incorruption, of our light. The Apostle says of our Lord, ‘Whom God made our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification and

redemption.' She therefore who is the mother of Christ is the mother of our wisdom, mother of our righteousness, mother of our sanctification, mother of our redemption. Therefore she is more our mother than the mother of our flesh. Better therefore is our birth which we derive from Mary, for from her is our holiness, our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification, our redemption.

Scripture says, 'Praise the Lord in his saints.' If our Lord is to be praised in those saints through whom he performs mighty works and miracles, how much more should he be praised in her in whom he fashioned himself, he who is wonderful beyond all wonder.

St Aelred of Rievaulx (1110-67)

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DAY THREE – 9th August

O God, come to our aid.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Ant: Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart.

Psalm 121(122)

I rejoiced when they said to me,
'Let us go to the house of the LORD.'
And now our feet are standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem.
Jerusalem is built as a city
bonded as one together.
It is there that the tribes go up,
the tribes of the LORD.
For Israel's witness it is
to praise the name of the LORD.
There were set the thrones for judgment,
the thrones of the house of David.
For the peace of Jerusalem pray,
'May they prosper, those who love you.'
May peace abide in your walls,
and security be in your towers.
For the sake of my family and friends,
let me say, 'Peace upon you.'
For the sake of the house of the LORD, our God,
I will seek good things for you.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Ant: Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart.

CANDLEMAS

The most chaste Virgin Mother of God bore in her arms the true light and came to the help of those who were lying in darkness. In the same way we must hurry out to meet him who is truly light, enlightened by the beams of his brightness and bearing in our hands the light which shines for all men.

We have embraced Christ in faith as he came to us from Bethlehem, and have been made the people of God instead of Gentiles, for he is the salvation given us by our God and Father. We have seen God made flesh with our very eyes and we are called the New Isarel now that we have seen the visible presence of God and have cradled him in our minds. That presence we celebrate with a yearly festival: we shall never forget it.

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DAY FOUR – 10th August

O God, come to our aid.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Ant: Let us adore the Saviour, who gave his Mother a share in his passion.

Psalm 129(130)

Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD;
LORD, hear my voice!
O let your ears be attentive
to the sound of my pleadings.
If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities,
LORD, who could stand?
But with you is found forgiveness,
that you may be revered.
I long for you, O LORD,
my soul longs for his word.
My soul hopes in the LORD
more than watchmen for daybreak.
More than watchmen for daybreak,
let Israel hope for the LORD.
For with the LORD there is mercy,
in him is plentiful redemption.
It is he who will redeem Israel
from all its iniquities.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Ant: Let us adore the Saviour, who gave his Mother a share in his passion.

OUR LADY OF SORROWS

The martyrdom of the Virgin Mary, implicit in Simeon's prophecy, is put before us in the story of our Lord's Passion. Simeon said, 'this child is set for a sign that will be contradicted'; and, 'a sword will pierce your soul.'

Blessed Mother, a sword did pierce your soul. For no sword could penetrate your Son's flesh without piercing your soul. After your own son Jesus gave up his life—he was yours in a special sense though he belongs to us all—the cruel lance, which opened his side and would nor spare him in death though it could do him no injury. His soul was no longer there, but

yours could not be set free, and it was pierced by a sword of sorrow. We rightly speak of you as more than a martyr, for the anguish of mind you suffered exceeded all bodily pain.

Charity it was that moved our Lord to suffer death, charity greater than that of any man before or since: charity too moved Mary, the like of which no mother has ever known.

St Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153)

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DAY FIVE – 11th August

O God, come to our aid.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Ant: All men will be called her children : the Most High himself has established her.

Psalm 23(24)

The LORD's is the earth and its fullness,
the world, and those who dwell in it.
It is he who set it on the seas;
on the rivers he made it firm.
Who shall climb the mountain of the LORD?
Who shall stand in his holy place?
The clean of hands and pure of heart,
whose soul is not set on vain things,
who has not sworn deceitful words.
Blessings from the LORD shall he receive,
and right reward from the God who saves him.
Such are the people who seek him,
who seek the face of the God of Jacob.
O gates, lift high your heads;
grow higher, ancient doors.
Let him enter, the king of glory!
Who is this king of glory?
The LORD, the mighty, the valiant;
the LORD, the valiant in war.
O gates, lift high your heads;
grow higher, ancient doors.
Let him enter, the king of glory!
Who is this king of glory?
He, the LORD of hosts,
he is the king of glory.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Ant: All men will be called her children : the Most High himself has established her.

MOTHER OF THE MYSTICAL BODY

The direct meaning of Our Lord's two brief sentences— 'Woman, behold thy son': 'Behold thy mother'— was that He entrusted His Mother to His best-beloved disciple as a sacred charge. But, if we revert to the great principle of the Mystical Body of Christ and to our incorporation with Him, we see that we are driven to say much more! For in that Mystical Body, Mary, too, exists. And within it, she holds a position that is not ours and cannot be. She is the Mother of Christ. Therefore, she is Mother of the whole Christ, in whom are we, incorporate.

You cannot as it were detach and departmentalise Mary, and make her exclusively Mother of Christ in so far as He lived at Nazareth or sojourned in Palestine. She is, altogether and always, what at any time and in any way she was. Our Lord's last words on the Cross to her and to the disciple are, then, in the last resort, rather a declaration of what God's Plan about the Incarnation and the Church, which is its prolongation, involved, than the inauguration of a new relationship.

C. C. Martindale, S.J. (1879-1963)

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O kind, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

O Queen Assumed into Heaven, pray for us. **Amen.**

DAY SIX – 12th August

O God, come to our aid.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Ant: Through her word the Virgin conceived; she remained a virgin;
as a virgin she gave birth to the King of all kings.

Psalm 15(16)

Preserve me, O God, for in you I take refuge.
I say to the LORD, ‘You are my LORD.
My happiness lies in you alone.
As for the holy ones who dwell in the land,
they are noble, and in them is all my delight.
Those who choose other gods increase their sorrows.
I will not take part in their offerings of blood.
Nor will I take their names upon my lips.
O LORD, it is you who are my portion and cup;
you yourself who secure my lot.
Pleasant places are marked out for me:
a pleasing heritage indeed is mine!
I will bless the LORD who gives me counsel,
who even at night directs my heart.
I keep the LORD before me always;
with him at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
And so, my heart rejoices, my soul is glad;
even my flesh shall rest in hope.
For you will not abandon my soul to hell,
nor let your holy one see corruption.
You will show me the path of life,
the fullness of joy in your presence,
at your right hand, bliss forever.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Ant: Through her word the Virgin conceived; she remained a virgin;
as a virgin she gave birth to the King of all kings.

QUEEN OF MERCY, MOTHER OF GRACE

Mary is not only an example for the whole Church in the exercise of divine worship but is also, clearly, a teacher of the spiritual life for individual Christians. The faithful at a very

early date began to look to Mary and to imitate her in making their lives an act of worship of God and making their worship a commitment of their lives. As early as the fourth century, St. Ambrose, speaking to the people, expressed the hope that each of them would have the spirit of Mary in order to glory God. May the heart of Mary be in each Christian to proclaim the greatness of the Lord; may her spirit be in everyone to exult in God.

But Mary is above all the example of that worship that consists in making one's life an offering to God. This is an ancient and ever new doctrine that each individual can hear again by heeding the Church's teaching, but also by heeding the very voice of the Virgin as she, anticipating in herself the wonderful petition of the Lord's Prayer— 'Thy will be done' (Mt. 6:10)—replied to God's messenger: 'I am the handmaid of the Lord. Let what you have said be done to me' (Lk. 1:38).

And Mary's 'yes' is for all Christians a lesson and example of obedience to the will of the Father, which is the way and means of one's own sanctification.

Bl Paul VI (1897-78), Marialis Cultus, 1974

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(Mention your request)

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O Queen Assumed into Heaven, pray for us. **Amen.**

DAY SEVEN – 13th August

O God, come to our aid.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Ant: Hail Mary, full of grace: the Lord is with you.

Psalm 118(119):41-48

LORD, let your mercy come upon me,
the salvation you have promised.
I shall answer those who taunt me,
for I trust in your word.
Never take the word of truth from my mouth,
for I hope in your decrees.
I shall always keep your law,
forever and ever.
I shall walk on a spacious plain,
for I seek your precepts.
I will speak of your decrees before kings,
and not be abashed.
In your commands I have found my delight;
these I have loved.
I reach out to your commands, which I love,
and ponder your statutes.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Ant: Hail Mary, full of grace: the Lord is with you.

THE ROSARY AND THE MODERN MIND

The Rosary has been the favourite devotion of great saints, but it is also the natural refuge of the unspiritual. It has a valuable disciplinary effect upon the mind in so far as it induces those who use it conscientiously to spend a certain amount of time on their knees, and to make some effort, however feeble, at meditation.

The Church is, indeed, the natural home of those who pray with difficulty, for in her profound understanding of the human heart and human psychology the Church recognises and provide not only for those who are not naturally religious, but for periods of aridity which occur even in the lives of the most saintly. In these dull intervals the Catholic, as it has been so wisely said, is still guided by habits formed and deepened in the course of his Catholic life.

When the mind is barren and feeling is dead, mechanical prayer and religious practices are not so merely and utterly mechanical but that they are also exercises and acts of conscience and freewill—earnests of ‘the better’ we fain would offer it we could, in ‘the day of small

things' when the flax smoulders without flame and the bruised reed cannot lift itself upright. Catholicism refuses to despise the half because it is not the whole, or to confound little with nothing. In the bare-walled conventicles of pure reason, if the soul cannot do her best, she can do nothing. In a Catholic temple she can do her second best or her third. There are altars to visit, and candles to light, and beads to finger, and litanies to mutter, and the crucifixion to gaze on, and a hundred little occupations not less good because others are so much better...

Arnold Lunn (1888-1974)

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the blessed fruit of your womb,
O kind, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

O Queen Assumed into Heaven, pray for us. **Amen.**

DAY EIGHT – 14th August

O God, come to our aid.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Ant: Blessed are you, O Mary, because you put your trust in the Lord.

Psalm 62(63):1-9

O God, you are my God; at dawn I seek you;
for you my soul is thirsting.
For you my flesh is pining,
like a dry, weary land without water.
I have come before you in the sanctuary,
to behold your strength and your glory.
Your loving mercy is better than life;
my lips will speak your praise.
I will bless you all my life;
in your name I will lift up my hands.
My soul shall be filled as with a banquet;
with joyful lips, my mouth shall praise you.
When I remember you upon my bed,
I muse on you through the watches of the night.
For you have been my strength;
in the shadow of your wings I rejoice.
My soul clings fast to you;
your right hand upholds me.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

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VIRGO FIDELIS: ‘MOST FAITHFUL VIRGIN’

This is one of the titles of the Blessed Virgin, which is especially hers from the time of her Assumption and glorious Coronation at the right hand of her Divine Son. How it belongs to her will be plain by considering some of those other instances in which faithfulness is spoken of in Holy Scripture.

The word faithfulness means loyalty to a superior, or exactness in fulfilling an engagement. In the latter sense it is applied even to Almighty God Himself who, in His great love for us, has vouchsafed to limit His own power in action by His word of promise and His covenant with His creatures. He has given His word that, if we will take Him for our portion and put ourselves into His hands, He will guide us through all trials and temptations, and bring us safe to heaven. And to encourage and inspirit us, He reminds us, in various passages of Scripture that He is the faithful God, the faithful Creator.

And so, His true saints and servants have the special title of 'Faithful,' as being true to Him as He is to them; as being simply obedient to his will, zealous for His honour, observant of the sacred interests which He has committed to their keeping. Thus Abraham is called the Faithful; Moses is declared to be faithful in all his house; David, on this account, is called the 'man after God's own heart'; St. Paul returns thanks that 'God accounted him faithful'; and, at the last day, God will say to all those who have well employed their talents, 'Well done, good and faithful servant.'

Mary, in like manner, is pre-eminently faithful to her Lord and Son. Let no one for an instant suppose that she is not supremely zealous for His honour, or, as those who are not Catholics fancy, that to exalt her is to be unfaithful to Him. Her true servants are still more truly His. Well as she rewards her friends, she would deem him no friend, but a traitor, who preferred her to Him.

He is the Fount of grace, and all her gifts are from His goodness. O Mary, teach us ever to worship thy Son as the One Creator, and to be devout to thee as the most highly favoured of creatures.

Bl John Henry Newman (1801-90)

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DAY NINE – 15th August

O God, come to our aid.
O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Ant: The Lord chose her, he chose her before she was born. He has brought her to live in his own dwelling place.

Psalm 150

Alleluia!
Praise God in his holy place;
praise him in his mighty firmament.
Praise him for his powerful deeds;
praise him for his boundless grandeur.
O praise him with sound of trumpet;
praise him with lute and harp.
Praise him with timbrel and dance;
praise him with strings and pipes.
O praise him with resounding cymbals;
praise him with clashing of cymbals.
Let everything that breathes praise the LORD!
Alleluia!

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Ant: The Lord chose her, he chose her before she was born.
He has brought her to live in his own dwelling place.

‘HEAVEN HAS A HEART’

The Feast of the Assumption is a day of joy. God has won. Love has won. It has won life. Love has shown that it is stronger than death, that God possesses the true strength and that his strength is goodness and love. Mary was taken up body and soul into Heaven: there is even room in God for the body. Heaven is no longer a very remote sphere unknown to us.

We have a mother in Heaven. And the Mother of God, the Mother of the Son of God, is our Mother. He himself has said so. He made her our Mother when he said to the disciple and to all of us: ‘Behold, your Mother!’. We have a Mother in Heaven. Heaven is open, Heaven has a heart. Mary is taken up body and soul into the glory of Heaven, and with God and in God she is Queen of Heaven and earth. And is she really so remote from us?

The contrary is true. Precisely because she is with God and in God, she is very close to each one of us. While she lived on this earth she could only be close to a few people. Being in God, who is close to us, actually, ‘within’ all of us, Mary shares in this closeness of God. Being in God and with God, she is close to each one of us, knows our hearts, can hear our

prayers, can help us with her motherly kindness and has been given to us, as the Lord said, precisely as a ‘mother’ to whom we can turn at every moment.

She always listens to us, she is always close to us, and being Mother of the Son, participates in the power of the Son and in his goodness. We can always entrust the whole of our lives to this Mother, who is not far from any one of us. On this feast day, let us thank the Lord for the gift of the Mother, and let us pray to Mary to help us find the right path every day. Amen.

Pope Benedict XVI (1927-), Assumption 2005

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After this earthly life, show us Jesus,
the blessed fruit of your womb,
O kind, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary.

O Queen Assumed into Heaven, pray for us. **Amen.**