



IN DIALOGUE  
WITH THE  
LORD

IN **DIALOGO**  
CON IL  
**SIGNORE**



SALESIANS  
DON BOSCO

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A special word of thanks to Francisco Santos Montero who coordinated the whole work, and to Ian Figueiredo who took care of this UK English version.

## PRESENTATION

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My dear confreres,

GC27 requested an updating of the manual *In dialogue with the Lord* and other resources of prayer as an expression of our commitment to grow in the Salesian consecrated identity (GC27, 67.7).

In the revision of the text, I asked the redaction group to keep in mind three elements: the multicultural context of the Congregation; the new digital world; prayer with the young and with our lay mission partners.

Perhaps the group has succeeded in paying greater attention to the possibilities offered today by the digital world than to the other two elements. For this reason, apart from a text that could be printed by Provinces or regions, they have prepared a digital edition with several alternatives, available on the Congregation's website ([www.sdb.org](http://www.sdb.org)). A very handy app for Salesian prayer has also been designed (Salesians@prayer), which includes, among other things, the Salesian Proper, which of its nature calls for frequent updating to include every new beatification or canonization. The digital format best serves this need.

I hope that you will find these instruments useful for personal and community prayer and for moments shared with your young people and lay mission partners.

May Mary, mother and teacher, help us to grow in our dialogue with the Lord.

Affectionately in Don Bosco,

**Ángel Fernández Artime**

*Rector Major*

*Rome, Easter - 12 April 2020*

## **NOTE**

### **MODIFICATION OF ACT OF ENTRUSTMENT TO MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS**

Please take note of the modification of the act of entrustment to Mary, Help of Christians, that was introduced by Fr Egidio Viganò in AGC 309, replacing “foundress and support of our Congregation” with the more theologically exact “you inspired the foundation of our congregation and remain its support”.

## ABBREVIATIONS

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<i>AGC</i>	<i>Acts of the General Council</i>
<i>ASC</i>	<i>Acts of the Superior Council</i>
<i>BM</i>	<i>Biographical Memoirs</i>
<i>Const.</i>	<i>Salesian Constitutions</i>
<i>GC21</i>	<i>21st General Chapter of the Salesians of Don Bosco</i>
<i>LG</i>	<i>Dogmatic Constitution on the Church Lumen Gentium</i>
<i>Reg.</i>	<i>General Regulations</i>
<i>SC</i>	<i>Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy Sacrosanctum Concilium</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>Assembly</i>
<i>L</i>	<i>Prayer Leader</i>
<i>P</i>	<i>Presider / Priest</i>
<i>R</i>	<i>Reader</i>

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Scripture texts have been taken from the Jerusalem Bible.

Psalms have been taken from the Grail Psalter (1963).

The blessing of the Advent wreath (option 1) has been taken from the USCCB website <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacraments-and-sacramentals/sacramentals-blessings/objects/blessing-of-an-advent-wreath.cfm>

The blessing of the Advent wreath (option 2) is from ThisisChurch.com

The Christmas Novena in chant has been taken from <http://www.donboscowest.org/resources/novena-prayers>

The Via Lucis has been taken from <http://www.vialucis.org/index.php/en/>

We thank Mario Galizzi and Carlo Maria Zanotti for several prayers.

**1** DAILY RECURRENCES

**2** MONTHLY RECURRENCES

**3** ANNUAL RECURRENCES

**4** SPECIAL OCCASIONS

# PART ONE

# SALESIAN PRAYERS



**1**

**DAILY  
RECURRENCES**



## MORNING OFFERING

I adore you, my God and I love you with all my heart. Thank you for the gift of life, for the blessing of Christian faith, and for your watchful care throughout the night. I offer you all my actions of this day. Grant that they may be done according to your will and for your greater glory. Keep me from sin and from every evil. In your kindness, keep me and all those who are dear to me always in your grace. Amen.

## ANGELUS

- L** The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary,  
**A** **And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.**  
**Hail Mary...**
- L** Behold the handmaid of the Lord,  
**A** **Be it done unto me according to your Word.**  
**Hail Mary...**
- L** And the Word was made flesh,  
**A** **And dwelt among us.**  
**Hail Mary...**
- L** Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,  
**A** **That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.**
- L** Let us pray. Pour forth, we beseech you, O

Lord, your grace into our hearts: that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ your Son was made known by the message of an Angel, may by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection. Through the same Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

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## REGINA CAELI (Easter Season)

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*English*

**L** Queen of Heaven, rejoice alleluia.

**A For He whom you did merit to bear, alleluia.**

**L** Has risen, as He said, alleluia.

**A Pray for us to God, alleluia.**

**L** Rejoice and be glad O Virgin Mary, alleluia.

**A For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia.'**

**L** Let us pray. O God, who gave joy to the world through the resurrection of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, grant we beseech you, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

*Latin*

- L** Regina caeli, laetare, alleluia  
**A** **Quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia,**  
**L** Resurrexit, sicut dixit, alleluia,  
**A** **Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.**  
**L** Gaude et laetare, Virgo Maria, alleluia.  
**A** **Quia surrexit Dominus vere, alleluia**  
**L** Oremus. Deus, qui per resurrectionem  
 Filii tui Domini nostri Jesu Christi mundu  
 laetificare dignatus es: praesta, quaesumus,  
 ut per eius Genitricem Virginem Mariam  
 perpetuae capiamus gaudia vitae, per  
 eundem Christum Dominum nostrum.  
**A** **Amen.**

**MEDITATION****Introduction****Option 1**

- L** Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of  
 your faithful and kindle in them the  
 fire of your love. Send forth your  
 Spirit and they shall be created.  
**A** **And You shall renew the face of the  
 earth.**  
**L** Let us pray. O God, who by the light of the  
 Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the

faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit  
we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His  
consolation. Through Christ Our Lord.

**A Amen.**

***Option 2***

Come, O Creator Spirit,  
visit our minds.  
Fill with your grace  
the hearts you have created.

O you who are called Paraclete,  
gift of the Most High God,  
living spring, fire, love,  
anointing of the soul.

Finger of God's right hand,  
the Saviour's promise,  
send forth your seven gifts,  
stir in us the word.

Be light to the mind,  
burning love in the heart;  
heal our wounds  
with the balm of your love.

From the enemy defend us,  
bring forth the gift of peace.  
With your invincible hand  
keep us from all harm.

Light of eternal wisdom,  
unveil to us the great mystery  
of God the Father and the Son  
united in one single Love. Amen.

**L** Send forth your Spirit and  
they shall be created.

**A** **And You shall renew the face of the earth.**

**L** Let us pray. O God, who by the light of the  
Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the  
faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit  
we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His  
consolation. Through Christ Our Lord.

**A** **Amen.**

### ***Option 3***

Veni, creator Spiritus,  
mentes tuorum visita,  
imple superna gratia,  
quae tu creasti pectora.

Qui diceris Paraclitus,  
donum Dei altissimi,  
fons vivus, ignis,  
caritas et spiritalis unctio.

Tu septiformis munere,  
dextrae Dei tu digitus,  
tu rite promissum Patris  
sermone ditans guttura.

Accende lumen sensibus,  
infunde amorem cordibus,  
infirma nostri corporis,  
virtute firmans perpeti.

Hostem repellas longius  
pacemque dones protinus;  
ductore sic te praeviso  
vitemus omne noxium.

Per te sciamus da Patrem  
noscamus atque Filium,  
te utriusque Spiritum  
credamus omni tempore. Amen.

**L** Emitte Spiritum tuum, et creabuntur.

**A** **Et renovabis faciem terrae.**

**L** Oremus. Deus, qui corda fidelium Sancti Spiritus illustratione docuisti: da nobis in eodem Spiritu recta sapere; et de eius semper consolatione gaudere. Per Christum Dominum nostrum.

**A** **Amen.**

#### **Option 4**

**L** The Lord, who has called all of us to pray without ceasing, makes us aware of his presence, that we may be prepared for the priceless gift of his Spirit. In silence let us hear and meditate on the mystery of God.

**L** Come, O Creator, Spirit blest

**A** **And in our souls take up Thy rest/ Come with Thy grace and heav'nly aid/ To fill the hearts/ which Thou hast made.**

**Great Paraclete, to Thee we cry/ O highest gift of God most high/ O fount of life, O fire of love/ And sweet anointing from above.**

**Thou in Thy sev'nfold gifts are known/ The finger of God's hand we own/ The promise of the Father, Thou/ Who dost the tongue with fire endow.**

**Our senses kindle from above/ And make our hearts o'erflow with love/ With patience firm and virtue high/ The weakness of our flesh supply.**

**Drive far from us the foe we dread/ And grant us Thy true peace instead/ So shall we not with Thee for guide/ Turn from the path of life aside.**

**O may Thy grace on us bestow/ The Father and the Son to know/ And Thee through endless times confessed/ Of both the eternal Spirit blest.**

**All glory while the ages run/ be to the Father and the Son/ Who rose from death; the same to Thee/ O Holy Ghost eternally. Amen.**

## Conclusion

### ***Option 1: Act of entrustment***

**L** Blessed are those who listen to God's word.

**A** **And live by it every day.**

**L** Let us renew our commitment to the Lord and our dedication to our mission on behalf of young people; let us ask Our Lady for the gift of fidelity.

**L** Most holy

**A** **and Immaculate Virgin, Help of Christians,  
Mother of the church,  
you inspired the foundation of our congregation  
and remain its support;  
we place ourselves under your motherly protection,  
and faithful to our Salesian vocation,  
we promise to work always for the greater glory of God  
and the salvation of the world.**

**L** With trust in your intercession,

**A** **we pray for the Church, for our Congregation and the Salesian family, for the young, especially those in most need,  
and for all redeemed by Christ.**

**L** You were Don Bosco's teacher;  
**A** **show us how to imitate his virtues,**  
**especially his union with God, his purity,**  
**humility and poverty,**  
**his love for work and for temperance,**  
**his kindness and wholehearted service**  
**of others,**  
**his loyalty to the Pope and to the**  
**Bishops of the Church.**

**L** Grant O Mary Help of Christians,  
**A** **that we may serve God with fidelity and**  
**generosity until death.**  
**Help us to come at last to the endless joy**  
**of life together**  
**in our Father's home in heaven. Amen.**

*(As modified by E. Viganò, AGC 309)*

### **Option 2**

**L** Lord, to whom shall we go?  
**A** **You have the words of eternal life**  
**L** Calling to mind our father and  
 model Saint John Bosco, let us renew  
 our commitment to the Lord.  
**A** **Lord God, our Father,**  
**Love ever faithful, total and freely**  
**bestowed,**  
**you are pleased to make use**  
**of the service of those you have created**

**in the unfolding of your saving design.  
In free response to your call,  
many have cooperated with you  
throughout the long history of salvation:  
Abraham and Moses, Mary and the  
Apostles,  
and Christian men and women  
everywhere in your Church.  
You called St. John Bosco to give himself  
completely  
in the service of young people.  
and he dedicated himself entirely to the  
salvation of youth.  
You have called us also into the Salesian  
Family  
to continue his mission.  
Lord, we thank you for our vocation.  
Give us your Spirit. Keep us faithful to  
our consecration,  
so that freed from our selfishness,  
we may share with young people  
the living spirit of our Founder. Amen.**

**L** Mary, Help of Christians,

**A** Pray for us.

### ***Option 3***

**L** In the morning let us know your love.

**A** And we shall praise you with joy  
throughout the day.

- L** Lord, we thank you for Don Bosco
- A** **You have given him to us as our father and leader. In him we celebrate the wonders of your love, a splendid blending of nature and grace, and source of an original style of life and action in the service of the young.**
- L** Virgin Mary,
- A** **You were Don Bosco's constant guide and support in his work. We believe that you are present among us continuing your mission as "Mother of the Church and Help of Christians". We entrust ourselves to you, the humble handmaid in whom the Lord has done great things, that we may be signs and bearers of the love of your Son for young people. Amen.**
- L** Mary, Help of Christians
- A** **Pray for us.**

## LECTIO DIVINA

**Reading (Lectio).** *The first step consists of an attentive, prayerful reading of a biblical passage. It is a listening-reading that patiently waits in trust for Jesus, the Word to reveal Himself. As the passage is read one or two times, be attentive to the phrase or word that*

*stand out for you. After the reading, participants may, in an unhurried way, speak that word or phrase in turn, without commentary.*

***Meditation (Meditatio).*** *The scripture is read again. Here you ponder and ruminate what was read. The Word is savored and meditated upon in expectation - like Mary who “pondered these things in her heart.” This stage engages thought, imagination, emotion and desire. A question to be asked is: what does this Word mean for **my** life? After an appropriate time of silence, participants may briefly share a reflection.*

***Prayer (Oratio).*** *You begin to dialogue with the Lord Jesus, starting from the text, with praise, thanksgiving, petitions. It is a response from the depths of your heart. A very simple definition of saint Teresa of Avila comes to mind: “Praying is nothing more than an intimate sharing between friends. It means taking time frequently to be alone with Him who we know loves us”. After an appropriate time of silence, participants may voice a prayer.*

***Contemplation (Contemplatio).*** *You sit still with God, realizing that in this deep and profound relationship, words are not necessary. Be content and at peace with a wordless, quiet*

*rest in God, which brings joy to the heart. Remember that contemplation is not your action or doing; rather, it is allowing God to act in you.*

**Action (Actio).** *Once you know what it is that God is calling on you to do, the next step is straightforward: **do it**. This is gospel action, which follows from a choice, a decision: a specific action is performed that changes the heart, that transforms your life.*

## SPIRITUAL READING

*The reading, done communally, unites the minds and hearts. Our tradition has it that every day, every Salesian community shall “reserve some time for spiritual reading.” (Reg. 71)*

### Introduction

**LA In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.**

- L** Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created.
- A** **And you shall renew the face of the earth.**
- L** Let us pray. O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit, did instruct the hearts of the

faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy His consolation. Through Christ Our Lord.

**A Amen.**

## **Conclusion**

### ***Option 1***

- L** Let us pray to God our Father, whose love for us gives us confidence that he will hear us. You have given us Don Bosco as our father and teacher.
- A** **May we, like him, be signs and bearers of your love for the young.**
- L** Render fruitful with your grace our apostolic work.
- A** **May we imitate the zeal and gentle charity of St. Francis of Sales.**
- L** Comfort our suffering brothers and sisters, especially those who are suffering for the faith.
- A** **Free them from all their tribulations.**
- L** Help us in the varied activities of our Salesian mission to assist the young in discovering the divine call in their lives.
- A** **May our witness, our invitation and our accompaniment give rise to new apostolic vocations for the Church and the Congregation, for the missions and for our provinces.**

**L** Let us remember our departed brothers.

*(A reading of the Necrology  
of deceased confreres)*

**L** Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord.

**A** **And let perpetual light shine upon them.**

**L** May they rest in peace.

**A** **Amen.**

**L** O Lord, you have called us to follow you more closely and to cooperate with you in the salvation of youth. Grant us the grace to be faithful to our consecration and mission up to the end of our life. Through Christ our Lord.

**A** **Amen.**

### **Option 2**

**L** Merciful Lord, in your providence you gave us St. John Bosco, to be a father and teacher of the young, and with the help of the Virgin Mary, to work with tireless zeal for the Church. Impelled by a love like his, may we seek souls and serve you alone. Through Christ our Lord.

**A** **Amen.**

**L** Mary Help of Christians,

**A** **Pray for us.**

## PRAYER BEFORE ACTIVITIES

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### ***Option 1***

Lord, may your grace go before us and accompany us always, so that sustained by your fatherly help, we may never grow weary of doing good. Through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

### ***Option 2***

Actiones nostras, quaesumus Domine, aspirando praeveni et adiuvando prosequere: ut cuncta nostra oratio et operatio a te semper incipiat et per te coepta finiatur. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

### ***Option 3***

O Father, you filled the heart of Don Bosco with preferential love for the young: enrich the heart of every Salesian with the same gift. Help us to discover the presence of Jesus in every young person so that we always may be ready to offer them our time, our talents, our energy, and our very lives. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## PRAYER AFTER ACTIVITIES

### **Option 1**

We give you thanks, Almighty God, for all your benefits, you who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

### **Option 2**

Agimus tibi gratias, omnipotens Deus, pro universis beneficiis tuis, qui vivis et regnas in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

### **Option 3**

Lord God, our lips sing your praise, our spirit offers you praise, and since our very being is your gracious gift of love, may our entire life be an unceasing liturgy to your praise. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## VISIT TO THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

*"If you cannot receive [Holy Communion], make at least a spiritual Communion.*

*This means that you should arouse in yourself an ardent desire*

*to receive Jesus in your heart."*

*(St. John Bosco, BM III, 10)*

### **Option 1**

My Jesus, I believe that you are truly present in the Blessed Sacrament.

I love you above all things, and long for your presence in my soul.

Since I cannot receive you sacramentally at this moment, come spiritually into my heart. I embrace you and unite myself intimately to you. Grant that I may never be separated from you. Amen.

### ***Option 2***

Jesus, my Lord,  
in simplicity of heart and with living faith  
I adore you truly present in the sacrament  
of the holy Eucharist.

You Lord are the bread come down from  
heaven,  
the food that sustains us on the journey of life;  
you are the font of self-giving, sacrificial love  
you are the pledge of eternal life.

Lord Jesus, by an outpouring of infinite love  
you remain with us in this sacrament  
where you give yourself intimately and  
completely to us.

Jesus, grant me the grace  
to receive every sacramental communion  
with pure faith and love.

O my Saviour,  
draw me to close to you

that I may die to myself  
and live solely for others.

Lord, grant me the grace:  
to live a new and divine life in communion  
with you  
until that day when I behold you beyond the  
veil of the sacrament,  
contemplate you face to face,  
and love you for all eternity. Amen.

*(St. John Bosco)*

## PRAYERS FOR VOCATIONS

### ***Daily prayer for vocations to the Salesian life***

Father of love,  
you have sown in the hearts of many young  
people  
the seed of a vocation to the Salesian life.  
Help them to discover and to develop the gift  
of your call to be Salesian priests or Salesian  
brothers.  
Increase the family spirit in our Salesian  
communities,  
so that many young people will feel at home  
with us  
and be attracted to know and to follow our  
Salesian vocation.  
Grant that, through the witness of our personal

and community life,  
and our joyful and generous self-giving,  
the young may find confirmation of your call  
to live the gospel as sons of Don Bosco.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

***Prayer for perseverance in one's vocation***

Almighty God,  
in your provident designs  
you raised up Saint John Bosco  
as a sign of your love for young people.  
Confirm our faith in the young  
and strengthen our dedication to their service.  
You entrust them to us  
as the privileged portion of your kingdom,  
the hope and the future of the Church  
who accompanies her children through time  
as she marks them with the seal of eternity.

O Christ, who reminded your disciples  
that the poor and the needy would always be  
with them,  
make us effective instruments of your grace to  
the young;  
help us to be sober and vigilant,  
intent on helping them to discover and  
rediscover  
the joy and vibrancy of life that is appropriate  
to their youthful age.

O Spirit of true freedom,  
make us intentional witnesses of your love,  
defend us from those who would undermine  
our work,  
deliver us from the darkness of passion and  
error  
and usher us into a new era of deep fraternal  
understanding and solidarity. Amen.

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## **PRAYER TO DON BOSCO** **(at the end of vespers)**

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Saint John Bosco,  
Father and Teacher of youth,  
docile to the gifts of the Spirit  
and open to the reality of your times,  
you were for the young,  
especially the little ones and the poor,  
a sign of the love and the special care of God.

Be our guide as we walk  
the path of friendship with the Lord Jesus,  
so that we may discover in Him and in his  
Gospel  
the meaning of our lives  
and the source of true happiness.

Help us to respond with generosity  
to the vocation we have received from God,

so that in daily life we may be  
builders of communion,  
and may collaborate with enthusiasm,  
and in communion with the whole Church,  
in creating a civilisation of love.

Obtain for us the grace of perseverance  
in living a high standard of Christian life,  
according to the spirit of the beatitudes;  
and grant that, guided by Mary Help of  
Christians,  
we may one day be with you  
in the great family of heaven. Amen.

*(Pascual Chávez)*

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## **ROSARY**

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### **Joyful Mysteries**

*(Monday and Saturday)*

1. The Annunciation.
2. The Visitation.
3. The Nativity.
4. The Presentation in the Temple.
5. The Finding of Jesus in the Temple.

### **Sorrowful Mysteries**

*(Tuesday and Friday)*

1. The Agony in the Garden.
2. The Scourging at the Pillar.

3. The Crowning with Thorns.
4. The Carrying of the Cross.
5. The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus.

### **Glorious Mysteries**

*(Wednesday and Sunday)*

1. The Resurrection.
2. The Ascension.
3. The Descent of the Holy Spirit.
4. The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
5. The Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

### **Luminous Mysteries**

*(Thursday)*

1. The Baptism in the Jordan.
2. The Wedding at Cana.
3. The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God.
4. The Transfiguration of Jesus.
5. The Institution of the Eucharist.

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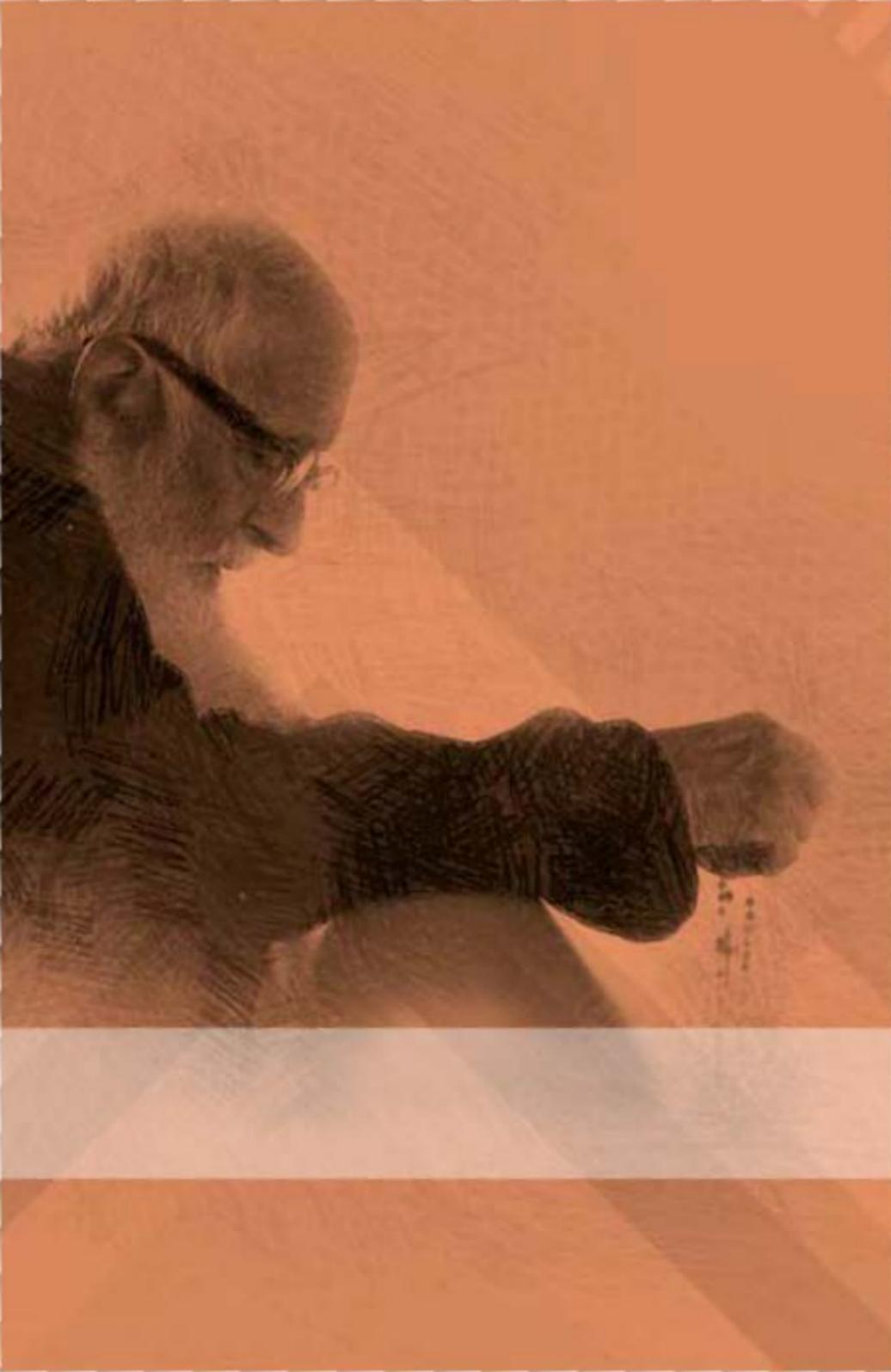
## **PRAYER AT THE END OF THE DAY**

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I adore you, O my God, and I love you with all my heart. I thank you for having created me, for having made me a Christian and for having preserved me this day. Pardon me for the evil I

have done today. If I have done anything good, be pleased to accept it. Protect me while I take my rest and deliver me from all dangers. May your grace be always with me and with those I love. Amen.







2

**MONTHLY  
RECURRENCES**



## AFTER BENEDICTION: THE DIVINE PRAISES

Blessed be God.

Blessed be His Holy Name.

Blessed be Jesus Christ, true God and true Man.

Blessed be the Name of Jesus.

Blessed be His Most Sacred Heart.

Blessed be His Most Precious Blood.

Blessed be Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament  
of the Altar.

Blessed be the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete.

Blessed be the great Mother of God, Mary most  
Holy.

Blessed be her Holy and Immaculate Conception.

Blessed be her Glorious Assumption.

Blessed be the name of Mary, Virgin and Mother.

Blessed be St. Joseph, her most chaste spouse.

Blessed be God in His Angels and in His  
Saints. Amen.

## MONTHLY RECOLLECTION

*“Our will for conversion is strengthened  
in the monthly recollection”  
(Const. 91)*

### **Opening prayer**

*The recollection could begin with the*

*corresponding hour of the Breviary or with the following introductory dialogue:*

**L** “Come away by yourselves  
and rest a while.”

**A** **At your invitation, O Lord,  
we disconnect from the concerns of the  
day  
and remember that you alone give  
meaning and purpose to our life.**

**L** “One thing alone is necessary.”

**A** **Open our hearts to receive your Word  
with its promise of light, peace and  
fullness of life.**

**L** “The one who abides in me  
will bear much fruit.”

**A** **Renew us by your presence; make us  
credible witnesses of your love.**

### ***Invocation to the Holy Spirit***

*A song dedicated to the Spirit or the following  
prayer*

Come Holy Spirit, sanctify me.

Come Spirit of wisdom, take hold of me.

Come Spirit of intelligence, enlighten me.

Come Spirit of counsel, advise me.

Come Spirit of fortitude, strengthen me.

Come Spirit of compassion, comfort me.

Come Spirit of knowledge, teach me.

Come Spirit of the fear of God, guard me  
 Come Spirit of peace, give me your peace.  
 Amen.

**L** Let us pray. O Father, who guide believers to the fullness of truth through your gift of the Holy Spirit, help us to savour the wisdom in the Spirit and to delight always in his consolation. Through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

## ***Meditation***

### ***Examination of conscience***

*Every month we examine our fidelity to the Lord's call: trusting in his mercy, we humbly recognize our weaknesses and strive for growth in our Salesian consecrated vocation. Each month certain themes could be the focus of the examen, or some questions could be chosen for each theme.*

**L** Let us pray. Lord Jesus, send us your Spirit of Truth so that we may renew once again our commitment to conform our lives to you and to your Gospel. You who live and reign for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

## ***Mystics in the Spirit***

## **I. The Word of God calls us to continual conversion** (Const. 90)

“You must therefore be perfect just as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mt 5, 48).

Have I slipped into spiritual mediocrity?

Do I strive to overcome my limitations? Do I make compromises that weaken my spiritual life? What was the fruit of my last monthly recollection? Of the annual retreat? Do I seek the voice of the Holy Spirit to guide my conscience? How frequently do I approach the sacrament of Reconciliation? Am I faithful to the personal examination of conscience each day?

## **II. Life of obedience** (Const. 64)

“My food is to do the will of the one who sent me” (Jn 4, 34)

Do I live obedience as a seeking for the will of God in common with my community? Do I obey “with a cheerful and humble spirit”? Do I collaborate even if I see things differently or when my opinion is not heeded? If I am the superior, do I direct, guide and encourage others with a discreet use of my authority? Do I engage in the fraternal chat with the Superior as a “privileged moment of dialogue” for my own good and for that of the community and the apostolate? Do I make efforts to know and

to act in accordance with the documents of the magisterium?

### III. **Life of poverty** (Const. 72)

“If you wish to be perfect, go and sell what you own.....” (Mt 19, 21)

Am I detached from earthly goods, with a standard of life that witnesses to consecrated poverty? Do I accept to be dependent on the community in the use of temporal goods? Do I accept inconveniences and privations? Do I share fraternally the fruits of my work, my gifts, talents, energies and experiences? Do I work diligently every day?

### IV. **Life of chastity** (Const. 80)

“Happy the pure in heart: they shall see God” (Mt 5, 8)

Do I live chastity as an expression of my undivided love for God and for the young? Does this “resplendent” virtue lead me to sincere love for the young? Does it motivate me to educate them in the ways of love and purity? Do I practice necessary mortification and custody of the senses? Do I make discreet and prudent use of the means of social communication? Do I make use of the natural means that contribute to physical health and psychological balance? Above all, do I

have recourse to the supernatural means for sustaining spiritual health such as prayer and the sacraments? Do I have a spiritual guide with whom I meet regularly and especially in moments of trial and difficulty? Do I turn with filial trust to Mary, the Immaculate Help of Christians?

**V. Life of prayer** (Const. 86.93)

“We need to pray continually and never lose heart” (Lk 18, 1)

Do I respect community prayer times?

Am I faithful to the practice of mental prayer?

Do I cultivate union with God that leads me to celebrate the liturgy of life?

Do I meditate on the sacred Scriptures daily so as to nourish my union with God?

Is the daily celebration of the Eucharist the central act that enlightens my day?

Do I make frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament daily to draw energy and constancy in my spiritual life?

Do I celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours with the dignity and fervor recommended by Don Bosco?

Am I faithful to praying the Hours which are not recited in common?

How attentive am I to the mysteries of the Lord celebrated on Sundays and throughout the liturgical year?

What place does Mary hold in my life? Do I pray the rosary willingly?  
Do I pray to Don Bosco and to our patron saints?

### ***Prophets of fraternity***

#### **VI. Fraternal and apostolic communion** (Const. 49)

“The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul” (Acts 4, 32)

Do I carry out the tasks entrusted to me with responsibility and in a collaborative spirit?  
Do I participate faithfully and actively in community meetings? Do I help create family spirit in the community? Do I avoid gossip and grumbling?

Am I prompt to forgive, taking the first step towards reconciliation, if necessary?

Do I foster a sense of belonging to my Province? Do I cultivate a true love for the Church by means of a renewed and current ecclesial awareness?

### ***Servants of the young***

#### **VII. Pastoral charity is at the centre of the Salesian spirit** (Const. 10)

“The good Shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep” (Jn 10, 11)

How zealous am I in my pastoral and apostolic commitments? Do I dedicate all my time and

energy to the mission entrusted to me? Have I placed my personal interests before the good of the young? Do I seek to improve and update my educational and pastoral competencies? Do I work on improving my character so as to be welcoming and loving? Am I a father, brother and friend to all I meet, without discrimination or prejudice? Do I allow difficulties to discourage me? Do I spread joy and optimism? Do I have a spirit of initiative? Do I evaluate my work periodically?

### ***Closing Prayer***

**L** Have mercy on us, Lord.

**A** **For we have sinned against you.**

**L** Lord, you call us to follow you in obedience to the Father, Lord have mercy on us.

**A** **Lord, have mercy.**

**L** Christ, you made yourself poor to offer us the riches of your forgiveness, Christ have mercy on us.

**A** **Christ, have mercy.**

**L** Lord, you call us to love you with undivided heart, Lord have mercy on us.

**A** **Lord, have mercy.**

**L** Let us pray. Lord, in your loving mercy, you call us to ongoing conversion in Christ. Grant that we may surrender more fully to the power of your love, put on the new man,

and be conformed to the image of your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

***Prayer for a happy death***

O Father, Lord of time and lover of life,  
who from all eternity call humanity to  
everlasting life,  
admit us, at the end of our earthly pilgrimage,  
to the peace of heaven.

Grant that at every moment of life  
we may know how to desire you alone,  
until we come into your reign of infinite joy.

O Christ, only begotten Son,  
who have prayed to the Father that your  
disciples  
might not be seduced by the world,  
help us to have your name always on our lips,  
to impart to the young a legacy of gratuitous love  
and the desire to live in your friendship.

O Spirit of consolation,  
who instil courage in those who are afraid  
and hope in the afflicted,  
help us to grow in holiness and wisdom,  
so that with pure and undivided hearts  
we may be admitted one day to the eternal  
banquet of heaven.

May the intercession of Mary our Help,  
and the friendship of Don Bosco and all the  
saints  
assist us at the sunset of our lives,  
so that, having been nourished each day by  
Jesus, the Bread of Life,  
we may take leave of our friends in this world  
and embrace those who have preceded us to  
the Eternal Banquet.  
Amen.

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## REVIEW OF LIFE (SCRUTINIES)

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*During the Trimonthly recollection it is  
advisable to have a review on some aspects  
of community life. A few outlines have been  
proposed below:*

### PRAYING WITH THE HEART OF DON BOSCO (*SCRUTINIUM ORATIONIS*)

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#### ***Invitation to prayer***

#### **Psalm prayer**

#### **Psalm 15**

*Choosing God as the only God and invoking him  
with an attentive heart.*

Ant. **I will praise the Lord, for he guides my  
steps** (*antiphon after every strofa*)

Lord, who shall be admitted to your tent  
and dwell on your holy mountain?

He who walks without fault;  
he who acts with justice  
and speaks the truth from his heart;  
he who does not slander with his tongue;

He who does no wrong to his brother,  
who casts no slur on his neighbour,  
who holds the godless in disdain,  
but honours those who fear the Lord;

he who keeps his pledge, come what may;  
who takes no interest on a loan  
and accepts no bribes against the innocent.  
Such a man will stand firm forever.

**L** Let us pray. Almighty Lord, at the sound  
of your voice our hearts are filled with joy:  
guide us on the path of holiness, that we  
may see you face to face and rejoice in your  
presence forever. Through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

### ***Listening to God's Word***

1 Thess 5, 16-26

*Unceasing prayer, joy and peace*

Be happy at all times; pray constantly; and for  
all things give thanks to God, because this is

what God expects you to do in Christ Jesus. Never try to suppress the Spirit or treat the gift of prophecy with contempt; think before you do anything - hold on to what is good and avoid every form of evil.

May the God of peace make you perfect and holy; and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul and body, for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. God has called you and he will not fail you.

Pray for us, my brothers. Greet all the brothers with the holy kiss.

### ***Review of our community prayer***

#### *Community prayer in general*

- Do we give prayer its due importance in our community? Is there a disconnect between our prayer and our apostolic life or are they mutually enriching? Does work tend to marginalize prayer time?
- Does prayer help to build up and to strengthen the community?
- Is prayer the foundation of the community's seeking and discerning together of the will of God?
- Do we offer the young and our lay collaborators an example of a praying community?
- Do we create moments to share community

prayer with our youth? With our lay mission partners?

- Are the rhythm and regularity of community prayer sufficiently cared for? Is there habitual absenteeism from, or abandonment of the commitment, to community practices of piety?
- Does youth ministry or pastoral activity outside the community take confreres away from community prayer? Is there a willingness to seek practical solutions to these difficulties where they exist?
- Are we faithful to our Salesian practices of piety and live them in harmony with the liturgical life of the Church?

### *Liturgical prayer*

- Does our community participate actively in liturgical prayer, with sufficient animation, creativity, and variety?
- Are liturgical celebrations well prepared, carried out with spiritual reverence and enlivened by appropriate music and singing?
- Are the community celebrations of the Hours sufficiently devout to inspire recollection and assist reflection?

### *The Eucharist*

- Does the maintenance, cleanliness, and environment of the church or chapel

convey the centrality of the Eucharist in our community and Salesian life?

- Is there willing participation in community celebrations, planned in accordance with community commitments?
- Are the Church's norms with regard to worship and liturgical celebrations of the Eucharist known and respected?
- Is care taken to introduce the young and our lay mission partners to the central importance of the Eucharist?
- Do individual confreres make frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament?

#### *Continuous conversion and reconciliation*

- Are the monthly, trimonthly recollections and the community penitential celebrations well prepared and carried out appropriately?
- Are the liturgical seasons celebrated with due awareness, differentiation and participation?
- Is the sacrament of Reconciliation, as a privileged moment of on-going interior renewal, celebrated as a community in the Salesian spirit?

#### *Meditation and spiritual reading*

- Does the community offer all its members the opportunity to make the meditation and

- spiritual reading in common or at least in groups?
- Do we allow it the time required (30 minutes for meditation; 20 minutes for spiritual reading) and encourage creativity?
  - Do we give pride of place to the Sacred Scriptures in our meditation?
  - Are we mindful to choose spiritual reading that is formative? Does our spiritual reading help us to learn more about Salesian spirituality and to improve our life in common as a family?
  - Does it help us to grow in the knowledge of Salesian spirituality and to improve our life in common as a family?
  - Is the “Good night” given and received with the importance it merits?

## **Intercessions**

**L** Let us ask the Lord to help us contemplate his glory in our daily apostolic activity; let us pray for perseverance in times of trial and the capacity to inspire holiness in the young and our lay mission partners.

**A Lord, teach us to pray**

*(Spontaneous prayers)*

**L** With the simplicity of Don Bosco, let us turn in faith to Him who is the

source of every grace and blessing  
and pray as Jesus taught us:

**A Our Father....**

**L** See, O Lord, our desire for openness and faithfulness to your call; stay close to us and accept the prayers we offer you today, that we may be transformed by your grace, delight in your presence and speak your word of peace and holiness to the next generation. Through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

## THE FRATERNAL SPIRIT (SCRUTINIUM FRATERNITATIS)

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***Invitation to prayer***

***Psalm prayer***

**Psalm 130**

*Trust and peace*

Ant. **My soul shall rest in peace like a child.**

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,  
Lord, hear my voice!

O let your ears be attentive  
to the voice of my pleading.

If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,  
Lord, who would survive?

But with you is found forgiveness:  
for this we revere you.

My soul is waiting for the Lord.  
I count on his word.  
My soul is longing for the Lord  
more than watchman for daybreak.  
Let the watchman count on daybreak  
and Israel on the Lord.

Because with the Lord there is mercy  
and fullness of redemption,  
Israel indeed he will redeem  
from all its iniquity.

**L** Let us pray. Almighty God, the sound of  
your voice fills our hearts with joy: guide  
us on the path of holiness, that we may  
see you face to face and rejoice in your  
presence forever. Through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

### ***Listening to God's Word***

#### **1 Cor 13, 1-10**

##### *Hymn to charity*

If I have all the eloquence of men or of angels,  
but speak without love, I am simply a gong  
booming or a cymbal clashing. If I have  
the gift of prophecy, understanding all the  
mysteries there are, and knowing everything,

and if I have faith in all its fullness, to move mountains, but without love, then I am nothing at all. If I give away all that I possess, piece by piece, and if I even let them take my body to burn it, but am without love, it will do me no good whatever.

Love is always patient and kind; it is never jealous; love is never boastful or conceited; it is never rude or selfish; it does not take offence, and is not resentful. Love takes no pleasure in other people's sins but delights in the truth; it is always ready to excuse, to trust, to hope, and to endure whatever comes. Love does not come to an end. But if there are gifts of prophecy, the time will come when they must fail; or the gift of languages, it will not continue for ever; and knowledge - for this, too, the time will come when it must fail. For our knowledge is imperfect and our prophesying is imperfect; but once perfection comes, all imperfect things will disappear.

### ***Review of our fraternal life in community***

#### *Fraternal life as an expression of charity*

- Is our fraternal communion rooted in a personal and community encounter with Christ in the Eucharist, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, prayer, and the liturgical seasons of the Church?

- Do all the confreres build up our family spirit through the fraternal sharing of everything in community?
- Do confreres mutually accept and respect each other, despite differences of culture or opinion?
- Is there a brotherly and familial rapport between older and younger confreres?
- Does the community welcome each confrere with an open heart and accept him as he is; or does it limit itself merely tolerate him?
- Do the confreres feel committed and optimistic about building up their community through the faithful practice of the friendly chat with the rector, and through active participation in community life and at meetings?
- Does friendship characterize all aspects of our life together: moments of work, prayer, meals, relaxation, gatherings and meetings?
- Do we support each other in genuine co-responsibility by sharing our joys and sorrows, our experiences and our apostolic plans in mutual trust and affection?
- Do we practice warm-hearted hospitality?
- How prevalent is loneliness in our community? Is there a lack of communication among confreres, above all at the spiritual level?

### *Fraternity as belonging*

- Do certain forms of individualism, such as seeking work that is more personally gratifying or lucrative, alienate confreres from the community?
- Do confreres tend to escape from the community during leisure time (week-ends, evenings spent with relatives and friends...)?
- Does our community feel a sense of belonging to the Province, take local initiative to implement the provincial educational and pastoral plan, and participate in Province initiatives?

### *Fraternity as participation*

- Does the community propose initiatives in which all the confreres can participate?
- Are confreres mindful about not just “informing” others about changes or decisions, but actually including individuals and groups in the decision-making process?
- Do community members avoid taking on roles of service in leadership because “life is easier” that way?
- Does our manner of participating in community life make our vocation attractive to the young people we serve? Do we invite them to “come and see” our educational mission among the young? Or is this

vocational concern relegated only to the Provincial vocation delegate or vocation commission?

### ***Intercessions***

- L** The love of God unites us in a bond of perfection. May that love deepen our resolve to be of one heart and one soul in our mission to the young. Let us pray that in our Father's love, we may be witnesses to the joy of mutual friendship and fraternal charity.
- A** **O Lord, may we love one another as you love us.**

*(Spontaneous intentions)*

### **A Our Father...**

- L** Lord our God, even in our religious community we do not always know where to find you or what to do with our cries of loneliness and pain. So often we are blind to your presence, like cold stones, oblivious to the warmth of the sun; there is no joy sparkling in our eyes, nor heartfelt song flowing from our lips. Listen to us, O Lord,

let our prayer rise to you, who listen to all  
your children  
and transform hearts of stone into hearts of  
flesh.

Send us your Spirit  
so that our community may pulsate with  
fraternal love.

Then we will recognize you  
in a word that affirms and forgives,  
in hands that reach out in friendship,  
in trust that allows us to speak what  
seemed unspeakable.

Build us up in fraternity, O Lord,  
until every wall has crumbled,  
every indifference is overcome,  
every brother sees that, though many, we  
are one,  
and we shall see you in Jesus, your Son,  
who is present to us in every confrere.  
He lives and reigns for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

## **THE BEATITUDES OF THE POOR** ***(SCRUTINIUM PAUPERIATIS)***

***Invitation to prayer***

***Psalm prayer***

**Psalm 25 (1-14)**

Ant. **The Lord is good and just: he teaches his will to the poor.**

To you, O Lord, I lift up my soul.  
I trust you, let me not be disappointed;  
do not let my enemies triumph.  
Those who hope in you shall not be  
disappointed,  
but only those who wantonly break faith.

Lord, make me know your ways.  
Lord, teach me your paths.  
Make me walk in your truth, and teach me:  
for you are God my saviour.

In you I hope all day long  
because of your goodness, O Lord.  
Remember your mercy, Lord,  
and the love you have shown from of old.  
Do not remember the sins of my youth.  
In your love remember me.

The Lord is good and upright.  
He shows the path to those who stray,  
He guides the humble in the right path,  
He teaches his way to the poor.

His ways are faithfulness and love  
for those who keep his covenant and law.  
Lord, for the sake of your name  
forgive my guilt, for it is great.

If anyone fears the Lord  
he will show him the path he should choose.

His soul shall live in happiness  
and his children shall possess the land.  
The Lord's friendship is for those who revere  
him;  
to them he reveals his covenant.

### ***Listening to God's Word***

*Acts 4, 32-37*

The whole group of believers was united, heart and soul; no one claimed for his own use anything that he had, as everything they owned was held in common. The apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus with great power, and they were all given great respect. None of their members was ever in want, as all those who owned land or houses would sell them, and bring the money from them, to present it to the apostles; it was then distributed to any members who might be in need.

There was a Levite of Cypriot origin called Joseph whom the apostles surnamed Barnabas (which means 'son of encouragement'). He owned a piece of land and he sold it and brought the money, and presented it to the apostles.

## **Response**

- L** Sell what you have:
- A and you will have treasure in heaven.**
- L** Give your money to the poor:
- A and you will have treasure in heaven.**
- L** Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit
- A Sell what you have: and you will have treasure in heaven.**

## **Outlines for the community review**

- Do we as a community give true witness to poverty: through a simple and humble dwelling place, through a sober and austere standard of living, through the renunciation of superfluous comforts and conveniences, through the moderate and reasonable use of entertainment, through the constructive use of our summer holidays?
- Do we spend community money as poor people or do we incur unnecessary and unjustifiable expenses?
- Is it obvious to the confreres that those who have administrative responsibility do not consider themselves “lords”, but responsible administrators who are accountable to the community?
- Among the expressions of poverty do we find: a commitment to on-going professional

qualification; the use of updated technology; long-term planning for renovations to our works; administrative vigilance, compliance and transparency regarding all relevant laws; preventive health care and healthy living?

- Do all confreres in the community share the same standard of living, and is that standard coherent with evangelical poverty?
- In our spirit of poverty and family, do all confreres do their part to maintain the common spaces in the section of the house reserved for the religious community?
- One quality that distinguishes the poor and which characterized our founder is hard work. Can the same be said of our community and of each confrere?
- Are holidays and leisure time enjoyed in a way that is consistent with the vow of poverty or with a middle class mentality?
- Does the community engage with the great and agonizing problems of the world such as hunger, malnutrition, unemployment, disease, natural, regional and global disasters? Does it study practical ways of getting involved, so that the community gives concrete witness to Christian solidarity in action? Is it prepared to

make community and personal sacrifices and adopt an austere lifestyle in order to translate its solidarity into concrete and significant assistance in terms of time, talent and treasure?

### **Intercessions**

- L** Let us pray for docility to the voice of his Spirit so that we may follow Christ on the way of authentic poverty.

Father, you have called us to follow Christ in evangelical poverty:

- *help us to live our choice joyfully, to place our trust in your Providence and to give ourselves entirely to the service of the Gospel.*

You have revealed to us that poverty must always be an act of love directed to you, an expression of true filial trust in your fatherly providence:

- *grant that we may not reduce our poverty to a purely legal observance.*

Through Him who is your word you said “blessed are the poor”:

- *grant that when poverty causes us inconvenience or suffering, we will rejoice to share with the poor the blessing that you have promised.*

You invite us not to cling jealously to whatever you have given to us in your generosity:

– *make us capable of sharing everything we have so that our poverty may be a sign of our love for our confreres and for the young.*

You invite us to express our human dignity through the daily work of our hands:

– *help us to fulfill our duties with diligence, enthusiasm and sacrifice, as a testimony to the human and Christian meaning of work.*

### **A Our Father**

**L** Almighty Father, in your abundant providence you clothe the fields with flowers and color the sky in shades of blue. Increase our faith, that we may abandon ourselves fully to your providence and become tireless co-workers in your vineyard until the coming of your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

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## **RECONCILIATION SERVICE** **(During the monthly recollection)**

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*The sacrament of Reconciliation brings to its fulfilment the commitment to conversion of each*

*member and of the whole community. Prepared by the daily examination of conscience and received frequently, this sacrament gives us the joy of the Father's pardon.... (Const. 90)*

### **Introduction**

- L** As God's chosen ones redeemed by the blood of Christ and sanctified by the Spirit, may abundant grace and peace be with you.
- A And with your spirit.**
- L** If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we are in communion with each other and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us of all sin.
- A Amen.**
- L** Let us pray. O God, your abundant love is manifest in the sacrament of forgiveness: send us your Spirit of truth, that we may see our sin and, with hearts renewed in your mercy, learn to forgive others as you have forgiven us. Reconcile us to yourself and to one another, that with one heart and one voice, we may gather in communion around the Eucharistic table to your glory and honour. Through Christ our Lord.
- A Amen.**

## ***Listening to God's Word***

- a) Do not delay. Now is the time for conversion.  
Mt 3, 1-12: Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees.  
Mt 4, 12-17: Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.  
Jn 8, 31-36: The truth will make you free.
  
- b) Conversion requires commitment.  
Mt 5, 1-12: The beatitudes of the Kingdom.  
Mt 5, 13-16: Either you are this or nothing.  
Lk 19, 1-10: Today salvation has come to this house.
  
- c) Jesus encounters sinners  
Lk 7, 36-50: A sinner is overcome with grateful love.  
Jn 8, 1-11: Only two were left: the adulteress and Mercy.  
Mt 26, 69-75: Even Peter was a sinner.
  
- d) The Church has the power to forgive sins  
Jn 20, 19-23: The gift of the Spirit signals the new creation.  
Lk 17, 1-4: Forgiveness is the sign of the strong.  
Mt 18, 15-20: The way to brotherly forgiveness  
Mt 18, 21-35: Forgive and you will be forgiven.

- e) We shall be judged on love  
Mk 12, 28-34: Love your neighbour “as yourself” has no loopholes.  
Jn 15, 1-8: Branches that bear fruit.  
Jn 15, 9-14: Love one another as I have loved you.
- f) Freely justified  
Rom 3, 22-26: The price of gratuitous love.  
2 Cor 5,17-21: Ministers of reconciliation.  
Eph 2, 1-10: By grace you have been saved.
- g) New life  
Rom 6, 2b-13: Be who you are and be that well!  
Rom 12, 1-21: Right worship according to the word.  
Eph 4, 1-3.17-32: Preserve the unity of the Church.
- h) Walk in the light of charity  
Col 3, 1-17: The ideal of the Christian life.  
1 Pet 1, 13-23: Renewed by the Word of God.  
1 Jn 1, 5-2, 2: He who claims to be without sin, deceives himself.  
1 Jn 2, 3-11: True knowledge of God.
- d) Act on God’s Word  
Jas 1, 22-27: Be doers of the Word of God.  
Jas 2, 14-26: Faith without works is dead.

Jas 3, 1-12: The grave responsibility of the one who teaches.

e) Spiritual warfare

Rom 13, 8-14: Put on the armour of light.

Eph 6, 10-18: Put on the armour of God.

2 Pet 1, 3-11: Confirming one's calling and election.

### ***(Brief homily)***

#### ***Examination of conscience***

##### *Fraternal life as an expression of charity*

- Is our fraternal communion rooted in a personal and community encounter with Christ in the Eucharist, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, prayer, and the liturgical seasons of the Church?
- Do all the confreres build up our family spirit through the fraternal sharing of everything in community?
- Do confreres mutually accept and respect each other, despite differences of culture or opinion?
- Is there a brotherly and familial rapport between older and younger confreres?
- Does the community welcome each confrere with an open heart and accept him as he is; or does it limit itself merely tolerate him?

- Do the confreres feel committed and optimistic about building up their community through the faithful practice of the friendly chat with the rector, and through active participation in community life and at meetings?
- Does friendship characterize all aspects of our life together: moments of work, prayer, meals, relaxation, gatherings and meetings?
- Do we support each other in genuine co-responsibility by sharing our joys and sorrows, our experiences and our apostolic plans in mutual trust and affection?
- Do we practice warm-hearted hospitality?
- How prevalent is loneliness in our community? Is there a lack of communication among confreres, above all at the spiritual level?

### *Fraternity as belonging*

- Do certain forms of individualism, such as seeking work that is more personally gratifying or lucrative, alienate confreres from the community?
- Do confreres tend to escape from the community during leisure time (week-ends, evenings spent with relatives and friends...)?

- Does our community feel a sense of belonging to the Province, take local initiative to implement the provincial educational and pastoral plan, and participate in Province initiatives?

#### *Fraternity as participation*

- Does the community propose initiatives in which all the confreres can participate?
- Are confreres mindful about not just “informing” others about changes or decisions, but actually including individuals and groups in the decision making process?
- Do community members avoid taking on roles of service in leadership because “life is easier” that way?
- Does our manner of participating in community life make our vocation attractive to the young people we serve? Do we invite them to “come and see” our educational mission among the young? Or is this vocational concern relegated only to the Provincial vocation delegate or vocation commission?

#### *Community prayer in general*

- Do we give prayer its due importance in our community? Is there a disconnect

between our prayer and our apostolic life or are they mutually enriching? Does work tend to marginalize prayer time?

- Does prayer help to build up and to strengthen the community?
- Is prayer the foundation of the community's seeking and discerning together of the will of God?
- Do we offer the young and our lay collaborators an example of a praying community?
- Do we create moments to share community prayer with our youth? With our lay mission partners?
- Are the rhythm and regularity of community prayer sufficiently cared for? Is there habitual absenteeism from, or abandonment of the commitment, to community practices of piety?
- Does youth ministry or pastoral activity outside the community take confreres away from community prayer? Is there a willingness to seek practical solutions to these difficulties where they exist?
- Are we faithful to our Salesian practices of piety and live them in harmony with the liturgical life of the Church?

### *Liturgical prayer*

- Does our community participate actively in liturgical prayer, with sufficient animation, creativity, and variety?
- Are liturgical celebrations well prepared, carried out with spiritual reverence and and enlivened by appropriate music and singing?
- Are the community celebrations of the Hours sufficiently devout to inspire recollection and assist reflection?

### *The Eucharist*

- Does the maintenance, cleanliness, and environment of the church or chapel convey the centrality of the Eucharist in our community and Salesian life?
- Is there willing participation in community celebrations, planned in accordance with community commitments?
- Are the Church's norms with regard to worship and liturgical celebrations of the Eucharist known and respected?
- Is care taken to introduce the young and our lay mission partners to the central importance of the Eucharist?
- Do individual confreres make frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament?

*Continuous conversion and reconciliation*

- Are the monthly, trimonthly recollections and the community penitential celebrations well prepared and carried out appropriately?
- Are the liturgical seasons celebrated with due awareness, differentiation and participation?
- Is the sacrament of Reconciliation, as a privileged moment of on-going interior renewal, celebrated as a community in the Salesian spirit?

*Meditation and spiritual reading*

- Does the community offer all its members the opportunity to make the meditation and spiritual reading in common or at least in groups?
- Do we allow it the time required (30 minutes for meditation; 20 minutes for spiritual reading) and encourage creativity?
- Do we give pride of place to the Sacred Scriptures in our meditation?
- Are we mindful to choose spiritual reading that is formative? Does our spiritual reading help us to learn more about Salesian spirituality and to improve our life in common as a family?

- Does it help us to grow in the knowledge of Salesian spirituality and to improve our life in common as a family?
- Is the “Good night” given and received with the importance it merits?

### ***Intercessions***

- P** Christ bore our sins in his body on the wood of the cross, so that free from sin we might live for righteousness. By his wounds we are healed. With trust in His mercy, we invoke his name.
- L** Jesus, physician of body and soul, heal our wounds.
- A** **Support us always with the strength of your Spirit.**
- L** Divest us of the corruption of the old man that remains within us.
- A** **And clothe us with the new man.**
- L** Grant that through penitence we may grow in fidelity to you.
- A** **And attain the glory of your resurrection.**
- L** Through the intercession of Mary your Mother, refuge of sinners,
- A** **Grant us your pardon and peace.**
- L** You who forgave the sinful woman,

- A Show us your mercy.**
- L** You who sought the lost sheep and carried it on your shoulders,
- A In your kindness, welcome us back when sin leads us astray.**
- L** You who promised paradise to the repentant thief,
- A Admit us one day into the joy of your kingdom.**
- L** You who died and rose to life for us,
- A Make us sharers in the fruits of the Resurrection.**

### ***Act of contrition***

I confess to almighty God and to you, my brothers,  
that I have greatly sinned  
in my thoughts and in my words,  
in what I have done, and in what I have failed  
to do;  
through my fault, through my fault, through  
my most grievous fault;  
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin, all  
the Angels and Saints,  
and you, my brothers,  
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

### ***Thanksgiving***

**P** It is truly right that we should give you thanks  
Father of infinite love:  
as high as the heavens are above the earth  
so strong is your merciful love for us:  
as far as the east is from the west  
you take away our sins.  
Through the prophets you had promised:  
“I will sprinkle clean water over you to make  
you clean;  
from all your impurities and from all your idols  
I will cleanse you.  
I will give you a new heart, and put a new  
spirit within you”.  
In the fullness of time, in your faithfulness,  
you sent your only begotten Son into the world  
to fulfil your promise.  
Having conquered sin and death,  
in the splendour of his resurrection  
he sent his Spirit on the apostles saying:  
“Receive the Holy Spirit:  
whose sins you forgive, they shall be forgiven  
whose sins you retain, they shall be retained”.  
Out of his love for sinners,  
which he revealed throughout his earthly  
mission,  
he instituted the sacrament of joy and mercy,  
so that forgiven and with hearts renewed  
we may learn to forgive one another

and be reconciled among ourselves and with  
 you,  
 united in praise around your altar.  
 Have mercy on us all, we pray.  
 Grant us patience and courage  
 to build a true community of free and  
 responsible brothers,  
 united in humble and selfless service to the  
 young.  
 With our fraternal bonds renewed through  
 your gift of forgiveness, we  
 say together with joy:

**A Our Father.....**

***Closing prayer***

**P** Loving God, watch over your people,  
 pardon us our failings and renew us  
 in your love, that we may serve you  
 with total dedication all the days of  
 our life. Through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

***Blessing***

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## **MEETING OF THE HOUSE COUNCIL**

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***Introduction***

**LA In the name of the Father...**

**L** Preserve the unity of spirit in  
 the bond of peace (*Ef* 4,3),

**A And we shall grow in mutual love, a sign of God's love.**

***Option 1***

**L** Let us pray. O Lord, you are present in our midst when we gather in your name: make our hearts open and attentive, humble and trusting, so that through fraternal dialogue we may learn to grow in truth and in love. You live and reign for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

***Option 2***

**L** God our Father, help us to reverence the presence of Christ your Son among us, promised to those who gather in his name. Grant that, acting in the Spirit of truth and of love, we might experience within us an abundance of light, mercy and peace. Through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

***Conclusion***

**L** Let us live in peace,

**A and the God of love and peace will be with us** (2 Cor 13,11)

**L** Let us give thanks to the Lord for he is good.

**A His love endures forever.**

***Option 1***

**L** Let us pray. Keep us united, O Lord, in

fraternal harmony, that we might be of one heart and one mind as we seek not our own interests, but the good of all the brothers you have given us. Through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

### **Option 2**

**L** O God, we have spent precious hours seeking your will together in faith-filled dialogue. Accept our efforts as an offering to you; make it a light to guide us going forward and a humble contribution towards the salvation of the young. Through Christ, our Lord.

**A Amen.**

**L** Mary, help of Christians,

**A Pray for us.**

## **MONTHLY COMMEMORATION OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS**

*(At the end of the Eucharist or at the end of community morning prayer)*

### **Option 1**

**O Mary Help of Christians, Mother of the Church**

O Mary, Help of Christians, Mother of the Church,

inspiration and guide of the Salesian Family,  
with motherly insight you read the heart of all  
every confrere,  
you enlighten and protect his apostolic  
consecration;  
you understand and bring to fruition  
the educational and pastoral work entrusted to  
him;  
you look with compassion on his limitations,  
weaknesses and sufferings;  
and love with tender prediction each young  
person entrusted to his care.  
We beg you, Holy Virgin Mother of God,  
powerful helper of the Pope, of bishops  
and of all their co-workers,  
place under your special patronage  
this humble and industrious Society of St.  
Francis of Sales;  
with filial confidence we solemnly entrust  
ourselves to you.  
As you were Don Bosco's guide and teacher;  
show us now how to imitate all his virtues.  
Amen.

(E. Viganò, ASC 309)

### ***Option 2***

**Mary our model of the radical Gospel  
approach**

*To Mary the Immaculate Help of Christians,  
Mother of a “radical and unconditional ‘yes’”, we  
entrust our assent of faith, our wish and desire  
for communion and our apostolic commitment  
to the young.*

Blessed are you **Mary, the Woman who  
listened,**

Because you lived in the search for God's will  
for you.

And when His plan for you was revealed  
you had the courage to accept it,  
abandoning your own life project  
to make the Lord's your own.

*Mother of believers,*  
teach us to listen to God  
and to make His will our own,  
so that He may realise his plan  
for the salvation of the young!

Blessed are you Mary, **Mother of the new  
community,**

who at the foot of the Cross welcomed  
as your son the beloved disciple of Jesus  
and helped in the birth of the Church,  
the new Body of your Son,  
a mystical reality of brothers and sisters  
united by faith and love.

You accompanied the life and prayer of the

Apostles,  
calling down the outpouring  
of the Spirit of the Risen One in the Upper Room.  
*Mother of the brothers and sisters* of your Son,  
teach us how to build communities  
which are of one heart and soul.  
Let our communion, our fraternity and our joy  
be a living testimony  
to the beauty of faith and of our Salesian vocation.

Blessed are you **Mary, Handmaid of the poor**,  
because you promptly set out along the way  
to serve a mother in need  
and you were there at Cana,  
sharing the joys and sorrows  
of a newly married couple.  
You did not look to your own needs,  
but to theirs,  
and you pointed out your Son, Jesus,  
as the Lord who could give to the human race  
the new wine of peace and joy in the Spirit.  
*Mother of servants*, teach us to go out of  
ourselves,  
to go and meet our neighbours,  
so that while we respond to their needs,  
we may offer them Jesus, God's gift, the most  
precious gift!  
Amen.

(Pascual Chávez, GC27)

## BLESSING OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

**P** Our help is in the Name of the Lord.

**A** **Who made heaven and earth.**

**Hail Mary...**

**We fly to your patronage, O holy Mother of God; despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us always from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin.**

**P** Mary, Help of Christians,

**A** **Pray for us.**

**P** O Lord hear my prayer.

**A** **And let my cry come unto You.**

**P** The Lord be with you.

**A** **And with your spirit.**

**P** Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, who by the cooperation of the Holy Spirit did prepare the body and soul of the glorious Virgin Mother Mary to become a worthy dwelling for Your Son, grant that as we rejoice in her commemoration, we may, by her loving intercession, be delivered from present evils and from everlasting death. Through Christ Our Lord.

**A** **Amen.**

**P** May the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, descend on you and remain with you forever.

**A Amen.**

*At the end of the community prayer, before the blessing of Mary Help of Christians, we address to Her this prayer, proposed for each month.*

## **1. JANUARY**

### **Mary, source of the goodness that flows from Jesus**

Holy Mary, Mother of God,  
you have given the world its true light,  
Jesus, your Son – the Son of God.  
You abandoned yourself completely  
to God's call  
and thus became a wellspring  
of the goodness which flows forth from him.  
Show us Jesus. Lead us to him.  
Teach us to know and love him,  
so that we too can become  
capable of true love  
and become fountains of living water  
for a thirsty world.

(Benedict XVI, Encyclical - *Deus caritas est*)

## 2. FEBRUARY

### **Mary, support of consecrated persons**

Mary, you are the image of the Church, the  
Bride without spot or wrinkle.

You “preserve with virginal purity,  
integral faith, firm hope and sincere charity”  
those who imitate you.

Sustain all consecrated people  
on their journey towards the sole and eternal  
Blessedness.

We entrust them to you, Virgin of the  
Visitation,  
that they may go in haste  
to respond to human needs, to offer help,  
but above all to bring Jesus.

Teach them to proclaim the mighty works  
which the Lord accomplishes in the world,  
that all peoples may extol the greatness of his  
name.

Support them in their work with the poor,  
the hungry, the hopeless, the little ones  
and all who seek your Son with a sincere  
heart.

To you, our Mother,  
who desire the spiritual and apostolic renewal  
of your sons and daughters

in their loving response and complete  
dedication to Christ,  
we address our confident prayer.

You who did the will of the Father,  
ever ready in obedience,  
courageous in poverty,  
and receptive in fruitful virginity,  
obtain from your divine Son  
that all who have received the gift  
of following him in consecrated life  
may bear witness to that gift by their  
transfigured lives  
as they make their way joyfully  
with their brothers and sisters  
towards our heavenly homeland and the  
eternal light which never fades.

We ask that in everyone and in everything  
glory, adoration and love be given  
to the Supreme Lord of all things,  
who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

(John Paul II, Exhortation - *Vita Consecrata*)

### **3. MARCH**

#### **Mary, Mother of the Church and Mother of our Faith**

O Mary, our Mother, help our faith!  
Make our ears attentive to God's word

that we might recognize his voice and his call.  
Awaken in us a desire to follow in his  
footsteps,  
to go forth from our own land and to receive  
his promise.

Let us allow his love to touch us  
that we may touch him in faith.  
Help us to entrust ourselves fully to him and  
to believe in his love,  
especially in times of trial and beneath the  
shadow of the cross,

when we are called to mature in faith.  
Sow in our faith the joy of the Risen One.  
Remind us that those who believe are never  
alone.

Teach us to see all things with the eyes of  
Jesus,  
that he may be the light for our path.  
May this light of faith always increase in us,  
until we behold the dawn of that undying day  
which is Christ himself, your Son, our Lord!  
Amen

(Francis, Encyclical - *Lumen fidei*)

#### **4. APRIL**

### **We entrust all the youth of the world to You**

Hail Mary, full of grace, Mother of the  
Redeemer!

Blessed are you who believed!  
As we honour Jesus, the meek and humble  
one,  
acclaimed as king by the simple hearted,  
we hail you, too.  
We call upon you, faithful Virgin and loving  
Mother,  
Virgin of Calvary and of Easter,  
model of the Church's faith and charity,  
at the Cross and in the risen glory of our Lord.  
Mother of Christ and Mother of the Church!  
We welcome you into our hearts,  
as the precious inheritance that Jesus  
entrusted to us from the Cross.  
And as disciples of your Son,  
we entrust ourselves fully to your care  
because you are the Mother of the Redeemer  
and Mother of the redeemed.  
Under your protection, may all families grow  
in holiness.  
Under your guidance, may all young people  
fulfil their human and Christian vocation,  
and build a society shaped by spiritual values.  
We entrust to you all those who suffer:  
the poor, the sick, the marginalized,  
and those whom violence has taken from us,  
but who remain present before the Lord of  
history

and are your sons and daughters, Mother of Life.

Hail, Virgin of Hope!

We entrust to you all the youth of the world, the hope of the Church and of her Pastors; the evangelizers of the third millennium, and witnesses of faith and love in Christ.

(St. John Paul II)

## 5. MAY

### **O Mary Help of Christians, Mother of the Church**

O Mary Help of Christians, Mother of the Church,  
 inspiration and guide of the Salesian Family,  
 with motherly insight you read the heart of every confrere,  
 you enlighten and protect his apostolic consecration;  
 you understand and bring to fruition the educational and pastoral work entrusted to him;  
 you look with compassion on his limitations, weaknesses and sufferings;  
 you love with tender predilection every young person entrusted to his care.  
 We beg you, Holy Virgin Mother of God, powerful helper of the Pope, of bishops

and of all their co-workers,  
place under your special patronage  
this humble and industrious Society of St  
Francis of Sales;  
with filial confidence we solemnly entrust  
ourselves to you.  
As you were Don Bosco's guide and teacher,  
show us how to imitate his virtues. Amen.  
(E. Viganò, ASC 309)

## **6. JUNE**

### **Mother of the living**

O Mary, bright dawn of the new world,  
Mother of the living,  
to you do we entrust the cause of life.

Look tenderly upon your countless children  
discarded by society:  
the babies who are not allowed to be born,  
the poor whose lives are made unbearable,  
the men and women who are victims of brutal  
violence,  
the elderly and the sick who are killed by  
indifference or misguided mercy.  
Grant that all who believe in your Son  
may proclaim the Gospel of life  
with courage, honesty and charity  
to the people of our time.  
Obtain for all people

the grace of accepting the Gospel as a gift that  
is ever new,  
the joy of celebrating it with  
gratitude throughout their lives  
and the courage to bear witness to it with bold  
resolve,  
so that, together, all people of good will  
may build a civilization of truth and love,  
to the praise and glory of God,  
the creator and lover of life. Amen.

(St John Paul II, Encyclical - *Evangelium vitae*)

## 7. JULY

### **Prayer to the Virgin Mary**

O Mary, Virgin and Mother,  
through your docility to the Holy Spirit,  
you welcomed the word of life  
into the depths of your humble faith:  
as you gave yourself completely to the Eternal  
One,  
help us to say our own “yes”  
to the urgent call, as pressing as ever,  
to proclaim the Good News of Jesus.  
Filled with Christ’s presence,  
you brought joy to John the Baptist,  
causing him to exult in his mother’s womb.  
Overcome with joy,  
you sang the praises of the Lord for the great

deeds he has done.  
Standing resolutely at the foot of the cross,  
you persevered in relentless faith  
until you received the joyful consolation of the  
resurrection,  
and gathered the disciples to await the  
promised Spirit  
so that the evangelizing Church might be  
born.

Obtain for us who share in Christ's  
resurrection  
a burning zeal to proclaim  
the Good News that life triumphs over death.  
Give us holy boldness to discover new paths  
by which this gift of unfading beauty  
may come to all people.

O Virgin of listening and contemplation,  
Mother of love, bride of the eternal wedding  
feast,  
pray for the Church whose purest icon you are,  
that she may never be closed-in on herself  
or lose her passion for advancing the reign of  
God.

Star of the new evangelization,  
help us to be radiant witnesses of communion,  
of service, of ardent and generous faith,  
of justice and love for the poor,  
so that the joy of the Gospel  
may reach the ends of the earth,

and every periphery may be brought into its light.  
 Mother of the living Gospel,  
 well-spring of happiness for God's little ones,  
 pray for us. Amen. Alleluia.

(Francis, Exhortation *Evangelii gaudium*)

## 8. AUGUST

### Mary, Mother of silence

Mother of silence, guardian of the mystery of God,  
 deliver us from the idolatry of the present,  
 to which those who do not remember  
 condemn themselves.

Purify the vision of pastors with the eyewash  
 of memory:

let us return to the freshness of our origins,  
 as a prayerful, penitent Church.

Mother of the beauty which blossoms through  
 fidelity to one's daily tasks,

rouse us from the numbness of laziness,  
 pettiness, and defeatism.

Clothe Pastors in that compassion which  
 unites and makes whole;

let us rediscover the joy of being a servant  
 Church, humble and fraternal.

Mother of tenderness, wrap us in your  
 patience and mercy,

let us burn away the sadness, impatience and  
 rigidity

of those who feel like they do not belong.  
Intercede for us to Jesus to obtain that that we  
may have agile hearts, hands and feet,  
eager to build his Church in truth and charity.  
Mother Mary, walk with us, the People of God,  
pilgrims bound for the Kingdom. Amen.

(Francis, *to the Italian Episcopal  
Conference*, 23 May 2013)

## **9. SEPTEMBER**

### **Mary, woman of listening**

Mary, woman of listening, open our ears;  
teach us to receive the word of your Jesus your  
Son

amidst the relentless messaging of the world;  
teach us to be in tune with the reality in which  
we live,

attentive to every person we encounter,  
especially the one who is poor, in need, or in  
difficulty.

O Mary, woman of decision,  
illuminate our minds and hearts,  
so that we may obey the Word of your Son  
Jesus,

without hesitation;  
give us the courage to make decisions,  
and not to let ourselves be dragged about by  
others who would direct our life.

Mary, woman of action,  
give us hands and feet  
that move “with haste” toward others,  
to bring them the truth and love of your Son  
Jesus,  
so that like you, we might bring the light of the  
Gospel to the world. Amen.

(Francis, *Prayer to Mary at the end of the Holy  
Rosary in St. Peter’s Square*, 31 May 2013)

## 10. OCTOBER

### **Mary, star of the sea**

Mary, star of the sea,  
we turn to you in confidence,  
seeking your solace and peace,  
imploring your protection and help.  
Mother of God and our Mother,  
protectress of migrants and the homeless,  
assist with your motherly care  
every man, woman and child  
who is compelled to flee their homeland  
in search of a new hope for the future.  
May their encounter with us and with our  
people  
never inflict new forms of  
oppression, slavery or humiliation upon them.  
Mother of mercy,  
implore the Father’s forgiveness for us who,

blinded by selfishness,  
closed in on our own interests  
and imprisoned by our own fears,  
have been indifferent to the needs  
and suffering of our brothers and sisters.  
Refuge of sinners,  
bring to conversion the hearts of those who  
foment war, hatred and poverty,  
exploit their weakest brothers and sisters,  
and trade unscrupulously in human life.  
Model of charity, bless all men and women of  
good will,  
who welcome and serve those who arrive at  
our borders:  
may the love they give and the love they  
receive  
sow new seeds of fraternal bonds  
and announce the dawning of a new era of  
peace in the world. Amen.

(Francis, *Pastoral Visit  
to Lampedusa*, 8 July 2013)

## **11. NOVEMBER**

### **We believe that Mary is the Mother of the Church**

We believe that Mary is the ever Virgin Mother  
of the Incarnate Word of God and our Saviour  
Jesus Christ,

and that by reason of this singular election,  
she was redeemed,  
through the merits of her Son,  
in a most eminent manner.  
“Preserved from all stain of original sin”  
and “filled, more than any other creature, with  
the gift of grace”,  
she was joined by an intimate and  
indissoluble bond  
to the mysteries of the Incarnation and  
Redemption.  
At the end of her earthly life the Immaculate  
One, the Most Blessed Virgin,  
was raised body and soul to heavenly glory  
and configured to her risen Son  
in anticipation of the reward of all the just.  
We believe that the Blessed Mother of God,  
the New Eve, “Mother of the Church”,  
“continues in heaven her role as mother”  
to all Christ’s members,  
“cooperating in the birth and growth of divine life  
in the souls of the redeemed”.

*(The “Profession of Faith”  
of Paul VI, 30 June 1968)*

## **12. DECEMBER**

### **Prayer to the Immaculate**

Holy and Immaculate Virgin,

to You, who are the honor of our people  
and the watchful protectress of our times  
we turn in confidence and love.

You are All Beautiful, O Mary!

There is no sin in you.

Awaken in us a renewed desire for holiness:  
may the splendour of truth ring through our  
words,

a song of charity resound in our work,  
purity and chastity reign over our body and  
spirit,

and all the beauty of the Gospel radiate  
through our life.

You are All Beautiful, O Mary!

The Word of God was made flesh in You.

Help us to live in unhurried, attentive listening  
to the voice of the Lord:

may the cry of the poor not leave us  
indifferent,

the suffering of the sick and the needy not find  
us distracted,

the loneliness of the elderly and the fragility of  
children move us to compassion,

and every human life be loved and respected  
by us all.

You are All Beautiful, O Mary!

In You is the perfect joy of a life spent in

blessed union with God.

Help us not to lose the meaning of our earthly journey:

may the gentle light of faith illumine our days,  
the consoling strength of hope direct our

steps,

the infectious warmth of love animate our  
hearts,

and the eyes of all of us remain focused there,  
on God, where true joy is found.

You are All Beautiful, O Mary!

Hear our prayer, answer our supplication:

may the beauty of God's merciful love in Jesus  
be in us,

may this divine beauty save us, our city, and  
the whole world.

Amen.

(Francis, *Veneration of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, Piazza di Spagna*, 2013)

## PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS – FIRST THURSDAY OF THE MONTH

- L** Faithful to the invitation of Christ to pray the Lord of the harvest to send workers into his vineyard, let us unite our voices and pray:

### **Option 1**

**A** O Loving Father, provident and holy,  
who reconciled the world to yourself  
through Christ,  
the eternal priest of the new covenant,  
do not scatter the flock to which you  
promised,  
in your infinite love, admission to your  
Kingdom:  
send new workers into your harvest  
and fill the hearts of your shepherds  
with perseverance and holiness.

O Christ Jesus, who on the shores of Lake  
Galilee  
called the apostles and made them signs  
and bearers  
of your grace of salvation,  
do not abandon the flock that you have  
entrusted to them;  
sustain your Church in the world today,  
that as your universal sacrament of  
salvation,  
she may grant courage to those whom from  
all eternity,  
you call to follow you under the sign of the  
Cross,  
and commission to sow God's field with  
the seeds of humility and wisdom.

O Spirit of holiness,  
in Baptism you consecrate a redeemed  
humanity to God's purposes.  
Help those whom you raise up as leaders of  
the community of believers  
to read prophetically the signs of the times  
so that they may be faithful interpreters  
and proclaimers,  
of your universal plan of salvation,  
to people of every language  
and nation. Amen.

### *Option 2*

**A God our Father,  
with the mysterious whisper of your  
Spirit  
call forth new leaders from among the  
young  
to be the presence of Christ, your Son,  
in the service of poor and abandoned  
youth.  
Open their hearts to the attractiveness of  
your call.  
Let them contemplate your face in their  
peers who  
left unaccompanied and forgotten,  
become easy prey to the corruption of  
the world.**

**Teach them to follow the way of prayer,  
to nourish themselves with your Word,  
to participate in the Eucharistic banquet,  
to celebrate with penitent joy your gift of  
reconciliation,  
to be aware of the urgent needs of today,  
and to mature in wisdom and in grace.  
Inspire them to make their life a self-gift  
to others.  
Grant them the courage to leave  
everything  
so as to find their treasure in you.  
On their journey of life, support and  
surround them with Salesian mentors  
to help them to grow in youthful  
holiness.**

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## **SACRED HEART – FIRST FRIDAY OF THE MONTH**

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### ***Option 1***

I take You, O Sacred Heart, as my love's sole  
desire,  
the protector of my life, the pledge of my  
salvation,  
the remedy of my weakness and inconstancy,  
the atonement for the faults of my life,  
and the secure refuge at the hour of my death.

Be then, O Heart of goodness, my justification  
before God the Father,  
and turn away from me His righteous  
indignation.

O loving Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in  
You,

for I fear the loss of all things because of my  
wickedness and frailty,  
but hope to gain every blessing through your  
goodness and bounty.

Consume whatever in me might displease or  
resist your holy will;

Set the seal of your pure love so firmly upon  
my heart

that I may never forget You or be separated  
from You.

In your kindness, let my name be written on  
your heart,

so that my every happiness and my only glory  
will be to live and die as your servant.

*(St Margaret Mary Alacoque)*

### **Option 2**

Lord Jesus Christ, eternal Son of the eternal  
Father,

born of the Virgin Mary,

continue to reveal to us, we pray, the mystery  
of God:

let us recognize in you “the image of the invisible God”;  
so that we might find Him in you, in your divine person,  
in the warmth of your humanity, in the love of your heart.

Heart of Jesus, in which the fullness of divinity resides!

Heart of Jesus, in whose fullness we all share!  
Heart of Jesus, king and centre of all hearts,  
for all eternity. Amen!

Heart of Jesus, victim of our sins,  
accept our praise, our eternal gratitude,  
our sincere contrition.

Have mercy on us, today and always. Amen.

*(St John Paul II)*

### ***Option 3***

Sacred Heart of Jesus, I offer you  
through the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Mother of the Church,  
in union with the Eucharistic Sacrifice,  
the prayers, actions, joys and sorrows of this day  
in reparation for the sins and for the salvation of all mankind,  
in the grace of the Holy Spirit, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

***Litany of the Sacred Heart***

Lord, have mercy / Lord, have mercy

Christ, have mercy / Christ, have mercy

Lord, have mercy / Lord, have mercy

Christ, hear us. / Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us. / Christ graciously  
hear us

*(after every invocation we respond 'have mercy  
on us')*

God the Father of Heaven,

God the Son, Redeemer of the world,

God the Holy Spirit,

Holy Trinity, one God,

Heart of Jesus, Son of the Eternal Father,

Heart of Jesus, formed by the Holy Spirit in the  
Virgin Mother's womb,

Heart of Jesus, substantially united to the  
Word of God.

Heart of Jesus, of infinite majesty.

Heart of Jesus, holy temple of God.

Heart of Jesus, tabernacle of the Most High.

Heart of Jesus, house of God and gate of  
heaven.

Heart of Jesus, glowing furnace of charity.

Heart of Jesus, vessel of justice and love.

Heart of Jesus, full of goodness and love.

Heart of Jesus, abyss of all virtues.

Heart of Jesus, most worthy of all praise.

Heart of Jesus, King and centre of all hearts.  
Heart of Jesus, in whom are all the treasures of  
wisdom and knowledge.  
Heart of Jesus, in whom dwells all the fullness  
of the Godhead.  
Heart of Jesus, in whom the Father was well  
pleased.  
Heart of Jesus, of whose fullness we have all  
received.  
Heart of Jesus, desire of the everlasting hills.  
Heart of Jesus, patient and rich in mercy.  
Heart of Jesus, rich to all who call upon You.  
Heart of Jesus, fount of life and holiness.  
Heart of Jesus, propitiation for our offenses.  
Heart of Jesus, overwhelmed with reproaches.  
Heart of Jesus, bruised for our iniquities.  
Heart of Jesus, obedient even unto death.  
Heart of Jesus, pierced with a lance.  
Heart of Jesus, source of all consolation.  
Heart of Jesus, our life and resurrection.  
Heart of Jesus, our peace and reconciliation.  
Heart of Jesus, victim for our sins.  
Heart of Jesus, salvation of those who hope in You.  
Heart of Jesus, hope of those who die in You.  
Heart of Jesus, delight of all saints.

**L** Lamb of God, who take away  
the sins of the world,

**A spare us, O Lord.**

- L** Lamb of God, who take away  
the sins of the world,
- A** **graciously hear us, O Lord.**
- L** Lamb of God, who take away  
the sins of the world,
- A** **have mercy on us.**
- L** Jesus, meek and humble of Heart,
- A** **Make our hearts like yours.**
- L** Let us pray.  
God, our loving Father,  
in the Heart of your Son  
we celebrate the marvels of your love:  
from this inexhaustible source  
pour on us the abundance of your gifts.  
Through Christ our Lord.
- A** **Amen.**

## PRAYER FOR THE MISSIONS - 11TH OF THE MONTH

- P** In the name of the Father...  
The grace and peace of Jesus Christ  
who has made all of us missionaries of his  
Gospel  
in the one Spirit of charity, be with you.
- A** **Amen.**
- P** Let us pray. Grant O Lord, that your  
Church fulfil her mission as the universal

sacrament of salvation and in obedience to the command of Christ, bring the good news of the Gospel to all peoples. He lives and reigns for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

### ***Listening to God's Word***

**Is 2, 2-5**

#### **Peace in the Kingdom of God**

In the days to come the mountain of the house of the Lord shall tower above the mountains and be lifted higher than the hills. All the nations will stream to it, peoples without number will come to it; and they will say: 'Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob that he may teach us his ways so that we may walk in his paths; since the Law will go out from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem'. He will wield authority over the nations and adjudicate between many peoples; these will hammer their swords into ploughshares, their spears into sickles. Nation will not lift sword against nation, there will be no more training for war. House of Jacob, come, let us walk in the light of the Lord!

#### **Psalm 121**

Ant. **Let us walk together to the house of the Lord.**

I lift up my eyes to the mountains;  
from where shall come my help?  
My help shall come from the Lord  
who made heaven and earth.

May he never allow you to stumble!  
Let him sleep not, your guard.  
No, he sleeps not nor slumbers,  
Israel's guard.

The Lord is your guard and your shade;  
at your right side he stands.  
By day the sun shall not smite you  
nor the moon in the night.

The Lord will guard you from evil,  
he will guard your soul.  
The Lord will guard your going and coming  
both now and for ever.

## **Jn 10, 11-16**

### **The Good Shepherd**

I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd is one who lays down his life for his sheep. The hired man, since he is not the shepherd and the sheep do not belong to him, abandons the sheep and runs away as soon as he sees a wolf coming, and then the wolf attacks and scatters the sheep; this is because he is only a hired man and has no concern for the sheep.

I am the good shepherd; I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for my sheep. And there are other sheep I have that are not of this fold, and these I have to lead as well. They too will listen to my voice, and there will be only one flock, and one shepherd.

### ***Reflection***

#### ***Choral prayer***

Almighty Father,  
Architect of history and Lord of life,  
in your loving providence you order all things,  
and fulfilled your promise to redeem  
humanity from the ancient guilt of sin:  
be mindful of every race and nation on earth.  
May they encounter and welcome your  
prophets  
who announce the long-awaited Day of the  
Lord,  
and open their hearts to the seeds of your  
truth.

Christ, obedient Son of the eternal Father,  
who proclaimed salvation to Israel and to all  
peoples:  
send forth new messengers of peace, so that  
every person of good will

may hunger for righteousness  
and be confirmed by your Grace.

Spirit of love,  
who inspire sincere hearts  
and pour out your gifts of redemption  
on those who seek the Infinite with a renewed  
heart:

make your Church holy and united;  
confirm your sacred ministers and all the  
baptized

in pastoral charity  
that the love of Christ may urge them on  
in their proclamation of salvation. Amen.

**A Our Father...**

**P** O Lord, renew in your Church  
the Spirit of truth and love,  
the gift of the paschal mystery of Christ.  
May the Body of Christ be entirely  
missionary

and every believer alive with zeal  
to bring the newness of Christ into the  
world.

He lives and reigns for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

***Blessing***

## DON BOSCO - LAST DAY OF THE MONTH

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### *Option 1*

**L** St. John Bosco, father of the young and master of holiness, hear us when we pray:

**A** **we follow in your footsteps as a living presence among the young, to offer them friendship and wisdom, and to grow with them in holiness and grace.**

**L** We ask you to intercede for us so that:

**A** **we may persevere in our Salesian vocation, be generous workers in the Lord's vineyard and faithful collaborators of the Pope and the Bishops of the Church. As we face the challenges of today may we always stand with those who are defenceless and alone, the last, the least and the lost, those who are hungry to know Christ's love for them.**

**L** Teach us, O Father of the poor,

**A** **to be prophets who proclaim to the world that the Reign of God abides in the heart of every man.**

**May your tireless zeal for the salvation of souls,  
your deep piety and your ecstasy of action  
be our model for a life lived fully  
in the spirit of the beatitudes  
a life that is deeply human and deeply  
spiritual,  
guided by consistent faith  
and generous in self-giving love and  
kindness.**

- L** Help us, O friend of the young,  
**A** **to take the first step towards the most forgotten young people,  
to offer them love in ways that speak to their heart,  
to be grateful that every day you send us to welcome them  
and to help them rediscover the joy of being young.**
- L** Grant us, ever-faithful servant of God,  
**A** **that at the end of our days,  
we may share, with all those whom we have loved,  
the eternal reward reserved for the just.**
- L** May your protection and the intercession of Mary Help of Christians  
be for us the path that leads to Love.

**A Amen.**

***Option 2***

O merciful Lord,  
in your providence you have given us St. John  
Bosco,  
father and teacher of the young  
who, guided by the Virgin Mary,  
worked with untiring zeal for the good of the  
Church;  
kindle also in us the same fire of love,  
that impels us to save souls and serve you  
alone.  
Through Christ our Lord. Amen!

***Option 3***

O St. John Bosco, Father and teacher of the  
young,  
who worked tirelessly for the salvation of  
souls,  
be our guide as we seek the good of our own  
souls  
and the salvation of our neighbour.  
Help us to overcome our passions and the  
need for human praise:  
teach us to love Jesus in the Blessed  
Sacrament,  
Mary Help of Christians and the Pope.  
Intercede for us: that God may grant us a  
happy and holy death,

so that we may one day be with you in Paradise. Amen.

#### **Option 4**

St. John Bosco, Father and Teacher of youth,  
docile to the gifts of the Spirit  
and open to the reality of your times,  
you were for the young,  
especially the little ones and the poor,  
a sign of the love and the special care of God.  
Be our guide as we walk  
the path of friendship with the Lord Jesus,  
so that we may discover in Him and in his Gospel  
the meaning of our lives  
and the source of true happiness.  
Help us to respond with generosity  
to the vocation we have received from God,  
so that in daily life we may be  
builders of communion,  
and may collaborate with enthusiasm,  
and in communion with the whole Church,  
in creating a civilisation of love.  
Obtain for us the grace of perseverance  
in living a high standard of Christian life,  
according to the spirit of the beatitudes;  
and grant that, guided by Mary Help of Christians,  
we may one day be with you  
in the great family of heaven. Amen

*(Pascual V. Chávez, 31 January 2011)*





3

**ANNUAL  
RECURRENCES**



## CELEBRATION AT THE BEGINNING OF THE ANNUAL RETREAT

*“Our will for conversion is strengthened in the monthly recollection and in the annual retreat. These are occasions of spiritual renewal which Don Bosco considered the fundamental part and the synthesis of all the practices of piety”*  
(Const. 91)

Don Bosco frequently emphasized the efficacy of grace operative in the annual retreat. This prolonged period of prayer is an opportunity to discover ourselves through an encounter with God. It is suggested that the Annual Retreat begin with a moment of Eucharistic adoration.

### **In the name of the Father....**

#### ***Presider’s greeting***

**P** Brothers, these days of retreat are precious days for us because as the Constitutions remind us, they are a “time of grace” (Const. 91). We do well to stop a while, to reconnect with ourselves in silence and in prayer, to deepen and clarify the true motivations of our vocation. But above all we need to encounter God, to listen to him, to let his Word pervade our being so that guided by it we may

then live it coherently and faithfully.  
Together, let us invoke the light and  
strength of the Holy Spirit who will be  
the protagonist of these coming days.

**A Veni, creator Spiritus...**

Veni, creátor Spíritus,  
mentes tuòrum vísita,  
imple supérna grátia,  
quæ tu creásti péctora.

Qui díceris Paráclitus,  
altíssimi donum Dei,  
fons vivus, ignis, cáritas,  
et spiritális ùnctio.

Tu septifòrmis mùnere,  
dígitus patérnæ déxteræ,  
tu rite promíssum Patris,  
sermóne ditans gùttura.

Accénde lumen sénsibus,  
infùnde amórem córdibus,  
infírma nostri córporis  
virtùte firmans pérpeti.

Hostem repéllas lóngius  
pacémque dones prótinus;  
ductóre sic te prævio  
vitémus omne nóxium.

Per Te sciámus da Patrem  
noscámus atque Fílium,  
teque utriùsque Spíritum  
credámus omni témpore.

Deo Patri sit glória,  
et Fílio, qui a mórtuis  
surréxit, ac Paráclito,  
in sæculórum sæcula. Amen.

**P** O Lord, send us your Spirit,  
so that our lives may be renewed  
in the depth of your truth and your love.  
Through Christ our Lord.

**A** **Amen.**

### ***Listening to God's Word***

#### **Hosea 2, 16-25**

That is why I am going to lure her  
and lead her out into the wilderness  
and speak to her heart.

I am going to give her back her vineyards,  
and make the Valley of Achor a gateway of hope.  
There she will respond to me as she did when  
she was young,  
as she did when she came out of the land of  
Egypt.

When that day comes - it is the Lord who  
speaks -

she will call me, 'My husband',  
no longer will she call me, 'My Baal'  
I will take the names of the Baals off her lips,  
their names shall never be uttered again.  
When that day comes I will make a treaty on  
her behalf  
with the wild animals,  
with the birds of heaven  
and the creeping things of the earth;  
I will break bow, sword and battle in the country,  
and make her sleep secure.  
I will betroth you to myself for ever,  
betroth you with integrity and justice,  
with tenderness and love;  
I will betroth you to myself with faithfulness,  
and you will come to know the Lord.  
When that day comes - it is the Lord who  
speaks -  
the heavens will have their answer from me,  
the earth its answer from them,  
the grain, the wine, the oil, their answer from  
the earth,  
and Jezreel his answer from them.  
I will sow him in the country, I will love  
Unloved;  
I will say to No-People-of-Mine, 'You are my  
people',  
and he will answer, 'You are my God'.

**Psalm 119, 33-40**

Ant. **Lord, let me live in your justice**

Teach me the demands of your statutes  
and I will keep them to the end.

Train me to observe your law,  
to keep it with my heart.

Guide me in the path of your commands;  
for there is my delight.

Bend my heart to your will  
and not to love of gain.

Keep my eyes from what is false;  
by your word, give me life.

Keep the promise you have made  
to the servant who fears you.

Keep me from the scorn I dread,  
for your decrees are good.

See, I long for your precepts;  
then in your justice, give me life.

**Gospel: Lk 8, 4-15**

With a large crowd gathering and people from every town finding their way to him, he used this parable: 'A sower went out to sow his seed. As he sowed, some fell on the edge of the path and was trampled on; and the birds of the air ate it up. Some seed fell on rock, and when it

came up it withered away, having no moisture. Some seed fell amongst thorns and the thorns grew with it and choked it. And some seed fell into rich soil and grew and produced its crop a hundredfold.' Saying this he cried, 'Listen, anyone who has ears to hear!'

His disciples asked him what this parable might mean, and he said, The mysteries of the kingdom of God are revealed to you; for the rest there are only parables, so that

*they may see but not perceive,  
listen but not understand.*

This, then, is what the parable means: the seed is the word of God. Those on the edge of the path are people who have heard it, and then the devil comes and carries away the word from their hearts in case they should believe and be saved. Those on the rock are people who, when they first hear it, welcome the word with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of trial they give up. As for the part that fell into thorns, this is people who have heard, but as they go on their way they are choked by the worries and riches and pleasures of life and do not reach maturity. As for the part in the rich soil, this is people with

a noble and generous heart who have heard the word and take it to themselves and yield a harvest through their perseverance.

***(Homily)***

***Prayer of the Faithful***

- P** Let us offer our prayers to the Father. May He who gave Christ, the Word of life to the world, dispose our hearts to attentive listening and to meditation.
- A Hear us, O Lord.**
- L** – That the Lord will keep the tempter away from us and that his Word will produce in us the fruits of salvation. Let us pray.
- That we may welcome the Word with joy and let it take root in our lives so that it may sustain us in the times of trial. Let us pray.
- That we may never allow the thoughts and concerns of the day to suffocate the power of the Word within us. Let us pray.
- That we may listen to the Word with open and sincere hearts, guard it with care and allow it to bear fruit through our perseverance. Let us pray.
- P** And now, we pray together:

**A** O Holy Spirit, open our hearts to a deeper awareness of the mysterious and profound relationship that unites us to Christ from whom we come, for whom we live, and towards whom we journey. During these days of spiritual renewal we pray that we will be guided by no other light than the light of Christ, who is the light of the world; that no other truth will interest us than the truth revealed by the Lord, our one and only teacher; that no other longing will attract us, than the desire to be totally faithful to Christ. To Him, our beginning, our life and our guide, our hope and our end, all honour and glory for ever. Amen.

### *Concluding hymn*

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## CELEBRATION AT THE END OF THE RETREAT

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### *Presider's greeting*

**P** Brothers, at the end of these days of spiritual renewal, let us take to heart the words of St. James: "Do not merely listen to God's Word, and so deceive yourselves; be doers of the Word. Welcome the Word which you have

heard with good and sincere hearts, guard it and let it bear fruit through your perseverance (cf. James 1, 22; Lk 8, 15).

Let us pray. O Lord, in these days you have spoken to our hearts, you have revealed your truth and have renewed us with your love; grant that we might live the Word that we have heard in joy and in fidelity. Through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

### ***Listening to God's Word***

#### **From the letter to the Colossians**

(2, 6-7.12-14; 3, 1-4)

You must live your whole life according to the Christ you have received - Jesus the Lord; you must be rooted in him and built on him and held firm by the faith you have been taught, and full of thanksgiving. Make sure that no one traps you and deprives you of your freedom by some second-hand, empty, rational philosophy based on the principles of this world instead of on Christ. You have been buried with him, when you were baptised; and by baptism, too, you have been raised up with him through your belief in the power of God who raised him from the dead. You were

dead, because you were sinners and had not been circumcised: he has brought you to life with him, he has forgiven us all our sins. He has overridden the Law, and cancelled every record of the debt that we had to pay; he has done away with it by nailing it to the cross.

Since you have been brought back to true life with Christ, you must look for the things that are in heaven, where Christ is, sitting at God's right hand. Let your thoughts be on heavenly things, not on the things that are on the earth, because you have died, and now the life you have is hidden with Christ in God. But when Christ is revealed - and he is your life - you too will be revealed in all your glory with him.

### ***Personal reflection***

#### **Meditation psalm** (119, 26-27.29-35)

I declared my ways and you answered;  
teach me your statutes.

Make me grasp the way of your precepts  
and I will muse on your wonders.

Keep me from the way of error  
and teach me your law.

I have chosen the way of truth  
with your decrees before me.

I bind myself to do your will;  
Lord, do not disappoint me.  
I will run the way of your commands;  
you give freedom to my heart.

Teach me the demands of your statutes  
and I will keep them to the end.  
Train me to observe your law,  
to keep it with my heart.

Guide me in the path of your commands;  
for there is my delight.

### **From the letter to the Romans** (12, 1-13)

Think of God's mercy, my brothers, and worship him, I beg you, in a way that is worthy of thinking beings, by offering your living bodies as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to God. Do not model yourselves on the behaviour of the world around you, but let your behaviour change, modelled by your new mind. This is the only way to discover the will of God and know what is good, what it is that God wants, what is the perfect thing to do.

In the light of the grace I have received I want to urge each one among you not to exaggerate his real importance. Each of you must judge himself soberly by the standard of the faith

God has given him. Just as each of our bodies has several parts and each part has a separate function, so all of us, in union with Christ, form one body, and as parts of it we belong to each other. Our gifts differ according to the grace given us. If your gift is prophecy, then use it as your faith suggests; if administration, then use it for administration; if teaching, then use it for teaching. Let the preachers deliver sermons, the almsgivers give freely, the officials be diligent, and those who do works of mercy do them cheerfully. Do not let your love be a pretence, but sincerely prefer good to evil. Love each other as much as brothers should, and have a profound respect for each other. Work for the Lord with untiring effort and with great earnestness of spirit. If you have hope, this will make you cheerful. Do not give up if trials come; and keep on praying. If any of the saints are in need you must share with them; and you should make hospitality your special care.

### ***Homily***

### ***Intercessions***

- P** In confidence let us raise our prayer to the Father who has called us to follow Christ in the radical way of the evangelical counsels.

- L** O Lord, in Baptism you consecrated us to your service.
- A** **Grant us the strength of the Holy Spirit that we may be faithful to the way of life that Jesus embraced when he came into the world to fulfil the Father's will.**
- L** O Lord, Jesus lived among us with an undivided heart.
- A** **Help us to love and to live the evangelical counsels of consecrated obedience, poverty and chastity, as your gift to us.**
- L** O Lord, Christ became obedient even unto death on a Cross.
- A** **Help us to interpret the signs of your will, with the help of our Constitutions, our superiors and the community, and to obey it with loving fidelity.**
- L** O Lord, Christ became poor to stand in solidarity with the least of his brothers and sisters and to enrich us with his friendship.
- A** **Grant us greater trust in your providence and lasting joy in the simplicity of our lives, so that our poverty may be a generous self-gift to you and our neighbour.**
- L** O Lord, You call us to celibacy in the service of youth.

- A** **May our response be faithful, generous and constant, and transform us into prophets of the liberating power of purity.**
- L** O Lord, accept our prayer for the Church: may she be a sign of the resurrection and of your love for the world.
- A** **May every heart be open to the message of salvation, and with joy and humility journey in sure hope to that place which Jesus Christ has prepared for us.**
- L** O Lord, send the abundant blessings of your Spirit upon N., our retreat preacher, and upon all those who have helped to animate this week of prayer and renewal.
- A** **May the Word that we have pondered renew our fidelity to Don Bosco and sustain our commitment to our communities, our lay mission partners, and our young people.**

### ***Renewal of profession***

- P** Let us now renew our total commitment to Christ and to our brothers in the Salesian Society. May our choice be a disciple's loving response to the love of the Father who calls.

**A God my Father,  
you consecrated me to yourself on the  
day of my baptism.  
In response to the love of the Lord Jesus  
your Son,  
who calls me to follow him more closely,  
and led by the Holy Spirit who is light  
and strength,  
with complete freedom I offer myself  
totally to you.  
I pledge myself to devote all my strength  
to those to whom you will send me,  
especially to young people who are  
poorer;  
to live in the Salesian Society  
in communion of spirit and action with  
my brothers;  
and in this way to share in the life and  
mission of your Church.  
And so, in the presence of my brothers,  
I renew the vow to live obedient, poor  
and chaste  
according to the way of the Gospel set  
out in the Salesian Constitutions.  
Father, may your grace, the intercession  
of Mary Help of Christians,  
of St Joseph, of St Francis de Sales, and  
of St John Bosco,  
together with the assistance of my**

**brother Salesians**  
**keep me faithful day by day. Amen.**

**P** Let us pray. God our Father, origin of our life, grant that through the intercession of St. John Bosco, we may work with renewed enthusiasm in your vineyard and be credible witnesses of your love among young people. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

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## PRAYER AT A COMMUNITY GATHERING

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**P** Spirit of mercy and of wisdom, we come into your presence, weighed down by our sins, but lifted up in your name.

Come and stay with us:  
by your presence  
purify our hearts and inspire us  
to do what is right,  
to pursue what is noble,  
to reflect your goodness in our lives,  
and so to accomplish your will in all things.

Spirit of wisdom, abide in us.  
Be the guide and inspiration of our

thoughts,  
you who alone, with the Father and the Son,  
are glorified.

Fashion us into artisans of justice,  
you who alone are perfect justice.

Spirit of Truth, keep us from stumbling in  
ignorance

and from being seduced by the pursuit of  
personal gain.

Grant us your gift of unity,  
that our community may abide deeply in  
you.

Guide us in the ways of truth,  
you who alone, with the Father  
and the Son, are infinite truth.

Gathered in your name,  
we ask that in all things  
we may temper justice with love and mercy,  
so that our human judgment  
may be a faithful reflection of your own.  
May the good we do today  
find its fulfilment in the eternal rewards  
you promise for all eternity.

**P** Send forth your Spirit, O Lord.

**A** **And renew the face of the earth.**

**P** Let us pray. Gracious God, you guide

the faithful by the power of the Holy Spirit. Enlighten our minds and hearts with your holy wisdom that we may seek and find our comfort in you alone. Through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

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## BIRTHDAYS AND PATRONAL NAME DAYS OF CONFRES

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### PRAYER FOR A CONFRE ON HIS BIRTHDAY

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O God, our days and seasons are in your hands. We ask you to look with favour upon our brother N., as he begins another year of life. Grant that he may continue to grow in wisdom and grace, and strengthen his trust in your goodness all the days of his life. Watch over him today and every day; bless and guide him wherever he may be. Strengthen his hands to do your work; comfort him in times of trouble and sadness; raise him up when he falls, so that his heart may always find peace in your tender love. God our Father, just as the birth of Jesus brought great joy to Mary and Joseph, may the life of our brother N. be a blessing to your people. We give you thanks

for calling him to be an apostle and bearer of your love to the young. May he ever grow in faith, hope, and love! We ask this in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

### **PRAYER ON ONE'S OWN BIRTHDAY**

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Lord, may this commemoration of my birth remind me of all the gifts and blessings I have received from you today and every day. I thank you for the gift of my life and my vocation and ask for another year filled with your presence so that I may continue to grow as an instrument of your love to young people. Gracious God, I thank you for the love of my parents who loved me into being and raised me. Thank you for calling me to celebrate life in the midst of the young. I thank you for all your goodness to me throughout the years, holding me in the palm of your hand. I do not know what lies ahead or what the future holds for me. But I know that I can trust your faithfulness to me. My faith in you is but a shadow of your great fidelity to me. Let my ways be pleasing to you for the rest of my days. Be near me when the road I walk is lonely; raise me up with your mighty arm when I stumble; draw me back into your light when darkness overshadows me. Grant that I

may be as creative and loving as you want me to be as your disciple. I ask this in the certain knowledge of your love for me and in the sure hope of meeting you one day, face to face, for all eternity, Amen.

### **PRAYER FOR A CONFRERE ON HIS NAME DAY**

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Heavenly Father, in your wisdom you have called women and men to consecrated life so that through their prayerful dedication to obedience, poverty and chastity, they may be authentic witnesses of your love. You chose them in your provident love and gave them a name and an enduring identity as true citizens of heaven. Look kindly on our brother N. as he celebrates his name day today. Grant him, Lord, the grace and joy of perseverance in his holy Salesian vocation through the intercession of his patron saint N. May he continue to experience the power and beauty of your call, even as your love leads him to new horizons. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.







4

**SPECIAL  
OCCASIONS**



## INSTALLATION OF A RECTOR

### **Option 1**

#### **Within a Eucharistic celebration**

*If the rite of installation takes place within a Eucharistic celebration, it follows the Gospel reading and a brief instruction. Articles of the Constitutions are read. The Provincial, or the one designated to take his place, reads the Decree of Nomination and gives a brief homily. The new rector makes the profession of faith, followed by the intercessory prayers. After communion the "Te Deum" may be sung.*

### **Option 2**

#### **Outside of a Eucharistic celebration**

##### ***Introductory hymn***

##### ***Liturgical salutation and invitation***

##### ***Prayer***

**P** O Lord, who in St. John Bosco have given to your Church a father and teacher of the young, bless our brother N. whom you have constituted in authority as he begins his mandate of service, so that with pastoral charity, discreet wisdom and attentive care he may animate the community and promote a renewed Salesian presence among the young. Through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

## ***Listening to God's Word***

### ***Option 1***

#### **1 Cor 2, 1-16**

*Christ is my wisdom*

As for me, brothers, when I came to you, it was not with any show of oratory or philosophy, but simply to tell you what God had guaranteed. During my stay with you, the only knowledge I claimed to have was about Jesus, and only about him as the crucified Christ. Far from relying on any power of my own, I came among you in great 'fear and trembling' and in my speeches and the sermons that I gave, there were none of the arguments that belong to philosophy; only a demonstration of the power of the Spirit. And I did this so that your faith should not depend on human philosophy but on the power of God. But still we have a wisdom to offer those who have reached maturity: not a philosophy of our age, it is true, still less of the masters of our age, which are coming to their end. The hidden wisdom of God which we teach in our mysteries is the wisdom that God predestined to be for our glory before the ages began. It is a wisdom that none of the masters of this age have ever

known, or they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory; we teach what scripture calls:

the things that no eye has seen and no ear has heard,  
things beyond the mind of man,  
all that God has prepared for those who love him.

These are the very things that God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit reaches the depths of everything, even the depths of God. After all, the depths of a man can only be known by his own spirit, not by any other man, and in the same way the depths of God can only be known by the Spirit of God. Now instead of the spirit of the world, we have received the Spirit that comes from God, to teach us to understand the gifts that he has given us. Therefore we teach, not in the way in which philosophy is taught, but in the way that the Spirit teaches us: we teach spiritual things spiritually. An unspiritual person is one who does not accept anything of the Spirit of God: he sees it all as nonsense; it is beyond his understanding because it can only be understood by means of the Spirit. A spiritual man, on the other hand, is able to judge the value of everything, and his own

value is not to be judged by other men. As scripture says: Who can know the mind of the Lord, so who can teach him? But we are those who have the mind of Christ.

### ***Option 2***

#### **Eph. 4, 1-7.11-16**

##### *Various roles in one Spirit*

I, the prisoner in the Lord, implore you therefore to lead a life worthy of your vocation. Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together. There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were all called into one and the same hope when you were called. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all, over all, through all and within all.

Each one of us, however, has been given his own share of grace, given as Christ allotted it. And to some, his gift was that they should be apostles; to some, prophets; to some, evangelists; to some, pastors and teachers; so that the saints together make a unity in the work of service, building up the body of Christ. In this way we are all to come to unity in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son

of God, until we become the perfect Man, fully mature with the fullness of Christ himself. Then we shall not be children any longer, or tossed one way and another and carried along by every wind of doctrine, at the mercy of all the tricks men play and their cleverness in practising deceit. If we live by the truth and in love, we shall grow in all ways into Christ, who is the head by whom the whole body is fitted and joined together, every joint adding its own strength, for each separate part to work according to its function. So the body grows until it has built itself up, in love.

**Psalm 84, 2-3.4.5-6.10-11.12-13**

Ant. **Blessed is he who lives in your house,  
Lord. Alleluia.**

How lovely is your dwelling place,  
Lord, God of hosts.

My soul is longing and yearning,  
is yearning for the courts of the Lord.  
My heart and my soul ring out their joy  
to God, the living God.

The sparrow herself finds a home  
and the swallow a nest for her brood;  
she lays her young by your altars,  
Lord of hosts, my king and my God.

They are happy, who dwell in your house,  
for ever singing your praise.

They are happy, whose strength is in you,  
in whose hearts are the roads to Zion.

Turn your eyes, O God, our shield,  
look on the face of your anointed.  
One day within your courts  
is better than a thousand elsewhere.

The threshold of the house of God  
I prefer to the dwellings of the wicked.

For the Lord God is a rampart, a shield;  
he will give us his favour and glory.  
The Lord will not refuse any good  
to those who walk without blame.  
Lord, God of hosts,  
happy the man who trusts in you!

### **Gospel: Mk 10, 35-45**

James and John, the sons of Zebedee,  
approached him. 'Master,' they said to him 'we  
want you to do us a favour.' He said to them,  
'What is it you want me to do for you?' They  
said to him, 'Allow us to sit one at your right  
hand and the other at your left in your glory'.  
'You do not know what you are asking' Jesus  
said to them. 'Can you drink the cup that I  
must drink, or be baptised with the baptism

with which I must be baptised?' They replied, 'We can'. Jesus said to them, 'The cup that I must drink you shall drink, and with the baptism with which I must be baptised you shall be baptised, but as for seats at my right hand or my left, these are not mine to grant; they belong to those to whom they have been allotted'.

When the other ten heard this they began to feel indignant with James and John so Jesus called them to him and said to them, 'You know that among the pagans their so-called rulers lord it over them, and their great men make their authority felt. This is not to happen among you. No; anyone who wants to become great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be slave to all. For the Son of Man himself did not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'

***From the Salesian Constitutions  
(Const. 176; 44; 55)***

176. The superior of each local community is called the rector.

He is first in order of responsibility for its religious life, its apostolic activities and the administration of its goods.

With the collaboration of his council he animates and governs the community according to the Constitutions and general Regulations.

44. The apostolic mandate which the Church entrusts to us is taken up and put into effect in the first place by the provincial and local communities. The members have complementary functions and each one of their tasks is important. They are aware that pastoral objectives are achieved through unity and joint brotherly responsibility.

The provincial and the rector, as promoters of dialogue and teamwork, guide the community in pastoral discernment, so that it may accomplish its apostolic plan in unity and fidelity.

55. The rector represents Christ who unites his followers in the service of the Father. He is at the centre of the community, a brother among brothers, who recognise his responsibility and authority.

His first task is to animate the community so that it may live faithful to the Constitutions and grow in unity. He coordinates the efforts of all, bearing in mind the rights, duties and capabilities of every member.

He also has a direct responsibility toward each confrere; he helps him realise his own personal vocation and carry out the work entrusted to him.

He extends his solicitude to the young for whom we work and to our collaborators, so that they may share in the community's mission with increasing responsibility. In his words, frequent contacts and opportune decisions he is a father, teacher and spiritual guide.

### ***Reading of the decree of nomination***

*(by the Provincial or his substitute, who concludes with a brief homily)*

### ***The Litany of Saints***

- L** Let us invoke the assistance of Mary Most Holy, our Help, and the intercession of the Saints upon our community so that, guided wisely and growing in fraternal collaboration, we may be a visible sign in the Church of the universal call to holiness in Christ Jesus.

*The customary Litany of the Saints follows, choosing significant names, glorified members of the Salesian Family and the patron saint of the new superior. At the end of the litany, the Rector makes the profession of faith.*

### ***Profession of faith***

I N., firmly believe and profess all and every one of the truths contained in the creed:

I believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen.

I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father. God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in Being with the Father. Through him all things were made.

For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven: by the power of the Holy Spirit he was born of the Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered, died and was buried.

On the third day he rose again in fulfilment of the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son. With the Father and the Son he

is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church.

I acknowledge one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Furthermore, I accept and profess all and every one of the tenets regarding faith and morals that have been proposed for belief by the Church, either through solemn pronouncement or through ordinary magisterium, especially those concerning the mystery of the Holy Church of Christ, its Sacraments and the Sacrifice of the Mass, as well as the primacy of the Roman Pontiff.

### ***Intercessions***

- P** Enlightened and encouraged by these teachings and exhortations, let us turn to God in supplication, that He may bless us and guide our new superior in his ministry as spiritual guide of this community.
- L** For our community consecrated to the service of the young in the spirit of Don Bosco:

- that the admirable fatherliness of our Founder may be for us an example to be contemplated, a point of reference to be cherished and a value to be incarnated.

For the new Rector, N., called to the service of authority:

- that he may direct the spirit and action of each confrere with the charism of his ministry.

For the new Rector, entrusted with the duty of promoting unity and fraternal communion with the blessing of the Spirit:

- that he may commit himself to building up a true family based on mutual respect and unity of purpose.

For the outgoing Rector N., to whom we express our gratitude with a fraternal remembrance in prayer:

- may the Lord continue to bless him for the service he rendered to our community and accompany him in his new ministry.

For those to whom our mission is directed and those whom we meet in our daily work:

- that we may welcome them with kindness, educate them with patient and firm goodness and love them with friendship that always seeks their best interests.

For vocations to the Salesian life:

- that the Lord may raise up new workers for his harvest and inspire a generous response to the urgency of proposing a radical Christian commitment to the young.

For all of us gathered here to welcome the new superior:

- that we might help each other to serve God in the young and to share with one another the joys and sorrows of our mission.

For the brothers who will be leaving our community:

- that our gratitude and fraternal remembrance may only be surpassed by the Lord's gracious recompense.

For the new confreres who will be joining our community:

- may our fraternal welcome, sustained by God's grace, empower them in their new responsibilities.

## ***Our Father***

### ***Sign of Peace***

- P** In the Spirit of the risen Christ who has made us brothers, and with the heart of Don Bosco, let us share a sign of peace.

### ***Closing prayer***

**P** God our Father, you offer us this moment of transition in the service of authority, as a sign of your on-going providence which we receive in trust and gratitude. Help us to walk together in pursuit of our common mission to be signs and bearers of your love for the young. As we embark upon this new pastoral year, may the help of Mary our Mother and the intercession of St. John Bosco be our sure source of grace, our support in times of adversity, and our inspiration to overcome difficulty and fatigue with zeal for your kingdom. Through Christ our Lord.

**A** **Amen.**

### ***Blessing***

### ***Final Marian hymn (Magnificat)***

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## **INSTALLATION OF THE NEW PROVINCIAL**

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*A celebration similar to the previous one, appropriately modified, is suggested. In each local community a specific prayer intention for the new provincial may be inserted.*

## PROVINCIAL VISITATION AND EXTRAORDINARY VISITATION

Our communion and spiritual growth are nourished, among other things, by moments of evaluation and review, enlivened by the presence of a Superior, Provincial or Extraordinary. The Visitor proposes an annual review of the vitality of a Salesian presence. He also meets each confrere individually in fraternal dialogue, focussed on the spiritual good of each confrere, the community, and the improvement of our educational-pastoral presence among young people. It is an experience of that intense family spirit which is the hallmark of our Salesian life.

*It is suggested that the visitation begin with a prayer service. This could be within the Liturgy of the Hours, a liturgy of the Word, or an opening prayer of invocation. It could conclude with a Eucharistic celebration or with a celebration of the Word.*

### ***Liturgy of the Word to begin or end the Visitation***

#### ***Opening Song***

#### ***Introductory Rites***

- P** The Lord who directs our steps in the path of true wisdom be with you all.

**A And with your spirit.**

***Act of Contrition***

**P** Lord Jesus, who were obedient to the will of the Father: forgive us for our lack of cooperation in the fulfilment of your plan of salvation.

**A Lord, have mercy.**

**P** Christ Jesus, with operative charity you made yourself available to those who sought the Kingdom: forgive us for our lethargy in the mission among the young.

**A Christ, have mercy.**

**P** Lord Jesus, who offered your life for the forgiveness of sinners: forgive us for any personal or community selfishness that made us indifferent to the cry of the poor.

**A Lord, have mercy.**

***Prayer***

*As an alternative to this prayer, one of the proposals offered in the celebrations of community meetings may be used.*

**P** Father, you order all things for good for those who place their trust in you. Help us to live in mutual charity and patience by interpreting wisely the signs of the times, and by seeking in all things to do not our own will but yours.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

**A Amen.**

### ***Listening to God's Word***

#### **For the opening celebration**

- Num 6, 24-26: The Lord be a blessing to all.
- 2 Cor 13, 5-10: May Christ dwell in you.
- Rom 16, 17-20: Be careful of those who cause divisions.
- Ef 6, 13-20: Spiritual warfare.
- Ps 66, 1-6  
(or another responsorial hymn).
- Ant. **May the Lord's word be light unto our path.**

#### **For the closing celebration**

- 1 Thess 5,16-24: Requirements for community living.
- Ps 132  
(or another responsorial hymn).
- Ant. **How good and pleasant it is when brothers live in unity.**

### **Introductory and Closing Conference of the Provincial or Extraordinary Visitor**

#### ***Intercessions for the Introductory Celebration***

*These may also be used in a Eucharistic celebration.*

**P** By God's love we are gathered as brothers to live in community and sent to be signs of his pastoral charity towards the young. Let us address our trusting prayer to our heavenly Father, that he may dispose our hearts for conversion at this privileged time of fraternal review.

**LA Lord, enlighten us with your wisdom.**

**L** For the holy Church of God:  
– that she might be an attentive witness of God's love for humanity by responding generously to the urgent needs of our times.

For priests and missionaries  
of the Good News:

– that they may grow in holiness as they proclaim the joy of the Gospel that sets us free, and take up their cross each day.

For all peoples and nations:

– that they may heed the urgency of building a society in which the dignity of every person and the sanctity of life are respected from conception to natural death.

For the young:

- that they may have the courage to grow in true freedom and seek wise mentors to accompany them along the way.

For Salesians:

- that we may keep Don Bosco's spiritual legacy alive through thoughtful and creative attentiveness to the needs of the various cultures.

For our provincial (extraordinary visitor) Fr. N.:

- that the Lord may enlighten his review of our community's educational-pastoral project and his personal encounter with each confrere.

For our community:

- that this visitation may be a privileged time to review our relationship with God, with each other, and with the young and so promote our spiritual growth in fraternal unity and mutual understanding.

### **PA Our Father...**

- P** Lord, accept our prayers and grant that these days be enlightened by your grace, wisdom and goodness. We ask this through the intercession of Mary our Help, of St. John Bosco and of all our holy patrons in Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**A Amen.**

***Intercessions for the concluding celebration***

*These may also be used in a Eucharistic celebration*

**P** Jesus Christ, Lord of history, has promised us the spirit of wisdom, truth and goodness. In this Spirit, we discern the Father's will to renew the Church constantly in holiness and apostolic fruitfulness. At the end of this [provincial / extraordinary] visitation, let us entrust our confident prayers to the Spirit, that we may be faithful to our vocation and revitalized for pastoral service.

**LA Spirit of the living God, hear us.**

- L** – For the Church, established on the foundations of the apostles: that she may confirm her witness to the risen Christ in every age through wise teaching and gospel-inspired pastoral action, we pray.
- For all those who accepted God's call to follow Christ on the way of evangelical counsels: that they may be the salt of the earth and light of the world, living and vibrant expressions of the charism of their founders, we pray.
- For us Salesians: that the Lord Jesus may make us wise interpreters of Don

Bosco's educational-pastoral project in the Church and in the world today, and imbue us with tireless zeal for the human promotion of the young in the light of the Gospel, we pray.

- For our local work: that the Holy Spirit constantly renew it to meet the needs of the young “here and now”, and make it a source of blessing for all who contribute to its success, we pray.
- For all of us, called to holiness in this religious community: that the spirit of truth will open our eyes to habits we need to change; open our hearts to fraternal love and correction; open our minds to reimagine our lifestyle in light of our Superior's observations, we pray.
- For renewed fraternal and apostolic zeal: that the dialogue and exchange shared during this visit may inspire new ways to build community, to grow in mutual respect and to work together for the good of the Church and of the poor, we pray.
- For the grace of unity in our lives: that each confrere may achieve a deeper synthesis of prayer and action as he integrates the demands of our

consecrated life with the demands of our apostolate service, we pray.

- For N., *our Visitor*: that the Lord reward him abundantly for his ministry of listening, for his prudence and wisdom during the fraternal dialogues, and for his sincere concern for each confrere, we pray.

**PA Our Father...**

*During a Eucharistic celebration, this prayer may conclude the intercessions.*

- P** Receive, O heavenly Father, the resolutions we have made at the end of this time of grace and strengthen our bonds of fraternal charity. Let difficulties not discourage these sons of yours, let differences not divide those whom you have brought together in your name. Protect those whom you have consecrated to follow Christ your Son in obedience, poverty and chastity. Bless their work, that they may proclaim to the young your promise of peace, justice and freedom, and inspire confident hope in a blessed eternity. We ask this through Christ Jesus our Lord.

**A Amen.**

***Blessing and final hymn***

## **Prayer for the community**

*In a Eucharistic celebration, this may be recited after the communion hymn. In a Liturgy of the Word, it may replace the intercessions.*

- P** O God Almighty Father,  
**A** you have fashioned all things in wisdom and love and at the dawn of time you fashioned humankind in your likeness and image. Nothing escapes your merciful gaze; to humanity afflicted by the ancient curse you gifted the day of salvation in Christ your Son. Every reality finds its meaning in you; even sadness is but a prelude to that day that will bring endless joy.
- P** Only begotten Son of the Father,  
**A** you called the Twelve to yourself, making them a sign of your grace; with them you walked the paths of the poor and the oppressed to announce the day of liberation. In the sacrifice of the Cross you founded the Church and sent out missionary disciples who, in your name proclaim the Good News to every receptive heart.
- P** Spirit of holiness,  
**A** you fill the Church with your wisdom, and raise up compelling witnesses

to the faith. Your ineffable presence is the heartbeat of the Church; the faithful whom you consecrate to religious life testify to the growth of the believing community in Christ.

**P** Bless our community, O Lord:

**A** help us to remain in your love and to be signs of your grace.

**P** Bless and forgive us, O merciful God:

**A** may your love help us to resolve any hostilities or misunderstandings.

**P** Bless our work, O Lord:

**A** guide us in our service to the young, in our giving and receiving correction, and in the discerning use of our energies.

**P** Bless, O God, all of us gathered in your name:

**A** make our community rich in hospitality that is serene, holy and open to the young.

**P** Loving God, help us to deepen our Salesian consecration by contemplating you in our presence among the young. May the young find in us the welcoming heart of Don Bosco as we grow with them in the holiness and missionary fruitfulness of our founder. We ask this through Christ, our Lord.

**A** **Amen.**

## PRAYERS TO PATRON SAINTS OF OUR CONGREGATION

*From the beginning of the Oratory, Don Bosco presented the Saints to the young as realistic models of the spiritual life. He proposed St Joseph as the patron saint of young apprentices, and the active charity of St Francis of Sales as a style of working for the nascent Congregation.*

*In the celebrations of the Saints, the Church proclaims the paschal mystery fulfilled in those who have suffered with Christ and been glorified with him; Indeed “she proposes them to the faithful as examples drawing all to the Father through Christ, and through their merits she pleads for God’s favours” (cf. SC 104).*

*“The feasts of our saints and beatified members should be celebrated as family events, and devotion to our servants of God should be fostered” (Reg. 75).*

### ST JOSEPH

Saint Joseph  
To you, O blessed Joseph,  
we turn in confidence  
to invoke your patronage  
and the intercession of Mary, your most holy

Spouse.

Through that charity which bound you so intimately

to the Immaculate Virgin Mother of God  
and through the paternal love  
with which you embraced the Child Jesus,  
we humbly beg you to look upon the  
inheritance

which Jesus Christ has purchased by his  
Blood,

and with your power and strength to aid us in  
our necessities.

O most watchful guardian of the Holy Family,  
defend the Church of Jesus Christ;  
deliver us from all error  
and from every vice that robs us of true  
freedom.

O our most mighty protector, be kind to us  
and from heaven assist us in our struggle  
against the power of darkness.

As once you rescued the Child Jesus from  
deadly peril,

so now protect God's Holy Church  
from the snares of the enemy and from all  
adversity;

shield each one of us by your constant  
protection,

so that, supported by your example and your aid,

we may live in virtue, die in peace with God,  
and be admitted to eternal happiness in  
heaven. Amen.

## ST JOHN BOSCO

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St. John Bosco, Father and Teacher of youth,  
docile to the gifts of the Spirit and open to the  
reality of your times,  
you were for the young, especially the little  
ones and the poor,  
a sign of the love and the special care of God.  
Be our guide as we walk the path of friendship  
with the Lord Jesus,  
so that we may discover in Him and in his  
Gospel  
the meaning of our lives  
and the source of true happiness.  
Help us to respond with generosity  
to the vocation we have received from God,  
so that in daily life we may be builders of  
communion,  
and may collaborate with enthusiasm,  
and in communion with the whole Church,  
in creating a civilisation of love.  
Obtain for us the grace of perseverance  
in living a high standard of Christian life,  
according to the spirit of the beatitudes;  
and grant that, guided by Mary Help of

Christians,  
we may one day be with you  
in the great family of heaven.  
Amen.

## **ST FRANCIS OF SALES**

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### ***Option 1***

O Saint Francis of Sales,  
who carried out your pastoral ministry  
with untiring dedication,  
help us to be zealous builders of God's  
Kingdom.  
Give us optimism and gentleness in  
tribulations,  
so that we may bring the love of Christ to the  
young.  
Teach us to cultivate a deep interior life,  
rooted in trust in God and celebrated in  
simplicity and joy,  
so that following your example  
we may be worthy to reach our homeland in  
heaven. Amen.

### ***Option 2***

O Saint Francis de Sales, patron of meekness,  
model of gospel virtues and living rule of  
holiness,  
through your benevolent patronage

help us to imitate you in combining  
humility with zeal,  
gentleness with strength,  
prayer and mortification with active charity.  
Help us to live in communion with God and  
with our brothers and sisters,  
in fidelity to the commitments of our  
baptismal consecration. Amen.

### **ST MARY MAZZARELLO**

---

O Saint Mary Domenica Mazzarello,  
who were ever faithful to your baptismal  
commitments;  
help us to deepen, day by day,  
our Christian vocation.  
Help us in every situation of life  
to believe in the fatherhood of God  
and to walk in his presence,  
serving our brothers with humble hearts,  
detached from the allurements of this passing  
world.  
Help us at all times  
to live in sincerity with God, with ourselves  
and with our neighbour,  
living each day in joy that is born of hope.  
Under the maternal guidance of Mary Help of  
Christians,  
may our lives, like yours, be a continual act of

self-giving love,  
to the glory of the Father and the salvation of all.  
Amen.

### **ST DOMINIC SAVIO**

---

O God, source of all that is good,  
we bless you for raising up St. Dominic Savio  
and giving him to young people  
as a resplendent example of charity and  
purity,  
a model for building up true spiritual  
friendships.

Docile to the action of your Spirit,  
Dominic pursued in his short years  
a simple but sure path to holiness,  
in joyfulness of heart and extraordinary  
fidelity  
to the ordinary commitments of daily life.

Help us to imitate his love for the Eucharist,  
his entrustment to Mary Immaculate,  
his apostolic zeal for the salvation of his  
neighbour.

Grant that we too, as your sons,  
may continually grow in joy and in love,  
until we attain the full stature of Christ our  
Lord,  
who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

## PRAYER FOR THE RECOGNITION OF HOLINESS

Merciful Father, we thank you for giving the Servant of God N. to the Church and to the world. With his commitment to his brothers and sisters, he taught us to know and love Jesus Christ who is present in a special way in the little ones. A faithful disciple of Don Bosco, he bore witness to your prevenient love, and to the merciful love of the Good Shepherd who seeks out and restores the lost sheep. Grant us, O heavenly Father, through the intercession of N., and in accordance with your will, the grace we ask for, in the living hope that he will soon be numbered among your saints. Through Christ, our Lord. Amen

## ILLNESS

### **The spiritual significance of illness and death for the sons of Don Bosco**

“The community surrounds its sick and aged confreres with care and affection. They, in

their turn, accepting their condition and serving the community in whatever way they can, are a source of blessing for it; they enrich its family spirit and deepen its unity” (Const. 53). The aged and sick confreres are a source of blessing for the Salesian community. In the experience of illness, especially when it is terminal, their apostolic zeal acquires a new meaning. They experience the mystery of redemptive suffering in a more intimate way for themselves and for others. The other confreres are united with their suffering brother in a genuine spirit of family and of sharing in the redemptive sacrifice of Christ. The enrichment is mutual. While the ailing confrere renews and sanctifies his community through his pain and suffering, the community awakens in him, through its fraternal assistance, ample reserves of love and endurance.

“When the hour for him to bring his consecrated life to its highest fulfilment comes, his brothers help him to enter fully into Christ’s paschal mystery. Death for the Salesian is made bright by the hope of entering into the joy of the Lord. And when it happens that a Salesian dies working for souls, the Congregation has won a great

triumph. The memory of departed confreres unites, 'in a love that will not pass away', those who are still pilgrims with those who are already resting in Christ" (Const. 54).

Don Bosco often reassured his first missionaries: "In time of fatigue and suffering do not forget that we have a great reward prepared for us in heaven." The Salesian is an apostle to the very end. He lives, loves and dies as an apostle of the young. His life echoes the passion of Don Bosco: "I have promised God that I would give of myself to my last breath for my youngsters."

*In the event of illness or death, the confreres of the community gather together to pray and to meditate on the mystery of suffering that is accompanied in the history of salvation by a specific gift of Christ – the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick – and to "prepare ourselves for death", as Don Bosco used to say. This and the following section contain material specifically adapted for community prayer, taken from the liturgical texts of the Church.*

*Our solidarity with a confrere who is ill or suffering has its origin in Christ who, during his life on earth, shared the suffering of the sick and worked miracles for them. Our sharing in*

*the sufferings of another is a witness to family life that invites all the members to share joys and sorrows and to accept them in faith as an expression of the will of God.*

## **VISIT TO A SICK PERSON**

*Blessing of a sick person is an ancient custom that dates back to Christ and to the apostles. Every community, besides caring for a member's material needs, is mindful of the spiritual care of its sick members and seeks in Christ the meaning of every circumstance in life.*

### **Greeting**

**P** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**A Amen.**

**P** The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**A And with your spirit.**

*With the following words the minister prepares the sick person and those present to receive the blessing.*

**P** The Lord Jesus blessed and healed sickness and infirmity of every kind. He encouraged his disciples to take care of the sick, to lay hands on them and to bless

them in his name. At this celebration, we entrust our infirm brother N. to God, that he may bear all his sufferings of body and spirit patiently, understanding that only if he participates in the passion of Christ will he share also in the joy of his resurrection. May Don Bosco, who cared for the health of his boys and Salesians, and even worked miracles of healing for them, direct all things to his spiritual benefit and be our advocate and consolation!

### ***Listening to God's Word***

#### ***Option 1***

#### **Acts 3, 1-10**

Once, when Peter and John were going up to the Temple for the prayers at the ninth hour, it happened that there was a man being carried past. He was a cripple from birth; and they used to put him down every day near the Temple entrance called the Beautiful Gate so that he could beg from the people going in. When this man saw Peter and John on their way into the Temple he begged from them. Both Peter and John looked straight at him and said, 'Look at us'. He turned to them expectantly, hoping to get something from them, but Peter said, 'I have neither silver nor

gold, but I will give you what I have: in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarene, walk!' Peter then took him by the hand and helped him to stand up. Instantly his feet and ankles became firm, he jumped up, stood, and began to walk, and he went with them into the Temple, walking and jumping and praising God. Everyone could see him walking and praising God, and they recognised him as the man who used to sit begging at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple. They were all astonished and unable to explain what had happened to him.

### ***Option 2***

#### **Mt 8, 14-17**

And going into Peter's house Jesus found Peter's mother-in-law in bed with fever. He touched her hand and the fever left her, and she got up and began to wait on him. That evening they brought him many who were possessed by devils. He cast out the spirits with a word and cured all who were sick. This was to fulfil the prophecy of Isaiah: "He took our sicknesses away and carried our diseases for us."

### ***Response***

#### **Ps. 102, 1-2.18-20.23-24**

Ant. **Lord, listen to my prayer and let my cry for help reach you.**

O Lord, listen to my prayer  
and let my cry for help reach you.

Then he will turn to the prayers of the  
helpless;  
he will not despise their prayers.

Let this be written for ages to come  
that a people yet unborn may praise the Lord;  
for the Lord leaned down from his sanctuary  
on high.

He looked down from heaven to the earth,  
when peoples and kingdoms are gathered  
together  
to pay their homage to the Lord.

He has broken my strength in mid-course;  
he has shortened the days of my life.

### ***Prayer of the faithful***

- P** As a community united in love, let us pray with confidence to Christ, our Saviour, that he may strengthen our ailing brother N. with his grace.
- L** Let us say together: Lord, bless our brother in his time of need.

**A Lord, bless our brother in his time of need.**

- L** – You who came as the physician of body and spirit to heal our infirmities.
- Man of sorrows, you took on our sufferings and our sins.
- You who had your mother at the foot of the cross to share in your sufferings.
- You who desire that we complete in our flesh what is lacking in your passion for the salvation of your Body, the Church.

**P** Let us now pray together as our Lord Jesus Christ taught us:

**PA Our Father ...**

### ***Closing prayer***

**P** Father, your Son accepted our sufferings to teach us the virtue of patience in sickness. Hear the prayers that we offer up for our brother N. May all those who suffer pain, illness or weakness, understand that they have been chosen to share in that holiness that derives from their union with the suffering Christ for the salvation of the world. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

### ***Blessing***

**P** May God the Father bless you.

**A Amen.**

**P** May Christ, the Son of God, grant you health in body and in spirit.

**A Amen.**

**P** May the Holy Spirit guide you today and always with his light.

**A Amen.**

**P** May Almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.

**A Amen.**

## **RITE OF HOLY COMMUNION TO THE SICK**

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### ***Greeting***

#### ***Option 1***

**P** The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

**A Amen.**

#### ***Option 2***

**P** Peace to you (to this house) and to all who dwell here.

**A And with your spirit.**

### ***Sprinkling with holy water***

**P** Rekindle within us, Lord, in the sign of this blessed water, the remembrance of our Baptism and of our acceptance of Christ the Lord, crucified and risen for our salvation.

### ***Penitential rite***

- P** Brothers, let us acknowledge our sins and ask the Lord for pardon. (*Pause*)
- P** Lord Jesus, you healed the sick: Lord, have mercy.
- A** **Lord, have mercy.**
- P** Lord Jesus, you pardoned sinners: Christ, have mercy.
- A** **Christ, have mercy.**
- P** Lord Jesus, you give yourself to heal us and bring us strength: Lord, have mercy.
- A** **Lord, have mercy.**

### ***Reading***

#### ***Option 1***

##### **Jn 6, 51**

“I am the living bread which has come down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live for ever; and the bread that I shall give is my flesh, for the life of the world.”

#### ***Option 2***

##### **Jn 6, 54-58**

“Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in

him. As I, who am sent by the living Father, myself draw life from the Father, so whoever eats me will draw life from me. This is the bread come down from heaven; not like the bread our ancestors ate: they are dead, but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.”

### ***Option 3***

#### **Jn 15, 5**

“I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me, with me in him, bears fruit in plenty; for cut off from me you can do nothing.”

#### ***Silence / comment on the reading***

#### ***Prayers of the faithful***

##### ***Our Father***

##### ***Communion***

**P** Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

**A** **Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.**

##### ***Silent prayer***

##### ***Prayer after Holy Communion***

### ***Option 1***

**P** Almighty and eternal God, may the body and blood of Christ your Son be for our brother, N. a lasting remedy for body and soul. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

### ***Option 2***

**P** God, our Father, you have called us to share the one bread and one cup, and so become one in Christ. Help us to live in him that we may bear fruit, rejoicing that he has redeemed the world. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

### ***Blessing***

#### ***Option 1***

**P** May God the Father bless you.

**A Amen.**

**P** May God the Son heal you.

**A Amen.**

**P** May God the Holy Spirit enlighten you.

**A Amen.**

**P** And on all of you present here, may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the Son,✠ and the Holy Spirit come down and remain with you for ever.

**A Amen.**

**Option 2**

**P** May the Lord be with you to protect you.

**A Amen.**

**P** May he guide you and give you strength.

**A Amen.**

**P** May he watch over you, keep you in his care, and bless you with his peace.

**A Amen.**

**P** May Almighty God bless you, the Father, the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.

**A Amen.**

**RITE OF ANOINTING OF THE SICK**

*As consecrated religious, we are called to be vigilant and prepared for the coming of the Lord and to live this moment in a meaningful way. It is recommended that the sacrament of anointing of the aged and the sick confreres be administered solemnly during a community celebration.*

*If the sick confrere so desires, he may avail of the sacrament of reconciliation before receiving the anointing of the sick.*

**Greeting****Option 1**

**P** The grace and peace of God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

**A And with your spirit.**

***Option 2***

**P** Peace be with you (this house)  
and with all who live here.

**A And with your spirit.**

***Sprinkling with holy water***

**P** Rekindle in us O Lord, in the sign of this blessed water, the remembrance of our Baptism and of our acceptance of Christ the Lord, crucified and risen for our salvation.

***Instruction***

**P** Beloved brothers, Christ our Lord is present among us who are gathered in his name. Let us turn to him with confidence as the sick people did in the Gospel. He, who suffered so much for us, commands us through the Apostle James: "Whoever is sick, let him send for the priests of the Church, and let the priests pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord. And the prayer of faith will save the sick person: the Lord will raise him up and if he has committed any sins, his sins will be forgiven him." Let us therefore commend our sick brother to the grace and power of Christ, that he may save him and raise him up.

## ***Penitential Rite***

### ***Option 1***

**P** Brothers, to prepare ourselves for this holy anointing, let us acknowledge our sins.

### ***Option 2***

**P** Brothers, let us acknowledge our sins and ask pardon of the Lord that we may be worthy of participating in this holy rite along with our sick brother.

**A I confess to Almighty God ...**

### ***Option 3***

**P** Lord Jesus, you healed the sick: Lord, have mercy.

**A Lord, have mercy.**

**P** Lord Jesus, you pardoned sinners: Christ, have mercy.

**A Christ, have mercy.**

**P** Lord Jesus, you give yourself to heal us and bring us strength: Lord, have mercy.

**A Lord, have mercy.**

*The celebrant concludes the penitential rite with the following words:*

**P** May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.

**A Amen.**

## ***Reading***

### ***Option 1***

#### **Mt 11, 25-30**

At that time Jesus exclaimed, "I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the clever and revealing them to mere children. Yes, Father, for that is what it pleased you to do. Everything has been entrusted to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, just as no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened, and I will give you rest. Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. Yes, my yoke is easy and my burden light."

### ***Option 2***

#### **Mk 2, 1-12**

When [Jesus] returned to Capernaum some time later, word went round that he was back; and so many people collected that there was no room left, even in front of the door.

He was preaching the word to them when some people came bringing him a paralytic carried by four men, but as the crowd made it impossible to get the man to him, they stripped the roof over the place where Jesus was; and when they had made an opening, they lowered the stretcher on which the paralytic lay. Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralytic, 'My child, your sins are forgiven'.

Now some scribes were sitting there, and they thought to themselves, 'How can this man talk like that? He is blaspheming. Who can forgive sins but God?' Jesus, inwardly aware that this was what they were thinking, said to them, 'Why do you have these thoughts in your hearts? Which of these is easier: to say to the paralytic, "Your sins are forgiven" or to say, "Get up, pick up your stretcher and walk"? But to prove to you that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins,' - he said to the paralytic - 'I order you: get up, pick up your stretcher, and go off home.' And the man got up, picked up his stretcher at once and walked out in front of everyone, so that they were all astounded and praised God saying, 'We have never seen anything like this'.

***Option 3***  
**Lk 7, 18b-23**

Summoning two of his disciples, John sent them to the Lord to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or must we wait for someone else?' When the men reached Jesus they said, 'John the Baptist has sent us to you, to ask, "Are you the one who is to come or have we to wait for someone else?"' It was just then that he cured many people of diseases and afflictions and of evil spirits, and gave the gift of sight to many who were blind. Then he gave the messengers their answer, 'Go back and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind see again, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, the Good News is proclaimed to the poor and happy is the man who does not lose faith in me.'

***A commentary on the reading or a moment of silence***

***Litanic prayer and laying on of hands***

**P** Brothers, in our prayer of faith let us appeal to God for our brother N., and let us say together:

Lord, hear our prayer.

**A** **Lord, hear our prayer.**

**P** Come and strengthen him through this holy anointing

**A Lord, hear our prayer.**

**P** Free him from all harm:

**A Lord, hear our prayer.**

**P** In your goodness relieve the sufferings of all the sick.

**A Lord, hear our prayer.**

**P** Grant that this sick brother, consecrated to Christ through profession of the evangelical counsels (and holy orders) may, through this holy anointing and the laying on of hands, receive life and health.

**A Lord, hear our prayer.**

*In silence, the priest lays his hands on the head of the sick person. The other priests who are present may do the same.*

### ***Thanksgiving over the blessed oil***

**P** Praise to you, God, the almighty Father.  
You sent your Son to live among us  
and bring us salvation.

**A Blessed be God who heals us in Christ.**

**P** Praise to you, God the only-begotten Son.  
You humbled yourself to share in our  
humanity  
and you heal our infirmities.

**A Blessed be God who heals us in Christ.**

**P** Praise to you God, the Holy Spirit, the  
Consoler.

Your unfailing power gives us strength  
in our bodily weakness.

**A Blessed be God who heals us in Christ.**

**P** God of mercy,  
ease the sufferings and comfort the  
weakness of your servant, N.,  
whom the Church anoints with this holy oil.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

### ***Anointing***

*The celebrant anoints the sick person with  
blessed oil.*

*First he anoints the forehead saying:*

**P** Through this holy anointing  
may the Lord in his love and mercy  
help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit.

**A Amen.**

*Next he anoints the hands saying:*

**P** May the Lord who frees you from sin,  
save you and raise you up.

**A Amen.**

**P** Lord Jesus Christ, our Redeemer,  
by the grace of the Holy Spirit,  
comfort our brother, N.,  
whom you have chosen to follow you in the  
name of Don Bosco.

Heal his sickness and forgive his sins;  
 expel all afflictions of mind and body;  
 mercifully restore him to full health,  
 and enable him to resume his former duties,  
 for you are Lord for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

### ***Our Father***

**P** And now, as a community gathered together by the God of love, we pray with confidence as Christ our Lord taught us:

**PA Our Father ...**

### ***Rite of communion***

*The priest shows the Eucharistic bread to those present, saying*

**P** Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

**A Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.**

*Distribution of Holy Communion*

**P** Body of Christ.

**A Amen.**

### ***Concluding prayer***

**P** All-powerful and ever-living God may the Body and Blood of Christ your Son

be for our brother N,  
a lasting remedy for body and soul.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

### ***Blessing***

**P** May God the Father bless you.

**A Amen.**

**P** May God, the Son, heal you.

**A Amen.**

**P May God the Holy Spirit enlighten you.**

**A Amen.**

**P** And may the blessing of almighty God,  
the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit,  
come down upon all of you present here.

**A Amen.**

## **RITE OF VIATICUM**

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### ***Greeting***

**P** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the  
love of God the Father and the fellowship  
of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

**A And with your spirit.**

### ***Sprinkling with blessed water***

**P** With the sign of this blessed water, renew  
within us Lord the remembrance of our  
Baptism and of our acceptance of Christ the  
Lord, crucified and risen for our salvation.

### ***Instruction***

**P** Brothers, before leaving this world to return to the Father, our Lord Jesus Christ left us the sacrament of his body and his blood. At the hour of our passing from this life to union with him, he wishes to strengthen us for our journey with this food and to comfort us with the pledge of the resurrection. United with our brother in the love of Christ, we pray for him.

### ***Penitential rite***

**P** Brothers, let us turn with confidence to the Lord and ask his forgiveness for all our sins.

**PA I confess to almighty God...**

**A Lord, have mercy.....**

*The priest concludes the penitential rite with the following words.*

**P** May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins and bring us to everlasting life.

**A Amen.**

### ***Plenary indulgence***

*At the end of the penitential rite, the priest may give the apostolic pardon for the dying using one of the following formulae.*

### ***Option 1***

**P** By the authority which the Apostolic See has given me,  
I grant you a full pardon  
and the remission of all your sins  
in the name of the Father, and of the Son, ✠  
and of the Holy Spirit.

**A Amen.**

### ***Option 2***

**P** Through the holy mysteries of our redemption, may almighty God release you from all punishments in this life and in the life to come. May he open to you the gates of paradise and welcome you to everlasting joy.

**A Amen.**

### ***Reading***

#### ***Option 1***

#### **Jn 6, 54-58**

“Anyone who does eat my flesh and drink my blood has eternal life, and I shall raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood lives in me and I live in him. As I, who am sent by the living Father, myself draw life from the Father, so whoever

eats me will draw life from me. This is the bread come down from heaven; not like the bread our ancestors ate: they are dead, but anyone who eats this bread will live for ever.”

### **Option 2**

#### **Jn 14, 23**

Jesus replied: “If anyone loves me he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we shall come to him and make our home with him.”

### **Option 3**

#### **1 Cor 11, 26**

“Until the Lord comes, therefore, every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are proclaiming his death.”

### ***A commentary on the reading or a moment of silence***

#### ***Renewal of the baptismal profession of faith***

**P** Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth?

**A I do.**

**P** Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, was crucified, died, and was buried,

rose from the dead, ascended into heaven  
and is now seated at the right  
hand of the Father?

**A I do.**

**P** Do you believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church, the communion of  
Saints,  
the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of  
the body  
and life everlasting?

**A I do.**

### ***Litany***

**P** Brothers, assembled together in one spirit,  
let us pray to our Lord Jesus Christ for our  
brother N., who freely chose the narrow way  
of the evangelical counsels to follow him  
more closely. Let us pray together saying:

**PA Assist him, Lord.**

**P** Lord Jesus, you loved us to the very end  
and gave yourself up to death that we  
might have fullness of life. We pray:

**A Assist him, Lord.**

**P** Lord Jesus you said, "Anyone who  
eats my flesh and drinks my blood  
will have eternal life". We pray:

**A Assist him, Lord.**

**P** Lord Jesus, you invite us to the

banquet of heaven, where there will be neither suffering nor tears, neither sadness nor separation. We pray:

**A Assist him, Lord.**

(Other invocations may be added)

## **Viaticum**

### ***The Lord's Prayer***

#### ***Rite of Communion as Viaticum***

*When the priest gives Communion to the sick person, he uses the form for Viaticum.*

**P** Jesus Christ is the food for the journey; he calls us to the heavenly table.

*OR*

This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Happy are those called to his supper.

**A Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.**

#### ***Distribution of Communion***

*After giving communion to the sick person, the priest adds*

**P** May the Lord Jesus Christ protect you and lead you to eternal life.

**A Amen.**

## ***Silent Prayer***

### ***Prayer after Communion***

**P** Let us pray: Heavenly Father, look upon our brother N. whom you consecrated to yourself in religious profession (and holy orders) and who now, with faith in Christ, entrusts himself to your promises. Grant that, strengthened by the Body of your Son, he may enter into the peace of your Kingdom. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

### ***Blessing***

**P** May the Lord be with you and protect you.

**A Amen.**

**P** May he guide you and give you strength.

**A Amen.**

**P** May he watch over you, keep you in his care, and bless you with his peace.

**A Amen.**

**P** May almighty God bless you,  
the Father, and the Son, ✠  
and the Holy Spirit.

**A Amen.**

## **COMMENDATION OF THE DYING**

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*As a testimony to our dignity as Christians and as religious, it is opportune to revive our faith and our*

*hope as the hour of a confrere's death approaches.  
These texts and prayers may prove helpful.*

**Brief scripture texts, words of Jesus, litany**

- Who can separate us from the love of Christ? (Rom 8, 35)
- Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's (Rom 14, 8)
- We have an everlasting home in heaven (2 Cor. 5, 1)
- We shall be with the Lord for ever (1 Thess. 4, 17)
- We shall see God as he really is (1 Jn 3, 2)
- To you, Lord, I lift up my soul (Ps 25, 1)
- The Lord is my light and my salvation (Ps 27, 1)
- I believe that I shall see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living (Ps 27, 13)
- Though I walk in the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me (Ps 23, 4)
- “Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you” (Mt 25, 34)
- “The Lord Jesus says, today you will be with me in paradise (Lk 23, 43)
- “The Lord Jesus says, I go to prepare a place for you, and I will come again to take you to myself” (Jn 14, 2-3)
- “Everyone who believes in the Son has eternal life” (Jn 6, 40)

- Into your hands, Lord, I commend my spirit (Ps 31,6)
- Lord Jesus, receive my spirit (Acts 7, 59)
- Holy Mary, pray for me.
- Saint Joseph, pray for me.
- Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, assist me in my last agony.

### ***Readings***

#### **a) Old Testament**

- Is 35, 3-4. 6c-7. 10
- Job 19, 1. 23-27

#### **Responsorial psalm**

- Psalm 23  
Ant. **The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.**
- Sal 25  
Ant. **To you, Lord, I lift up my soul.**

#### **b) New Testament**

- 1 Cor 15, 1-8.
- 1 Jn 4, 16
- Jn 6, 37-40
- Jn 14, 1-6.23.27

### ***Litany of the saints***

Lord, have mercy  
Christ, have mercy

Lord, have mercy  
Christ, have mercy

Lord, have mercy	Lord, have mercy
Christ hear us	Christ, graciously hear us
Holy Mary, Mother of God	pray for him
Holy angels of God	pray for him
Abraham, our father in faith	pray for him
David, leader of God's people	pray for him
All holy patriarchs and prophets	pray for him
Saint John the Baptist	pray for him
Saint Joseph	pray for him
Saint Peter and Saint Paul	pray for him
Saint Andrew	pray for him
Saint John	pray for him
Saint Mary Magdalene	pray for him
Saint Stephen	pray for him
Saint Ignatius	pray for him
Saint Lawrence	pray for him
Saint Perpetua and Saint Felicity	pray for him
Saint Agnes	pray for him
Saint Gregory	pray for him
Saint Augustine	pray for him
Saint Athanasius	pray for him
Saint Basil	pray for him
Saint Martin	pray for him
Saint Benedict	pray for him
Saint Francis and Saint Dominic	pray for him
Saint Francis Xavier	pray for him
Saint John Vianney	pray for him
Saint Catherine	pray for him

Saint Teresa	pray for him
Saint John Bosco	pray for him
Saint Mary Mazzarello	pray for him
Saint Francis of Sales	pray for him
Saint Dominic Savio	pray for him
Saint N. (Patron of the confrere)	pray for him
All holy men and women	pray for him
Lord, be merciful	Lord, save your people
From all evil	Lord, save your people
From every sin	Lord, save your people
From Satan's power	Lord, save your people
At the moment of death	Lord, save your people
From everlasting death	Lord, save your people
On the day of judgement	Lord, save your people
By your coming as man	Lord, save your people
By your suffering	
and cross	Lord, save your people
By your death and	
rising to new life	Lord, save your people
By your return in glory	
to the Father	Lord, save your people
By your gift of	
the Holy Spirit	Lord, save your people
By your coming	
again in glory	Lord, save your people
Be merciful to us sinners	Lord, hear our prayer
Bring N. to eternal life, first promised	
to him in baptism	Lord, hear our prayer

Raise N. on the last day, for he was nourished  
with the bread of life Lord, hear our prayer  
Let N. share in your glory, for he has shared in  
your suffering and death Lord, hear our prayer  
Jesus, Son of the living God Lord, hear our prayer  
Christ, hear us Christ, hear us  
Lord Jesus, hear  
our prayer Lord Jesus, hear our prayer

**P** Go forth, Christian soul, from this world in the name of God the almighty Father, who created you; in the name of Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, who suffered for you; in the name of the Holy Spirit, who was poured out upon you. Go forth, faithful Christian. May you live in peace this day, may your home be with God in Zion, with Mary, the virgin Mother of God, with St. Joseph, and all the angels and saints.

**A Amen.**

**P** I commend you, my dear brother, to almighty God, and entrust you to your Creator. May you return to Him who formed you from the dust of the earth. May Mary most holy, the angels and the saints come to meet you as you go forth from this life. May Christ who was crucified for you receive you into eternal freedom and peace.

May Christ who died for you admit you to paradise. May Christ, the Good Shepherd, welcome you into his flock. May he forgive all your sins, and set you among his elect. May you see your Redeemer face to face, and delight forever in the vision of God.

**A Amen.**

**P** Welcome your servant, Lord, into the place of salvation which, because of your mercy, he rightly hoped for.

**A Lord, save your people.**

- Deliver your servant, Lord, from every distress.
- Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered Noah from the flood.
- Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered Abraham from Ur of the Chaldees.
- Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered Job from his sufferings.
- Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered Moses from the hand of the Pharaoh.
- Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered Daniel from the den of lions.
- Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered the three young men from the fiery furnace.

- Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered Susanna from her false accusers.
- Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered David from the attacks of Saul and Goliath.
- Deliver your servant, Lord, as you delivered Peter and Paul from prison.
- Deliver your servant, Lord, through Jesus our Saviour, who suffered death for us and gave us eternal life.

## PRAYERS AFTER DEATH

- P** Saints of God, come to his aid! Come to meet him, angels of the Lord!
- A** **Receive his soul and present him to God the Most High.**
- P** May Christ, who called you, take you to himself; may angels escort you to the bosom of Abraham.
- A** **Receive his soul and present him to God the Most High.**
- P** Give him eternal rest, O Lord, and may your light shine upon him forever.
- A** **Receive his soul and present him to God the Most High.**
- P** Let us pray. All-powerful and merciful God, we commend to you N., our brother

and your servant. In your mercy and love, blot out whatever sins he committed through human weakness. He has died to this world; grant him birth to eternal life with you in Paradise. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

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## DEATH

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### **Death reunites us to Christ**

We remember our deceased brother N. with fraternal affection. While his passing fills us with sorrow, our hearts do not yield to despair because we believe that his death is his “birth” to new life in the Kingdom of Heaven. We are a resurrection people. Beyond the veil of suffering and death we find the joy of the empty tomb of Jesus. Don Bosco reminds us that: “a piece of paradise fixes everything.” This is the horizon that now opens up for our dear confrere N. who gave his life to God in the service of the young as a member of our Congregation. As we recall his personal virtues, we acknowledge that all the good he did for the young, in and through the Church, was by the grace of God. With proud and grateful hearts, we honour his legacy because

he worked, believed, hoped, suffered and loved among us as our brother. He lives on in our midst, urging us to persevere in our own vocation with fidelity and enthusiasm, until we too reach our journey's end in heaven.

*The prayerful vigil in the presence of the deceased confrere is an act of faith in and a testimony to the resurrection. The celebration of the Eucharist and the funeral rites are eloquent expressions of the paschal realities: our pilgrimage of human life, marked by weakness and sin, comes by grace to fullness of life in Christ, through an intentional and profound interior purification. While death ends our earthly existence, the communion between the living and the dead endures. The daily and yearly suffrage offered for the intentions of a deceased confrere are occasions for us to renew our bonds with him and to strengthen the union between the Church militant and the Church triumphant.*

*Suggested prayer services for the dead include vigils, the rosary, daily commemoration during Evening Prayer, community visits to the cemetery and prayers for the grieving community.*

## PRAYER VIGIL FOR THE DECEASED

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### **Presider's greeting**

**P** Brothers [and sisters], we are gathered here in faith, hope and love around our brother N. whom God has called from this world. He shared our life, he shared our beliefs, he worked with us in the vineyard of the Lord. And now, he has returned to the house of the Father. His passing fills us with sorrow. His death affects all of us, as a community and as individual confreres [and friends]. But we must see his passing in the light of faith, and seek its meaning and significance in the Word of God. Death does not break our connection to our brother. It merely transforms it. We can still help him, and yes, he can still help us through the power of prayer that unites us. Let us continue to carry our brother in prayer, even as we trust that he will pray for us as our intercessor before God.

### **Introductory prayers**

*One or more of the following psalms may be recited or chanted. They may be chanted in two choirs, or alternating between a soloist and assembly. Each psalm may be followed by*

*a concluding prayer that recalls the deceased confrere.*

### **Psalm 130**

Ant. **To you, O Lord, I lift up my voice.**

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,  
Lord, hear my voice!  
O let your ears be attentive  
to the voice of my pleading.

If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,  
Lord, who would survive?  
But with you is found forgiveness:  
for this we revere you.

My soul is waiting for the Lord.  
I count on his word.  
My soul is longing for the Lord  
more than watchman for daybreak.  
Let the watchman count on daybreak  
and Israel on the Lord.

Because with the Lord there is mercy  
and fullness of redemption,  
Israel indeed he will redeem  
from all its iniquity.

### **Psalm 23**

Ant. **The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.**

The Lord is my shepherd;

there is nothing I shall want.  
Fresh and green are the pastures  
where he gives me repose.

Near restful waters he leads me,  
to revive my drooping spirit.  
He guides me along the right path;  
he is true to his name.

If I should walk in the valley of darkness  
no evil would I fear.  
You are there with your crook and your staff;  
with these you give me comfort.

You have prepared a banquet for me  
in the sight of my foes.  
My head you have anointed with oil;  
my cup is overflowing.

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me  
all the days of my life.  
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell  
for ever and ever.

**P** Let us pray. We ask you, O Lord, to listen to the prayers for our brother N. Just as the true faith united him to the community of believers on earth so, by your mercy, may he now be united to the assembly of the saints in heaven. Through Christ our Risen Saviour.

## **A Amen.**

### **Listening to the Word of God**

#### **First reading**

*One of these passages is suggested*

- Job 19, 23-27a.
- 1 Cor 15, 1-4.
- Jn 6, 53-58.

#### **Second reading**

*The following readings may be found in various offices of the Liturgy of the Hours, as indicated*

- (1) *Christ will change our lowly body* (St. Athanasius – Office of the Dead).
- (2) *The Risen Christ is the hope of all Christians* (St. Braulio – Office of the Dead).
- (3) *It is a holy thought to pray for the dead* (St. Gregory Nazianzen – Friday, XXXI Week in Ordinary Time).
- (4) *Let us die with Christ, to live with Christ* (St. Ambrose - 2 Nov.: The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed).
- (5) *God's mercies shall be my song forever* (St. Aloysius Gonzaga - 21 June: Memorial).
- (6) *Let us show Christ Crucified in our lives* (St. Ambrose – Saturday, XXXI Week in Ordinary Time).

- (7) *The one who overcomes shall not be harmed by the second death* (St. Fulgentius of Ruspe – Monday, XXXIII Week in Ordinary Time).
- (8) *Let us banish the fear of death and think of the eternal life that follows it* (St. Cyprian – Friday, XXXIV Week in Ordinary Time).
- (9) *The death of Saint Monica- Let us gain eternal wisdom* (St. Augustine – 27 August: Memorial).
- (10) *An exemplary death: St. Martin, a poor and humble man* (Sulpitius Severus – 11 November: Memorial).

## **Profession of faith**

- P** This is the message that we have received.
- A** **This is our faith: Christ died for our sins, in accordance with the Scriptures; he was buried; and he was raised to life on the third day, in accordance with the Scriptures; he appeared to Peter and to the twelve.**
- P** The Lord is risen: the first fruits of all who have fallen asleep.
- A** **As all die in Adam, so all will be brought to life in Christ.**

## **Thanksgiving**

**Option 1**

**P** The Lord be with you.

**A** **And with your spirit.**

**P** Lift up your hearts.

**A** **We lift them up to the Lord.**

**P** Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God.

**A** **It is right and just.**

**P** It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,  
 always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
 Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,  
 through Christ our Lord.  
 In him the hope of blessed resurrection has  
 dawned,  
 that those saddened by the certainty of  
 dying  
 might be consoled by the promise of  
 immortality to come.  
 By this mystery of salvation, O Father,  
 we know the greatness of your love for us.  
 Now, as we await the coming  
 of your Kingdom of justice and peace,  
 we turn to you with the prayer  
 that Jesus taught us

**PA** **Our Father...**

**Option 2****Intercessions**

**P** Brothers [and sisters], because we are intimately united to Christ through baptism, we have a share in his infinite glory. In the Risen Lord, we remain united to each other even beyond death. Strengthened by this hope, we turn to the Lord in faith.

**A Lord, graciously hear us.**

- L** – For the Church: that she may be for the world a sign of hope, love and life. We pray to the Lord.
- For the world: may the hunger for life which God has planted in the hearts of all his creatures triumph over sin and death. We pray to the Lord.
- For those who believe that death has the last word: may our testimony of faith inspire them with new hope. We pray to the Lord.
- For our brother N., who believed in Jesus and placed all his hope in his death and resurrection: may the Lord welcome him to his eternal dwelling place of light and peace. We pray to the Lord.
- For our brother N., who accepted the Lord's call and followed him to the end of his days: may the Lord grant him the reward of the good and faithful servant. We pray to the Lord.
- For our brother N., who was nourished

with the bread of life: may the Lord grant him the joy of the resurrection. We pray to the Lord.

- For our brother N., who like each one of us, bore his own human weakness and fragility: may the Lord in his mercy cleanse him of all guilt and sin. We pray to the Lord.
- For all of us here present: may the Lord help us to grow in fidelity to him day by day. We pray to the Lord.

### **A Our Father...**

#### **Concluding prayer**

*Any prayer from the Masses for the Dead may be used.*

- P** O God, you are the life of the just and the glory of believers because you saved us through the death and resurrection of your Son. Have mercy, we pray, on our brother N., who through his self-giving to the Salesian mission professed his faith in the resurrection. Bless him with endless joy. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

### **A Amen.**

## **DAILY REMEMBRANCE OF THE DEPARTED**

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*Each community, as a sign of brotherly communion, decides on an opportune moment*

*for the daily reading of the necrology (Reg. 47). A meaningful moment could be during Vespers, just before the final intercession. Occasionally, it would be appropriate to recall, in personal and community prayer, the memory of all the deceased members of the Salesian Family. The “Good Night” would be another appropriate moment to honour the memory of confreres who made an exceptional contribution to the Congregation at the local, provincial or world level.*

*Below are suggested formulae for introducing and concluding the remembrance of deceased confreres. These introductions express our gratitude to God for the lives of our deceased confreres, and our ongoing prayer for their eternal repose.*

### **Introduction**

- Let us remember our deceased confreres whose death anniversary occurs tomorrow/ today [add date].
- Let us pray for our deceased confreres, mindful that our human weakness is healed by the merciful love of our God.
- Let us pray for our deceased confreres who sought to grow in holiness by dedicating themselves to the good of the young in the spirit of Don Bosco.

- Let us implore God's mercy and peace upon our deceased confreres, whose living memory is a blessing for those who knew and loved them.

## Conclusion

### Option 1

- L** Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May they rest in peace.

**A Amen.**

### Option 2

- L** Grant eternal rest, O Lord,

**A To all who seek to dwell in your peace.**

### Option 3

- L** God the Father has raised Jesus from the dead.

**A May he grant new life to our mortal bodies, through the power of the Spirit who dwells within us.**

## VISIT TO THE CEMETERY

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*In addition to the funeral rites and the daily remembrance of deceased confreres, we preserve the ancient Christian tradition of visiting the cemetery to pray in suffrage for the dead, professing our belief in the resurrection of*

*those who have fallen asleep in Christ.*

*Where possible, it is laudable to celebrate a community Mass for all the departed confreres in the cemetery/chapel or other suitable place. The community could go in procession from the place where the Mass was celebrated to the tomb and offer appropriate prayers. The Order of Christian Funerals contains responsorial psalms, readings, intercessory prayers that are appropriate for such occasions. Prayers at the tomb may begin with a brief invitation to prayer, followed by a short scripture reading, a responsorial psalm, the Our Father and a final prayer followed by the blessing of the tomb with the sprinkling of holy water.*

### **Prayer of the faithful**

- P** Gracious God, in your loving plan of salvation, you created us in your likeness and image, redeemed us from sin and death and restored us to fellowship in your divine life. We entrust our deceased brothers to your infinite mercy.
- L** Look kindly upon those who have died in the certain hope of reaching their homeland in heaven.
- A** **May they rise from the dust to enjoy fullness of life in your presence.**

- L** Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, you conquered death and broke the ancient curse, restoring the temple in your risen body and unlocking for us the gates of heaven.
- A** **Welcome into your dwelling place of eternal light and holiness those whom you chose to follow you in the service of the young.**
- L** Spirit of peace, you consoled our deceased brothers in their trials and tribulations. They have left this world to join those who have preceded them in faith from time into eternity.
- A** **Be mindful of us, too, as we continue our pilgrimage on earth and seek the eternal joy of heaven.**
- P** In faith and hope, we turn to the Father and pray as Jesus taught us
- A** **Our Father...**
- P** Let us pray. Welcome, O Lord, into the company of your saints our departed confreres (*names could be mentioned*). In the name of Jesus Christ, they followed the gospel way of perfect love. Grant that their mortal remains be raised up at the final resurrection. Bless those whom from

all eternity you have destined to share in your glory. Through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

*The tomb may be sprinkled with holy water, while all the priests present join in imparting the blessing.*

**P** May the souls of all our deceased confreres and of all the faithful departed rest in peace.

**A Amen.**

*An appropriate hymn may be sung.*

## **PRAYER FOR A COMMUNITY GRIEVING A CONFRERE'S PASSING**

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*This community prayer may be offered in the chapel or in any other appropriate setting. Confreres are invited to sit in a circle, facing one other. It is recommended to have a lit candle at the centre of the circle as a reminder of the Risen Christ who is the focus of our hope and consolation. A smaller candle could be prepared to be passed around during the fraternal sharing.*

### **Greeting**

**P** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**A Amen.**

**P** May the consolation of God the Father, the love of Christ the Son, and the life-giving presence of the Holy Spirit be with you.

**A And with your spirit.**

*The presider addresses the confreres with these or other suitable words.*

**P** The memory of our confrere's passing is foremost in our hearts and minds. In our sadness we turn to the Lord of all consolation, that he may restore our joy and our strength. In this time of grief, let us ask the Lord for the grace of renewed trust in him who is the God of hope, the God who alone can restore peace through the power of the Holy Spirit. Although the ways of the Lord are not always clear to us, we entrust our brother N. to the Risen Jesus who by his death and resurrection transforms human defeat into Godly victory.

**P** Let us pray. God of all consolation, be present to this community and comfort us as we grieve the passing of our beloved confrere N. Be our strength at this time of loss and sadness. Surround us with your love. Help us to find rest in your paternal embrace. Watch over us when we rest and bless us at our

rising, so that each day we may give ourselves generously in service, to the glory of your name. As brothers, may we be of one mind and one heart. Strengthen our fraternal bonds, that the memory of our deceased brother which unites us in sorrow may also renew in us the joy of total self-giving to our Salesian vocation. Guide this community as we seek together the promises of your Kingdom. Who live and reign for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

## **The Word of God**

### ***Suggested Reading:***

2 Cor 1, 3-7 (or) 1 Thess 4, 13-18

### **Responsorial psalm**

#### ***Option 1***

Ant. **Console me with your love, O Lord.**

Wrap me in your powerful embrace  
Be for me a shelter in the storm, O Lord,  
Protect me with your loving care.

By day I entrust my heartbreak to you  
By night I entrust my troubled thoughts to you.

In you I find refuge,  
In you I will not be afraid,  
for you hold me tight; with you I am safe.

Calm my fearful heart, O God,  
 Restrain my anxious thoughts, O Lord.  
 Because my whole life is founded on you  
 My entire being is entrusted to you,  
 All my hope has its source in you.

### Option 2

- Psalm 23  
 Ant. **The Lord is my shepherd,  
 nothing shall I want.**
- Psalm 71, 1-8  
 Ant. **In you, O Lord, I find refuge.**
- Psalm 121  
 Ant. **My help comes from the Lord  
 who made heaven and earth.**

### Gospel reading

Jn 11, 28-37 (Or) Lk 24, 28-32

### Fraternal sharing

*Each confrere is invited to share how the deceased confrere impacted his life or some meaningful anecdote from his life. During this sharing, the passing of a lit candle from one confrere to the next is recommended. The passing-candle is lit from the Christ-candle that was placed at the center of the circle. At the end of the sharing, the community leader invites the group to pray together the Our Father.*

## **Our Father**

- P** Jesus taught us to call God our Father. With confidence and trust we sum up all our sentiments in the prayer that the Lord has given us:

### **Our Father ...**

- P** All powerful God, Author of life and Lord of creation, we see your majesty revealed in all the works of your hands, from the humble beauty of a simple flower, to the rich dignity of every human person. We thank you for filling our days with hope in eternal life. Your Son assumed our human condition in all things but sin, and like us experienced the sorrow of losing those who were dear to him. As we recall our brother N. we ask that you open the pages of our lives to the outpouring of your mercy: forgive our sins and fill us with profound gratitude for your provident care. You are the resurrection and the life. You live for ever and ever.

- A Amen.**

## **Blessing**

- P** Loving Father, ease our grief with firm trust in your paternal care. May your tender love bring healing and consolation.

**A Amen.**

**P** Jesus our brother, strengthen our faith as we pray for the dead. May our suffrage hasten the purification of their souls; in your mercy, bring them to the glory of eternal life with all those whom they have loved.

**A Amen.**

**P** Consoler Spirit, assist us as we ponder the mysteries that exceed our human comprehension. Grant us an abiding trust in the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection and life everlasting.

**A Amen.**

**P** May almighty God bless you, the Father, and the Son, ✠ and the Holy Spirit.

**A Amen.**

**5** SEASON OF ADVENT

**6** SEASON OF CHRISTMAS

**7** SEASON OF LENT

**8** THE SEASON OF EASTER

**9** ORDINARY TIME

## PART TWO

# THE LITURGICAL YEAR

*“The commemoration of the mysteries of the Lord...  
makes of our life a time of salvation in hope”*

**(Const. 89)**





5

SEASON OF  
ADVENT



## ADVENT WREATH SERVICE

### ***Blessing of the Advent wreath***

*The blessing of the Advent Wreath takes place on the First Sunday of Advent, usually in the chapel just before Sunday Evening Prayer I, or in the community room or dining room after Evening Prayer. In the first week of Advent, one purple candle is lit. Each week of Advent an additional candle is lit. The rose candle is lit on Week III, Laetare Sunday. If it is local custom to add a fifth Christ-candle to the center of the wreath, it is normally lit on Christmas Eve.*

*Two possible prayer services are offered here. The second is more suitable for gatherings where young people are present.*

### **Option 1**

#### **Introduction**

*All make the sign of the cross as the presider says:*

**P** Our help is in the name of the Lord.

**A Who made heaven and earth.**

#### **Scripture Reading**

*One of the following passages may be read.*

Is 9, 1-2, 5-6

Is 63, 16-17, 19

Is 64, 2-7

**R** The Word of the Lord.

**A** **Thanks be to God.**

*With hands joined, the presider says:*

**P** Lord our God,  
we praise you for your Son, Jesus Christ:  
he is Emmanuel, God with us, the hope of  
the peoples.  
He is the wisdom that teaches and guides  
us,  
he is the Saviour of every nation.  
Lord God,  
let your blessing come upon us  
as we light the candles of this wreath.  
May the wreath and its light  
be a sign of Christ's promise to bring us  
salvation.  
May he come quickly and not delay.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**A** **Amen.**

***Prayer before lighting the candle***

**FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

Come, Lord Jesus, Word of the Father. Teach us  
to keep vigil. Make us doers of your Word and  
builders of your Church. Help us to recognize  
the signs of your saving presence in the  
ordinary events of daily life. Come, Lord Jesus,  
Maranatha.

*The blessing may conclude with a verse from an Advent hymn. The verse however is omitted if Evening Prayer is celebrated immediately after the wreath blessing and candle lighting.*

“O Come, O Come, Emmanuel”

O come, desire of nations, bind  
in one the hearts of humankind;  
bid ev’ry sad division cease  
and be thyself our Prince of peace.  
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel  
shall come to thee, O Israel.

## **SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

Come, Lord Jesus. Bring us back from  
whatever paths have led us away from you.  
Help us to follow you, who are the way, the  
truth and the life. May your Word be a light  
unto our steps, opening us to your gift of true  
joy. Come, Lord Jesus, Maranatha.

## **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

Come, Lord Jesus. We await you in joyful  
anticipation as sentinels watching for  
daybreak. Your dawn is near. May all  
Christians grow in the light of your love and  
by their manner of living attract new brothers  
and sisters to the beauty of your church, the

light you promised to the nations. Come, Lord Jesus, Maranatha.

## **FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

Come, Lord Jesus. Stir up in our communities the courage of Mary who set out in haste to bring prompt, humble and loving service to those in need. Her words and her zeal proclaim your presence in her life; she reveals that you are the fulfillment of every human desire. Help us to be like her, Lord: wherever people walk in darkness Lord, send us to be your light. Come, Lord Jesus, Maranatha.

### ***Option 2***

#### ***Week 1 - The Candle of Hope***

#### **The Patriarchs, Abraham, the Old Testament Ancestors of Jesus**

*An advent hymn could be sung*

**P** Light and peace in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**A** **Thanks be to God**

**R1** Today is the First Sunday of Advent. We recall the hope we have in Christ. God told Abraham that through him all the nations of the world would be blessed, because he trusted and put his hope in

God. The Old Testament spoke of the coming of Christ, of how a Saviour would be born, a king in the line of King David. He would rule the world wisely and bless all the nations. We too believe in God's promise to send Jesus again to this world to establish his kingdom upon the earth.

*(A person lights the first candle)*

**R2** Hope is like a light shining in a dark place. As we look at the light of this candle we celebrate the hope we have in Jesus Christ.

**P** Let us pray.

**A** **God of Abraham and Sarah and all the Patriarchs of old, you are our Father too. Your love is revealed to us in Jesus Christ, Son of God, and Son of David. Help us in preparing to celebrate his birth, to make our hearts ready and to place our hope in you. Help us today and every day to worship you, to hear your word, and to do your will by sharing your hope with others. We ask this in the name of the one who was born in Bethlehem. Amen.**

## ***Week 2 - The Candle of Peace***

*The first candle is lit before the prayer begins*

## **The prophets who foretold the birth of Jesus**

*An advent hymn could be sung*

**P** Light and peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **A Thanks be to God**

**R1** Today is the Second Sunday of Advent and we will light the Candle of Peace.

Last Sunday we lit the first candle of our Advent Wreath, and celebrated the patriarchs. This first candle reminded us of our hope in Christ, our Saviour, born a king in the line of King David. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, the City of David, and we believe that he will come again to fulfil all of God's promises to us. Today we light the second candle of Advent, the candle of peace.

*(A person lights the second candle)*

**R2** We remember the prophets who spoke of the coming of Christ. The prophet Isaiah called Christ "the Prince of Peace". The prophets foretold how Jesus would rule the world wisely and bless all the nations.

When Jesus came he taught people the importance of being peace-makers. He said that those who make peace shall be called the children of God. When Christ comes

to us he brings us peace and he will bring everlasting peace when he comes again. We light the Candle of Peace to remind us that Jesus is the Prince of Peace and that through him peace is possible in our hearts, our families, and in the world.

**R3** Peace is like a light shining in a dark place. As we look at this candle we welcome the peace that we find in Jesus Christ.

**P** Let us pray.

**A** **Lord Jesus, Light of the World, the prophets said you would bring peace and save your people from trouble. Give peace to our hearts this Advent and Christmas time. We ask that as we wait for you to come again, your peace might reign on earth. Help us today and every day to worship you, to hear your word, and to do your will by sharing your peace with each other. We ask it in the name of the one who was born in Bethlehem. Amen.**

### ***Week 3 - The Pink Candle of Joy***

*The first and second candles are lit before the prayer begins*

### **Mary the Mother of Jesus**

*An advent hymn could be sung*

**L** Light and peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord

**A Thanks be to God**

**R1** Last Sunday we lit the Candles of Peace and Hope as we remember that Jesus, born in Bethlehem, will come again to fulfil all of God's promises and bring us everlasting peace. Today we light the third candle of Advent, the candle of Joy.

*(A person lights the rose candle)*

**R2** When the angel Gabriel told Mary that a special child would be born to her she was filled with joy. She sang a song that began with the words: "My soul magnifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour". Just as the birth of Jesus gave great joy to his mother, so his presence in the world brings joy to those who had none before. Jesus is our joy because he heals those who believe in him.

**R3** Our joy comes from the hope and peace of knowing Jesus is near to us. The candle of joy reminds us that Jesus wants to be born in us and that through him there will be everlasting joy for all.

Joy is like a light shining in a dark place. As we look at this candle we celebrate the joy we find in Jesus Christ.

**P** Let us pray

**A** **Thank you God for the joy you give us. We ask that as we wait for all your promises to come true, and for Christ to come again, that we would remain in your presence. Help us today, and every day to worship you, to hear your word, and to do your will by sharing your joy with others. We ask this in the name of the one who was born in Bethlehem. Amen.**

#### ***Week 4 - The Candle of Love***

*The first, second and third candles are lit before the prayer begins*

#### **John the Baptist**

*An advent hymn could be sung*

**P** Light and peace, in Jesus Christ our Lord.

**A** **Thanks be to God**

**R1** Last Sunday we lit the candles of hope, peace and joy as we remembered Jesus, born in Bethlehem, our hope, our peace and our joy.

Today we light the fourth Advent candle, the candle of love.

*(A person lights the fourth candle)*

**R2** In their old age, God gave Zechariah and Elisabeth a son named John. John spoke to the people bravely in the desert denying his own comforts and accepting to die for what he believed. John taught that we should share what we have with others, treat each other kindly and show God's love. He did this because he cared for people and wanted them to repent and find God's forgiveness.

**R3** Love is like a candle shining in a dark place. As we look at the light of this candle we celebrate the Christ's love that draws people together.

**P** Let us pray.

**A** **Lord God, your witness, John the Baptist, grew up strong in spirit and prepared people for the coming of the Lord. He loved your people and baptized them in the Jordan River to wash away their sins. Help us to have the same kind of love as John. Make us witnesses to Jesus and help us spread the good news of your love to others. As Christmas draws closer day by day, help us to be ready to welcome Jesus in our hearts. Amen**

*Christmas Day*

## **The Last Candle - The Birth of Christ**

*An advent hymn could be sung*

**P** Light and peace in Jesus Christ our Lord.

### **A Thanks be to God**

**R1** Today is Christmas Day, on which we recall the hope we have in Christ because he is Emmanuel, God with us. Today we light again the candles of hope, peace, love and joy.

*(Each candle will be lit as the leader speaks)*

**R2** First Candle. We live in hope ..... because God keeps his promises to us.

**R3** Second Candle. We work for peace ..... because Jesus is the 'Prince of Peace' and he calls his children to work for peace in his name.

**R4** Third Candle. We share joy .... because the Holy Spirit fills our hearts and minds with the presence of God.

**R5** Fourth Candle. We show love ..... because Jesus gave everything for us and led us to know the forgiveness of God.

**R6** Last Candle (Christ candle). Now we light our last candle to remember the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. As the prophets promised so

long ago, Jesus came among as our brother; and with the shepherds, we are filled with wonder and amazement.

*(A person lights the white Christ candle)*

**P** Lord, you come as a tiny, fragile baby; yet we know that you are mighty God and Saviour of the world. May the flame of this candle remind us that you are the light of the world and that if we follow you, we will never walk in darkness, but will have the true light of life.

**A O come, let us adore him! Amen.**

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## TRIDUUM IN PREPARATION FOR THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

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***First Day: Mary, Model of Contemplation***

### ***Introductory Rites***

**P** May the peace and salvation of God, who fulfils his promises through Jesus, his only begotten Son, be with you.

**A And with your spirit.**

**P** My brothers, let us look to Mary, our hope, as we unite our hearts to hers in faithful anticipation and contemplation of God's coming among us.

Let us pray.  
Lord, almighty God and Father,  
you inspired the Virgin Mary to embrace  
her vocation fully  
as the mystical dawn of redemption.  
Through her cooperation  
you fulfilled your promise of salvation.  
Grant that we, through her intercession,  
may likewise embrace all that you call us to  
be.  
Give us robust faith as we await the coming  
of your Kingdom,  
confident hope to prepare your ways, and  
selfless love to render generous service  
to those you entrust to our care.  
We ask this through Jesus  
Christ and our Lord.

**A Amen.**

### ***From the Magisterium of the Church***

#### **Contemplating Christ with Mary**

Jesus was transfigured before them, and “his face shone like the sun” (Mt 17,2). The Gospel scene of Christ’s transfiguration, in which the three Apostles Peter, James and John appear entranced by the beauty of the Redeemer, can serve as an icon of Christian contemplation. To look upon the face of Christ, to recognize its

mystery amid the daily events and sufferings of his human life, and then to grasp the divine splendour definitively revealed in the Risen Lord, seated in glory at the right hand of the Father: this is the task of every follower of Christ and therefore the task of each one of us. In contemplating Christ's face we become open to receiving the mystery of Trinitarian life, experiencing ever anew the love of the Father and delighting in the joy of the Holy Spirit. Saint Paul's words can then be applied to us: "Beholding the glory of the Lord, we are being changed into his likeness, from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit" (2 Cor 3,18).

The contemplation of Christ has an incomparable model in Mary. In a unique way the face of the Son belongs to Mary. It was in her womb that Christ was formed, receiving from her a human resemblance which points to an even greater spiritual closeness. No one has ever devoted himself to the contemplation of the face of Christ as faithfully as Mary. The eyes of her heart already turned to him at the Annunciation, when she conceived him by the power of the Holy Spirit. In the months that followed she began to sense his presence and to picture his features. When at last she gave

birth to him in Bethlehem, her eyes were able to gaze tenderly on the face of her Son, as she “wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger” (Lk 2,7).

Thereafter Mary’s gaze, ever filled with adoration and wonder, would never leave him. At times it would be a questioning look, as in the episode of the finding in the Temple: “Son, why have you treated us so?” (Lk 2,48); it would always be a penetrating gaze, one capable of deeply understanding Jesus, even to the point of perceiving his hidden feelings and anticipating his decisions, as at Cana (cf. Jn 2,5). At other times it would be a look of sorrow, especially beneath the Cross, where her vision would still be that of a mother giving birth, for Mary not only shared the passion and death of her Son, she also received the new son given to her in the beloved disciple (cf. Jn 19,26-27). On the Easter morning, hers would be a gaze radiant with the joy of the Resurrection, and finally, on the day of Pentecost, a gaze afire with the outpouring of the Spirit (cf. Acts 1,14).

Mary lived with her eyes fixed on Christ, treasuring his every word: “She kept all these things, pondering them in her heart” (Lk 2,19;

cf. 2,51). The memories of Jesus, impressed upon her heart, were always with her, leading her to reflect on the various moments of her life at her Son's side. In a way those memories were to be the "rosary" which she recited uninterruptedly throughout her earthly life.

Even now, amid the joyful songs of the heavenly Jerusalem, the reasons for her thanksgiving and praise remain unchanged. They inspire her maternal concern for the pilgrim Church, in which she continues to relate her personal account of the Gospel. Mary constantly sets before the faithful the "mysteries" of her Son, with the desire that the contemplation of those mysteries will release all their saving power. In the recitation of the Rosary, the Christian community enters into contact with the memories and the contemplative gaze of Mary.

St John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae* 10-12

***Meditation (recited in unison)***

Mary, our Mother,  
we turn to you in confidence  
because evil has no power over you  
who, from the day of your conception,  
are full of grace and unblemished in holiness.

In our daily battle against evil,  
you are our comfort, our hope, our strength.  
Before he breathed his last on the Cross,  
Jesus gave you to us as our Mother.  
You do not leave us orphaned.  
Although we are sinners, we are also your  
children,  
called to that same holiness which you  
personify.

As your children,  
we invoke your motherly protection  
over us, our families, our city, and our world.  
As you, by God's foreseeing love, were  
preserved from all sin,  
may we, through your intercession, be freed  
from every spiritual and material slavery.  
May love for God's plan of salvation grow in  
our hearts and direct all our endeavours.

Mother of Mercy,  
look upon us and grant that our human pride  
may yield to divine grace.  
Teach us to be merciful to others,  
just as our heavenly Father is merciful to us.

As we anticipate the feast of Jesus' birth,  
teach us to swim against the tide:  
to welcome Jesus the Eternal Word,  
to humble ourselves,

to strip ourselves of everything superfluous  
and vain,  
to shed all hypocrisy,  
to reach out in generous service of others,  
to listen,  
to make silence,  
to reject indifference,  
to create a space in our souls for the beauty of  
God,  
the only source of true joy.  
Mary, our Immaculate Mother, pray for us!

***Listening to God's Word***

**A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the  
Romans (Rom 8,18-27)**

I think that what we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us. The whole creation is eagerly waiting for God to reveal his sons. It was not for any fault on the part of creation that it was made unable to attain its purpose, it was made so by God; but creation still retains the hope of being freed, like us, from its slavery to decadence, to enjoy the same freedom and glory as the children of God. From the beginning till now the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth; and not only

creation, but all of us who possess the first-fruits of the Spirit, we too groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free. For we must be content to hope that we shall be saved - our salvation is not in sight, we should not have to be hoping for it if it were - but, as I say, we must hope to be saved since we are not saved yet - it is something we must wait for with patience. The Spirit too comes to help us in our weakness. For when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the Spirit himself expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words, and God who knows everything in our hearts knows perfectly well what he means, and that the pleas of the saints expressed by the Spirit are according to the mind of God

*A brief homily may be given, or a reflection by any member of the community, lay mission partner, or young person.*

### ***Prayer of thanksgiving***

- P** Truly it is right and just to give you thanks, and to raise a hymn of blessing and praise to your name, almighty and eternal God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. He was announced by all the prophets,

the Virgin Mother waited for him and raised him with perfect love.

John proclaimed his coming and pointed him out to the world when at last he appeared.

May the same Lord, whose coming we anticipate in this season of Advent, find us vigilant in prayer and exultant in his praise.

And now, together with Mary, let us sing our song of praise:

### ***Magnificat***

**A My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit exults in God my Saviour...**

### ***Intercessions***

**P** We invoke Mary, model and first fruit of the new creation. In her trusting expectation of the Saviour she welcomed into her own being the fulfilment of God's promises. As we prepare joyfully for the celebration of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, let us pray together and say:

**A Hail Mary, full of grace.**

**L** – In your Immaculate Conception, O Virgin Mary, you were blessed by the Lord and sanctified by God.

- All holy Virgin, conceived without a shadow of sin, you have become the Mother of the Lord.
- You are robed in white as with snow, your face shines like the sun.
- You are the glory of Jerusalem, the joy of Israel, the honour of your people.
- We follow you, O Immaculate Virgin, drawn by your beauty, strength and holiness.

### **Option 1**

**P** Lord Jesus Christ,  
who constituted your Immaculate Mother  
a luminous model and figure of the Church,  
through her intercession,  
free us from our faults  
and strengthen our desire for holiness.  
You live and reign for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

### **Option 2**

**P** As we eagerly await our Saviour,  
accept, O Lord, the prayers we offer you  
through the intercession of Mary, his  
Mother and ours.  
The Immaculate One is our beacon of hope,  
the praying Virgin  
who contemplates the Word she welcomed  
in her womb:  
Jesus Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

***Final Blessing***

*(a Marian blessing from the Roman Missal, may be used)*

**P** O God,  
who by the Immaculate Conception of the  
Blessed Virgin Mary  
prepared a worthy dwelling for your Son,  
grant, we pray,  
that as you preserved her from sin  
by virtue of the Death of your Son, which  
you foresaw,  
so, through her intercession,  
we too may be cleansed and admitted to  
your presence.  
Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son  
who lives and reigns with you in the  
unity of the Holy Spirit,  
one God for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

***Second Day: Mary, Collaborator in the Plan of Salvation***

***Introductory Rites***

*(as on the First Day)*

**P** My dear brothers, at the announcement of  
the angel Gabriel,

the Virgin Mary accepted God's plan for her in a courageous act of faith.

We turn to her with heart-felt devotion as we invoke her intercession.

Mary, ever-faithful Virgin,  
intercede for us before the Father.  
May your total availability to God's divine plan for you  
rekindle our own zeal for God's plans for us.

May our lives, like yours, be transformed  
by our encounter with Christ  
who comes to us day by day.  
He lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit,  
one God for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

***The Annunciation: A call and a response. "Let it be done unto me according to your Word"***

The story [of the Annunciation] is one of the most beautiful in the Gospel of Luke. It provides a lens through which we can read our present times. The Gospel is not just about an historic event; it is always an announcement of something new. The narration recalls ancient hopes, expresses current expectations and anticipates man's dreams of salvation. All of this resonates within Mary who personifies

humanity. She is called to place herself completely at God's disposition so that all of humanity's deepest yearnings may be fulfilled. "Rejoice": this is a greeting commonly used by the prophets when they address the Daughter of Zion. It ensures God's benevolent will towards a person and announces an election that brings about unparalleled happiness: "Exult! You have been highly favoured".

"The Lord is with you": these words of reassurance often accompany God's call to a particular mission. They are repeated in vocation narratives that play a key role in salvation history. This reassurance indicates that when God chooses someone for a particular vocation and mission, he continuously supports them by his presence, assistance, company, and covenant. "Nothing is impossible for God": this expression is spoken to Sarah, the wife of Abraham, in the desperate moment of her sterility, prior to her bringing forth offspring as numerous as the stars in the sky. It expresses God's decision to intervene in human affairs in favour of humanity, overcoming any limitation of nature or human freedom in the unlikely people whom God chooses for his purposes. The Annunciation remains for us

the announcement of an event of particular importance for humanity. It is the “vocation”, the “call” of Mary to collaborate in the plan of salvation; and it is her answer in faith that would allow her to become an instrument of human mediation in God’s divine plan.

Mary is invited, first of all, to believe that the event announced by the Angel is possible and also to believe in herself (this is the most difficult part!); then, she is invited to make a commitment, and finally to remain faithful to this commitment for her entire life. All this requires an unconditional trust in God.

God has the mysterious power of making fruitful that which, to the human eye, is sterile, limited or lost. The Annunciation, therefore, is an invitation to review our faith in the action and strength of the Spirit! The Annunciation calls us to our vocation. In fact, the Annunciation was the inspiration that moved us to follow the Lord Jesus, following the example of Don Bosco. Proclamations like this call us to commitment and responsibility, in which we must entrust ourselves to God and await the future with trust.

The Annunciation reminds us, above all, how our personal response to God should be:

docile, trusting, continuous, like that of Mary: "Let your word be done in me". Mary allowed herself to be shaped by the Word of God, by the Spirit of God, to be the Mother of the Word. In the inner sanctuary of her heart, grace and the Spirit were at work to perfect in Mary her vocation as Mother. And so we appreciate anew the expression so dear to the Fathers, that Mary conceived Jesus in her soul before she conceived him in her womb.

Similarly, each of us must choose to allow our obedience in faith to mature in dialogue with God and in docility to the Spirit. Sometimes in our active, consecrated or lay life, a tension arises between our personal relationship with God, that is to say, attentiveness, dialogue, affectionate acceptance and gratitude of the Lord, and - on the other hand - concern for the results of our activities. The latter challenges us and often tempts us. We want to do more and more, and little by little we put all our trust in the means and activities, to the point that they end up draining us. We need to constantly connect our endeavours and plans to the source from which they take energy and meaning: God's invitation to collaborate with Him. This is the profound meaning of our obedience.

We recognize Mary's role in the inspiration and founding of our Congregation and of the Salesian Family. We turn to her as our mother, asking that her journey of faith, so beautifully displayed at the Annunciation, inspire our journeys of faith: may we recognize the inner call of God, let ourselves become interiorly fruitful under the influence of the Spirit, and offer our own "Here I am" to bring forth new apostolic life.

Juan Vecchi, *AGC 375*

***Prayer [in unison or in two choirs]***

O Virgin Mary,  
your many children find refuge under your  
mantle  
because you are our Mother of Mercy.

Your tender heart reflects the love of God  
who draws near to us in Emmanuel.  
Jesus became flesh of your flesh  
so that as your son, he might be our brother  
and as the Son of God, our Saviour.

We look to you, our Immaculate Mother,  
in whom we contemplate  
the victory of divine mercy over sin and all its  
consequences.  
You restore our hope in newness of life, lived

to the full.

Help us to avoid every occasion of sin,  
free us from all fear and resentment,  
preserve our dignity as sons and daughters of  
God.

Teach us to live as brothers and sisters reborn  
in your Son.

Accompany us on our journey of faith.

Lead us to that open Door that is Christ.

With maternal care, speak your uplifting  
words to our heavy hearts:

“Do not be afraid. Trust and come near.

Behold Jesus, the face of the mercy of God.

Do not be ashamed, do not delay.

The Father awaits you with open arms,  
eager to welcome you home.

Come, drink at the source of his peace and joy”.

We thank you, Immaculate Mother,  
for walking before us on the road of  
reconciliation and fullness of life.

Nurture our purity of heart, that we might see  
God.

We trust you, our Mother, now and forever.

Amen.

### ***Listening to God's Word***

**A reading from the Gospel of Luke** (Lk 1.26-39)

## *The Visitation*

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. He went in and said to her, 'Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you.' She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, 'Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favour. Listen! You are to conceive and bear a son, and you must name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David; he will rule over the House of Jacob for ever and his reign will have no end.' Mary said to the angel, 'But how can this come about, since I am a virgin?' 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you' the angel answered 'and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God. Know this too: your kinswoman Elizabeth has, in her old age, herself conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God'. 'I am the handmaid of the Lord,' said Mary 'let what you have said be

done to me.' And the angel left her. Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah.

***Prayer of thanksgiving***

**P** The Lord be with you

**A** **And with your spirit**

**P** Lift up your hearts

**A** **We lift them up to the Lord**

**P** Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God

**A** **It is right and just.**

**P** Eternal Father, we praise and glorify your name  
for you created the universe  
and breathed humanity into being, allowing  
us to share in your divine life.  
After the fall of Adam and Eve, you did not  
abandon us,  
but revealed your plan of salvation by  
calling Abraham,  
who hoped against hope,  
and in faith brought forth the people of the  
first covenant.  
Throughout salvation history,  
you have continued your patient dialogue  
with humanity,  
stirring bold and courageous hearts to

respond to your call.

Finally, in the fullness of time, you sent your messenger, an angel, to Mary, a poor virgin who humbly entrusted herself entirely to you.

In faith she received your Word within her and became the Mother of your Son and of all believers.

She is the cause of our joy as we rejoice in her life-giving faith.

With her, we glorify your name:

### ***Magnificat***

**A** **My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord....**

### ***Closing Invocation of Mary***

**P** Hail Mary, full of grace, obedient handmaid of the Lord:  
your nuptial “Yes” to the Father continues to bear fruit in every age.  
Fertile and free, you opened your heart to God without resistance or reserve.  
As the mystical spouse of God, the seed of his Spirit was planted within you,  
and the invisible God was made visible in your Son.  
We honour you as queen of the kingdom of God, ark of the covenant,

tabernacle of the law, nest of the Spirit, seat  
of wisdom,  
uncorrupted witness of the Word given and  
received.

In your maternal fidelity,  
intercede for us when our faith is weak  
that we may be reconciled with the Father  
and bear fruit in his Kingdom.  
He lives and reigns with your Son and the  
Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

***Third Day: Mary, Figure of the Church,  
Listening to the Word of God***

***Opening Dialogue***

*(as on the first day)*

**P** Let us pray.

Gracious God, source of all goodness,  
through Mary's intercession  
and in the power of the Holy Spirit,  
keep your Church attentive to your Word,  
that she may be strong in faith, rich in hope  
and boundless in charity.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord, who  
lives and reigns  
with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God for ever and ever.

## **A Amen.**

### ***From the Church's magisterium***

Mary, "Mother of God's Word" and "Mother of Faith"

The human reality created through the word finds its most perfect image in Mary's obedient faith. From the Annunciation to Pentecost she appears as a woman completely open to the will of God. She is the Immaculate Conception, the one whom God made "full of grace" (cf. *Lk* 1.28) and unconditionally docile to his word (cf. *Lk* 1.38). Her obedient faith shapes her life at every moment before God's plan. A Virgin ever attentive to God's word, she lives completely attuned to that word; she treasures in her heart the events of her Son, piecing them together as if in a single mosaic (cf. *Lk* 2.19,51).

In our day the faithful need to be helped to see more clearly the link between Mary of Nazareth and the faith-filled hearing of God's word. [...] The incarnation of the word cannot be conceived apart from the freedom of this young woman who by her assent decisively cooperated with the entrance of the eternal into time. Mary is the image of the Church in attentive listening of the word of God, which took flesh in her. Mary also symbolizes

openness to God and others; an active listening which interiorizes and assimilates, one in which the word becomes a way of life.

Here I would like to mention Mary's familiarity with the word of God. This is clearly evident in the *Magnificat*. There we see in some sense how she identifies with the word and enters into it; in this marvellous canticle of faith, the Virgin sings the praises of the Lord in his own words: "The *Magnificat* - a portrait, so to speak, of her soul - is entirely woven from threads of Holy Scripture, threads drawn from the word of God. Here we see how completely at home Mary is with the word of God, with ease she moves in and out of it. She speaks and thinks with the word of God; the word of God becomes her word, and her word issues from the word of God. Here we see how her thoughts are attuned to the thoughts of God, how her will is one with the will of God. Since Mary is completely imbued with the word of God, she is able to become the Mother of the Word Incarnate".

Furthermore, in looking to the Mother of God, we see how God's activity in the world always engages our freedom, because through faith the divine word transforms us. Our apostolic

and pastoral work can never be effective unless we learn from Mary how to be shaped by the working of God within us: “devout and loving attention to the figure of Mary as the model and archetype of the Church’s faith is of capital importance for bringing about today a concrete paradigm shift in the Church’s relation with the word, both in prayerful listening and in generous commitment to mission and proclamation”.

As we contemplate in the Mother of God a life totally shaped by the word, we realize that we too are called to enter into the mystery of faith, whereby Christ comes to dwell in our lives. Every Christian believer, Saint Ambrose reminds us, in some way interiorly conceives and gives birth to the word of God: even though there is only one Mother of Christ in the flesh, in the faith Christ is the progeny of us all. Thus, what took place for Mary can daily take place in each of us, in the hearing of the word and in the celebration of the sacraments.

Benedict XVI, Apostolic Exhortation,  
*“Verbum Domini”* 27-28

***Prayer [in unison or in two choirs]***

Mary, our Immaculate Mother,

Through your maternal eyes  
we behold all people and all creation  
with respect and gratitude,  
unfiltered by selfish interests or hypocrisy.

Through your immaculate heart,  
we learn to love unconditionally,  
unfettered by ulterior motives, masks or  
manipulation,  
always seeking the good of the other,  
with a simple and sincere heart.

Through your immaculate hands,  
we learn never to grab or strike,  
but to caress with tenderness the flesh of Jesus  
who is present in our poor, sick and  
marginalized brothers and sisters.  
We learn to lift up those who have fallen  
and to support those who falter.

Through your immaculate feet,  
we learn to go in haste  
eager to encounter those who cannot take the  
first step,  
to bring back those who are lost,  
and to acknowledge those who are overlooked  
and forgotten.

We turn to you, our Immaculate Mother, ever  
free from the illusion of sin.

Your freedom foreshadows our own.  
Remind us that before and after all that we  
experience  
there is the grace of God the Father who wills  
us into being,  
the love of Christ the Son who gave his life for  
us,  
and the power of the Holy Spirit who makes all  
things new.

When we are discouraged, rekindle our trust  
in your assistance.

Help us to be zealous co-workers of the Holy  
Spirit,  
that with hearts and minds renewed,  
we may dream God's dreams in every  
generation.

Pray for us, Immaculate Mother of God,  
that we may be made worthy of the promises  
of Christ!

Amen.

### ***Listening to God's Word***

#### **A Reading from the Book of Revelation**

(Rev12,1-12a)

Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a  
woman, adorned with the sun, standing on the  
moon, and with the twelve stars on her head  
for a crown. She was pregnant, and in labour,

crying aloud in the pangs of childbirth. Then a second sign appeared in the sky, a huge red dragon which had seven heads and ten horns, and each of the seven heads crowned with a coronet. Its tail dragged a third of the stars from the sky and dropped them to the earth, and the dragon stopped in front of the woman as she was having the child, so that he could eat it as soon as it was born from its mother. The woman brought a male child into the world, the son who was to rule all the nations with an iron sceptre, and the child was taken straight up to God and to his throne, while the woman escaped into the desert, where God had made a place of safety ready, for her to be looked after in the twelve hundred and sixty days.

And now war broke out in heaven, when Michael with his angels attacked the dragon. The dragon fought back with his angels, but they were defeated and driven out of heaven. The great dragon, the primeval serpent, known as the devil or Satan, who had deceived all the world, was hurled down to the earth and his angels were hurled down with him. Then I heard a voice shout from heaven, 'Victory and power and empire for ever have been won by our God, and all authority for his Christ, now that the persecutor, who accused

our brothers day and night before our God,  
has been brought down. They have triumphed  
over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the  
witness of their martyrdom, because even in  
the face of death they would not cling to life.  
Let the heavens rejoice and all who live there.'

***Prayer of thanksgiving and Profession of faith***

**P** The Lord be with you.

**A** **And with your spirit.**

**P** Let us give thanks to the Lord for he is good

**A** **He has worked marvellous deeds for us.**

*[adapted from the Preface of Mary, Image and  
Mother of the Church I]*

**P** Almighty and eternal God,  
we proclaim your greatness  
and thank you for your loving-kindness  
as we honour the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Receiving your Word in her Immaculate  
Heart,  
she conceived Jesus in her virgin's womb  
and giving birth to the Creator  
she nurtured the beginnings of the Church.

Standing beside Jesus at the cross,  
she received the testament of divine love  
and became the Mother

of all those who, by the death of Christ,  
are born to heavenly life.

As the Apostles awaited the Spirit you had  
promised,  
she joined them in faith-filled supplication  
and so became the pattern of  
the Church at prayer.

Raised to the glory of heaven,  
she accompanies the pilgrim Church with a  
mother's love;  
she watches in kindness over the Church's  
journey of faith  
until the day when the Lord  
shall come again in glory.

And so, through our Blessed Mother's  
intercession,  
we ask you to overshadow us with your  
Spirit  
who gives us the joy of  
proclaiming our faith:

***Prayer [in unison or in two choirs]***

**A We believe in God the Father Almighty,  
who in the fullness of time  
sent his only begotten Son, born of a  
woman.**

**We believe in Jesus Christ  
who for all humanity and for our  
salvation  
was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and  
became man.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit,  
who preserved the Mother of God from  
original sin,  
guided her always in the ways of  
holiness,  
and made her a new creation in Christ,  
born in God's mercy by the very Son she  
bore.**

**We believe that Mary  
conceived in her heart and in her womb  
the eternal Word of God  
and gave birth to the Life of the world.**

**We believe that Mary is the Mother of  
God's only Son,  
beloved daughter of the Father  
and temple of the Holy Spirit.**

**We believe that Mary  
collaborated in a unique way  
in the Saviour's mission  
through her obedience, faith, hope and  
charity.**

**Mary,  
figure of the Church,  
holy virgin and loving mother,  
look with tender watchfulness upon the  
pilgrim people of God.  
Assist us with your motherly love and  
intercession.  
We have recourse to you,  
who are Advocate, Rescuer, Help of  
Christians,  
Mother of God and our Mother!  
Amen.**

### ***Blessing***

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## **CHRISTMAS NOVENA** **(From 17 December to 23 December)**

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*Each community can decide how to integrate the novena into their common prayer. One possibility is to combine the Novena with the Liturgy of the Hours, singing the Prophetic Song, Antiphons, Magnificat and Closing Prayer from the Novena, and taking the rest from Evening Prayer.*

*After the scripture reading, a brief sermonette on it or on the daily "O" Antiphon may be given. This may be given by community members who do not normally*

have occasion to share in this way, such as brothers or confreres in initial formation.

(For the full Christmas Novena in Chant, visit <http://www.donboscowest.org/resources/novena-prayers/>)

## **The Prophetic Song**

### I THE PROPHETIC SONG

Long ago, the prophets told in glowing imagery the splendors of God's Kingdom in the new Jerusalem, the Church. Sing with them the wonders of Christ's Coming.

Chanters



The Lord our King is drawing near: O come, let us a-dore Him.

Congregation



The Lord our King is drawing near: O come, let us a-dore Him.

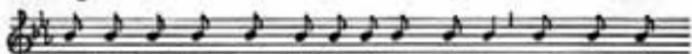
Chanters



1. Break out in song, daughter of Si-on, and sing for boundless joy,



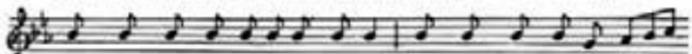
daughter of Je-ru-sa-lem; for He comes, your lord and master,



and the day shall gleam with a radiant splendor; and mountains



distill sweet new wine; hills shall flow with milk and honey, for



now comes the long-awaited Prophet, and then shall He re-build



you, Je-ru-sa-lem,  
Congregation

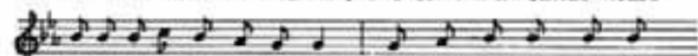


The Lord our King is drawing near: O come, let us a-dore Him.

Chanters



2. He shall be both God and man, and come from David's house

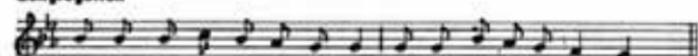


to sit up-on His king-ly throne, you shall see Him, and in



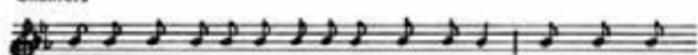
your hearts re-joice greatly.

Congregation

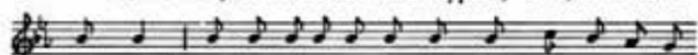


The Lord our King is drawing near: O come, let us a-dore Him.

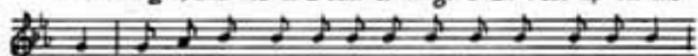
Chanters



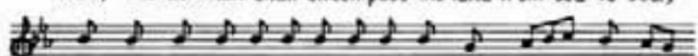
3. Be-hold, the Ho-ly One of Israel shall appear, God, our shield



and strength, and the di-a-dem of kings shall rest up-on His



brow; His do-main shall encompass the land from sea to sea,



and from the riv-er e-ven un-to the earth's most re-mote



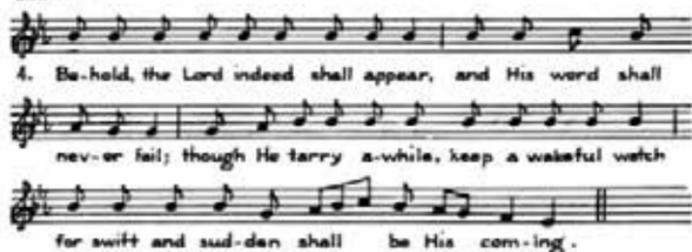
li-mits.

Congregation



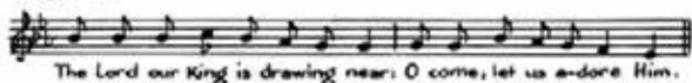
The Lord our King is drawing near: O come, let us a-dore Him.

Chanters



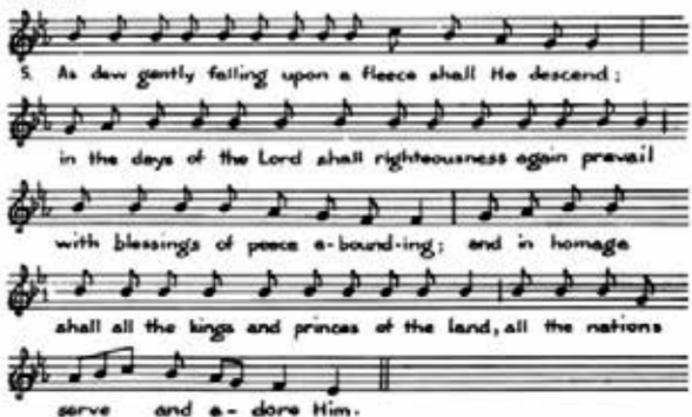
4. Be-hold, the Lord indeed shall appear, and His word shall  
nev-er fail; though He tarry a-while, keep a watchful watch  
for swifft and sud-den shall be His com-ing.

Congregation



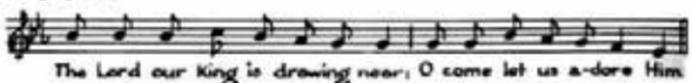
The Lord our King is drawing near; O come, let us a-dore Him.

Chanters



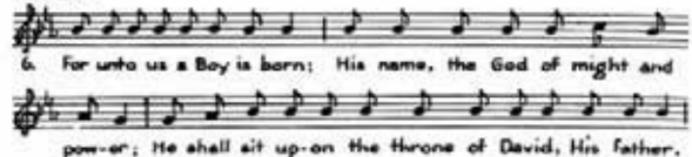
5. As dew gently falling upon a fleece shall He descend;  
in the days of the Lord shall righteousness again prevail  
with blessings of peace a-bound-ing; and in homage  
shall all the kings and princes of the land, all the nations  
serve and a-dore Him.

Congregation

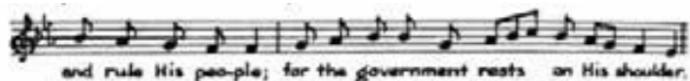


The Lord our King is drawing near; O come let us a-dore Him.

Chanters

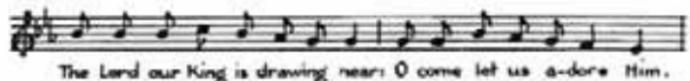


6. For unto us a Boy is born; His name, the God of might and  
pow-er; He shall sit up-on the throne of David, His father.



and rule His peo-ple; for the government rests on His shoulder,

Congregation



The Lord our King is drawing near: O come let us a-dore Him.

Chanters

7. Bethlehem, city of God Most High, from you shall spring the  
chosen king of Is-ra-el; and His coming forth shall be as  
on the timeless morn of the days of e-ter-ni-ty; so shall  
the nations' countless voices chant His praise in wondrous  
concert; and lasting peace shall fill our land when  
He shall ap-pear.

Congregation



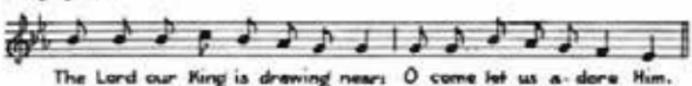
The Lord our King is drawing near: O come, let us a-dore Him.

ON CHRISTMAS EVE ADD THIS:

Chanters

To-morrow shall the earth be freed from all in-i-qui-ty,  
And the Savior of the world shall reign o-ver us.

Congregation



The Lord our King is drawing near: O come let us a-dore Him.

Chanters



Congregation



## II THE SERMONETTE

A reading from Holy Scripture and/or a brief sermonette. Time now for God's living word: Open your heart to the Divine Sower.

## III THE PSALM

A song for meditation. In words taken from the Psalms, we beg Christ to come quickly and bring the world mercy and peace.

1. Re-joyce,	heavens, and, earth,	be	joy-ful.	•
2. Burst forth,	mountains,	with	glad-ness,	•
3. Be-cause	the Lord	is	com-ing,	•
4. Drop down	dew, heavens, and, clouds, rain	the	Just One;	•
5. O Lord,	do	re-member	us;	•
6. Show us,	Lord,	your	mer-cy,	•
7. Lord, send	the Lamb, ruler of	our	na-tion,	•
8. Come, Lord	God of hosts, and	de-liv-er	us;	•
9. Come, Lord,	grant us in peace	your	vis-it,	•
10. May we	know, Lord, on earth	your	pass-ing,	•
11. A-rise	with power	and	come to	us;
12. Come, Lord,	and delay	no	long-er;	•
13. On-ly	rend the heavens and	come	down to	us;
14. Come, Lord,	unveil to us	your	coun-ten-ance,	•
15. Glo-ry	to the Father, Son, and Ho-	ly	Spir-it,	•

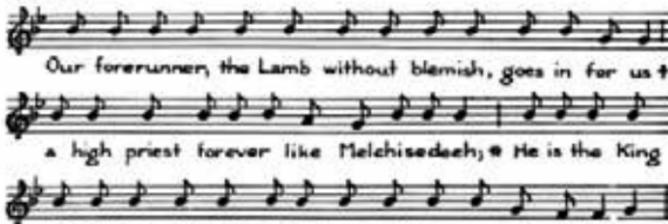


1 and, mountains,	ing	glad	prais-	es-
2 and, lowly	hills,	with	jus-	tice.
3 on His poor He	will	have	mer-	cy.
4 earth, be opened and bud	forth	a	Sev-	ior.
5 and visit us with	your	sal-	va-	tion,
6 and grant us	your	sal-	va-	tion.
7 from Petra of the desert to the daughter	of	Sion's	Holy	Mount
8 show us your face, and we shall	see	sal-	va-	tion.
9 that we may joy before you with a	heart	all	per-	fect.
10 your salvation	in	all	na-	tions.
11 and settle	us	in	saf-	ty.
12 loose the bonds	of	your	peo-	ple.
13 how the mountains would melt away	at	your	pres-	ence!
14 who dwell a-	ver	the	Over-	uin.
15 as in the beginning, now and for-	ev-	er.	A-	ments

#### IV THE SHORT READING

A thought from the letter to the Hebrews;  
the Christ child is eternal High Priest and  
King of ages, our Mediator with the Father.

Celebrant



Our forerunner, the Lamb without blemish, goes in for us †  
a high priest forever like Melchisedech; † He is the King  
of justice, without beginning of days or end of life.

Congregation



All thanks be to God.

V THE HYMN

Joy and wonder at the mystery of God made man, and the immaculate beauty of His Virgin Mother.

A clarion voice is heard a- far Resounding clear through shadowed night;  
 "A-rise from slumber's dreaminess, The morning star, Christ, gleams on  
 high." 2. A gracious Lamb He comes to us To grant release from Adam's  
 debt; With sorrow for our sinful ways Forgiveness let us all implore.  
 3. Th' Eternal Framer of the sky A servant's lowly form girds on; Our  
 flesh in weakness thus to save. Lest we should perish whom He made.  
 4. On Mary's fair virgin-i-ty The grace of heaven gently falls; En-  
 shrined within her spotless womb. Unknown re-pos-es God with us.  
 5. His ho-ly temple is a maid; At angel's word so wondrously, Un-  
 sullied by an earthly love, The Virgin knows a mother's joy.  
 6. To God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit-one in three Unend-  
 ing e-qual glory sing In time and for e-ter-ni-ty. A - men.

## VI OUR LADY'S SONG

Before and after Mary's Song, sing one of these antiphons or refrains which sound the keynote of the day's liturgy. They are rich in scriptural content and most artistic in form and melody.

### December 16th Antiphon



Lo, the king is com-ing; Lord of all cre- ation, and He shall take  
a-way the sins that keep us chained in bondage.

### SING OUR LADY'S SONG

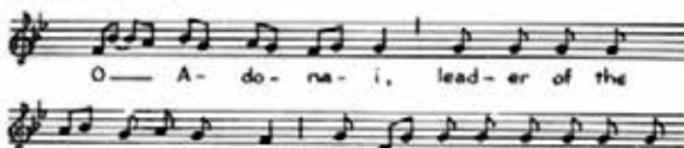
### December 17th Antiphon



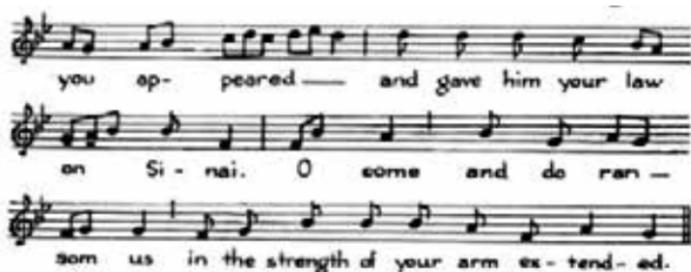
O ————— Wis- dom, from the mouth of  
God pro- ceed- ing and reach- ing from  
end to end ———, dis- pose all things  
with sweet-ness. O come to en- light-  
en us in the ways of pru- dence.

### SING OUR LADY'S SONG

### December 18th Antiphon



O — A- do- na- i, lead- er of the  
house of Is- ra- el, to Mo- ses in the flaming bush



you ap- peared — and gave him your law  
 on Si- nai. O come and do ran-  
 som us in the strength of your arm ex- tend- ed.

December 19th Antiphon



O — Root of Jes- se, a lofty standard un-  
 to the na- tions, in your sight kings  
 si- lent shall re- main — while all peoples to you  
 shall ral- ly. O come to de- liv-  
 er us and de- lay no long- er.

SING OUR LADY'S SONG

December 20th Antiphon



O — Key of Da- vid, and sceptre of the  
 house of Is- ra- el, who o- pen and  
 none can close —, who close and none  
 can o- pen, O come, free the cap- tive from



December 21st Antiphon

O— Ris- ing Day- star, splen- dor of  
light e- ter- nal and shin- ing sun  
of jus- tice—, O come, and light with  
your ra- dianc- e those who in dark-  
ness dwell and lin- ger in death's shad- ow.

December 22nd Antiphon

O— King of na- tions, long de- sired  
and a- wait- ed, the build- ers' cor-  
ner stone —, you bind in one what was  
di- vid- ed. O come to save sin-  
ful men, mor- tal clay you once fash- ioned.

December 23rd Antiphon



O — Em- ma- nu- el, our king and  
leg- is- la- tor, ex- pect- ed of  
all na- tions — and their on- ly  
sal- va- tion, O come be our re-  
deem- er, Lord our God and mas- ter.

December 24th Antiphon



When the first rays of morn- ing light the heavens, shall you  
be- hold the King of kings proceeding from the  
Father as a bridegroom from His chamber leav- ing.

SING OUR LADY'S SONG

OUR LADY'S SONG



1. My soul mag-ni-fies the Lord \*



2. Be-cause	he has regarded the lowliness of his	hand-	maid *
3. Be-cause	he who is mighty has done great	things for	me *
4. And his	mercy is from generation to gener-	a-	tion *
5. He has	shown the power	of his	arm *
6. He has	put down the mighty	from their	thrones *
7. He has	filled the hungry with	good	things *
8. He has	given help to Israel, his	ser-	vant *
9. E-ven	as he spoke to our	fath-	ers *
10. Glo-ry	to the Father, Son and Holy	Spir-	it *



1. and my spirit rejoices in God my Sav-ior.



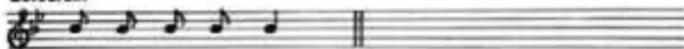
2. for, behold, henceforth all generations shall	call	me	bless-	ed.
3. and	ho-	ly	is his	name.
4. on	those	who	fear	him.
5. he has scattered the proud in the	height	of	their con-	ceit.
6. and has exalt-	ed	the	hum-	ble.
7. and has sent the rich away	emp-	ty	hand-	ed.
8. mindful	of	his	mer-	cy.
9. to Abraham and to his posteri-	ty	for-	ev-	er.
10. as in the beginning, now, and for-	ev-	er.	A-	men.

Repeat the ANTIPHON of the day

## VII THE CLOSING PRAYER

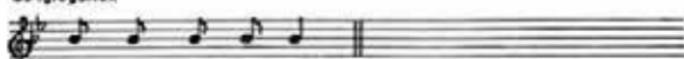
In this prayer of the assembly, summon up all the desire of your heart and the ardor of your love: Come, Lord Jesus!

Celebrant



The Lord be with you.

Congregation



And with your spir-it.

Celebrant



Let us pray.



Make haste, Lord, we beg you, and do not tarry but be

at hand to sustain us with your grace; that we who

lean on your loving constancy may be heartened by the

consoling joys of your coming, Who live and reign,

God, one with the Father and Ho-ly Spirit ages

without end. A-men.

Congregation



without end. A-men.

## 17 December

### **Scripture Reading (Wis 7,21-30)**

#### *The Nature of Wisdom*

All that is hidden, all that is plain, I have come to know,  
instructed by Wisdom who designed them all.  
For within her is a spirit intelligent, holy,  
unique, manifold, subtle,  
active, incisive, unsullied,  
lucid, invulnerable, benevolent, sharp,  
irresistible, beneficent, loving to man,  
steadfast, dependable, unperturbed,  
almighty, all-surveying,  
penetrating all intelligent, pure  
and most subtle spirits;  
for Wisdom is quicker to move than any  
motion;  
she is so pure, she pervades and permeates all  
things.  
She is a breath of the power of God,  
pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty;  
hence nothing impure can find a way into her.  
She is a reflection of the eternal light,  
untarnished mirror of God's active power,  
image of his goodness.  
Although alone, she can do all;  
herself unchanging, she makes all things new.

In each generation she passes into holy souls,  
she makes them friends of God and prophets;  
for God loves only the man who lives with  
Wisdom.

She is indeed more splendid than the sun,  
she outshines all the constellations;  
compared with light, she takes first place,  
for light must yield to night,  
but over Wisdom evil can never triumph.

### **“O” Antiphon**

O Wisdom of our God Most High,  
guiding creation with power and love:  
come to teach us the path of knowledge!

### ***Magnificat***

### ***Intercessions***

#### ***Option 1: from the Liturgy of the Hours***

#### ***Option 2:***

- P** As we await the manifestation of our  
Lord Jesus Christ, we place our trust in  
his mercy. Even today, God is faithful  
to his promises and wants to save  
those who wait for him in hope.
- L** Our response to each petition is:  
Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay.
- A** **Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay.**

- L – For the Church: that she may be a faithful steward of God's many gifts by breaking open the Word, celebrating the sacraments and practicing evangelical mercy. We pray...
- For all men and women who seek God with a sincere heart: that their hopeful anticipation of the Lord will give meaning and direction to their lives. We pray...
- For all of us present here today: that our prayerful listening to the Word of God may open us to the cry of the poor and urge us to respond with the joy of the Gospel. We pray...
- *Additional intentions*

## **18 December**

### ***Scripture Reading (Ex 19,16-19; 20,1-5a)***

#### *The Israelites consecrated on Mount Sinai*

Now at daybreak on the third day there were peals of thunder on the mountain and lightning flashes, a dense cloud, and a loud trumpet blast, and inside the camp all the people trembled. Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet God; and they stood at the bottom of the mountain. The mountain of Sinai was entirely wrapped in smoke, because the Lord had descended on it in the form of

fire. Like smoke from a furnace the smoke went up, and the whole mountain shook violently. Louder and louder grew the sound of the trumpet. Moses spoke, and God answered him with peals of thunder. Then God spoke all these words. He said, 'I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no gods except me. You shall not make yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything in heaven or on earth beneath or in the waters under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them'.

### **“O” Antiphon**

O Leader of the House of Israel,  
giver of the Law to Moses on Sinai:  
come to rescue us with your mighty  
power!

### ***Magnificat***

### ***Intercessions***

#### ***Option 1: from the Liturgy of the Hours***

#### ***Option 2***

**P** During this Advent season the Lord calls us to stay awake and be ready for his second coming. This is an invitation to convert to the Lord with all our heart. As

we wait in hopeful anticipation, we ask the Lord for his help, that through him and with him and in him, we may receive his light and bring it to the world.

**L** Our response to each invocation is:  
*Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay.*

**A** **Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay.**

- L** – For our community: that the light of Christ may never diminish in us as we witness to him as the Saviour, the Light of the world. We pray...
- For all people: that the darkness of selfishness, fear and mutual distrust may be dispelled by the luminous rays of courage, optimism, mutual respect and virtue. We pray...
- For all of us present here: that we may recognize the face of the Lord in all our brothers and sisters, especially in those who are weakest and most needy. We pray...
- *Additional intentions*

## **19 December**

### ***Scripture Reading (Is 11,1-12)***

*The Peaceful Kingdom and the Faithful Remnant*

A shoot springs from the stock of Jesse,  
a scion thrusts from his roots:

on him the spirit of Yahweh rests,  
a spirit of wisdom and insight,  
a spirit of counsel and power,  
a spirit of knowledge and of the fear of  
Yahweh.

He does not judge by appearances,  
he gives no verdict on hearsay,  
but judges the wretched with integrity,  
and with equity gives a verdict for the poor of  
the land.

His word is a rod that strikes the ruthless,  
his sentences bring death to the wicked.  
Integrity is the loincloth round his waist,  
faithfulness the belt about his hips.

The wolf lives with the lamb,  
the panther lies down with the kid,  
calf and lion cub feed together  
with a little boy to lead them.

The cow and the bear make friends,  
their young lie down together.

The lion eats straw like the ox.

The infant plays over the cobra's hole;  
into the viper's lair the young child puts his  
hand.

They do no hurt, no harm, on all my holy  
mountain,  
for the country is filled with the knowledge of  
the Lord

as the waters swell the sea.  
That day,  
the root of Jesse  
shall stand as a signal to the peoples.  
It will be sought out by the nations  
and its home will be glorious.  
That day,  
the Lord will raise his hand once more  
to ransom the remnant of his people,  
left over from the exile of Assyria, of Egypt,  
of Pathros, of Cush, of Elam,  
of Shinar, of Hamath, of the islands of the sea.  
He will hoist a signal for the nations  
and assemble the outcasts of Israel;  
he will bring back the scattered people of Judah  
from the four corners of the earth.

***“O” Antiphon***

O Root of Jesse’s stem,  
sign of God’s love for all his people:  
come to save us without delay!

***Magnificat***

***Intercessions***

***Option 1: from the Liturgy of the Hours***

***Option 2***

**P** The Saviour for whom we are waiting is  
the Prince of Peace. Let us pray that his gift

of peace will have a lasting effect in our lives, on our families, and in the world.

**L** Our response to each invocation is:  
Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay.

**A** **Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay.**

- L** – For the Church: that every Christian may be a sprout of Jesse, bringing forth new life through the gifts of the Spirit and working for a world of justice and peace. We pray...
- For all government officials and those in positions of power: that they may lead with sincerity, seek the common good, promote peaceful conflict resolution, and respect the human dignity of all peoples, especially the most vulnerable. We pray...
- For us gathered here: that our daily choices and personal plans of life may reflect the mission of Jesus Christ, who came to bring peace to all nations even through our active collaboration. We pray...
- *Additional intentions*

## **20 December**

**Scripture Reading (Is 22,22-23; 49,8-9)**

*Zion's Children will be brought home to the House of David*

I place the key of the House of David on his  
shoulder;

should he open, no one shall close,

should he close, no one shall open.

I drive him like a peg into a firm place;

he will become a throne of glory for his  
father's house.

Thus says the Lord:

At the favourable time I will answer you,

on the day of salvation I will help you.

I have formed you and have appointed you  
as covenant of the people.

I will restore the land

and assign you the estates that lie waste.

I will say to the prisoners, 'Come out',

to those who are in darkness, 'Show  
yourselves'.

On every roadway they will graze,

and each bare height shall be their pasture.

### ***"O" Antiphon***

O Key of David,

opening the gates of God's eternal

Kingdom:

come and free the prisoners of darkness!

### ***Magnificat***

### ***Intercessions***

## **Option 1: From the Liturgy of the Hours**

### **Option 2**

**P** In the fullness of time God the Father sent his Son for our salvation. He has freed humanity from the slavery of evil and sin. As the Father's beloved children, let us pray that we may always live in that freedom which Jesus our brother has won for us.

**L** Let our response be: Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay.

**A** **Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay.**

- L** – For the holy Church of God: that she may be a courageous herald of the Gospel, proclaiming Jesus as the light of the world. We pray to the Lord.
- For all Christians: that our attentive listening to the Word of God may bring about a revolution of tenderness in our hearts and minds, and free us from indifference and spiritual superficiality. We pray to the Lord.
- For unbelievers and sinners: that they may encounter Jesus as he truly is: not a limitation to human freedom, but freedom's very source and fulfilment. We pray to the Lord.
- *Additional intentions*

## **21 December**

### ***Scripture Reading (Is 60,1-9)***

#### *The Ingathering of the Dispersed*

Arise, shine out, for your light has come,  
the glory of the Lord is rising on you,  
though night still covers the earth  
and darkness the peoples.  
Above you the Lord now rises  
and above you his glory appears.  
The nations come to your light  
and kings to your dawning brightness.  
Lift up your eyes and look round:  
all are assembling and coming towards you,  
your sons from far away  
and your daughters being tenderly carried.  
At this sight you will grow radiant,  
your heart throbbing and full;  
since the riches of the sea will flow to you,  
the wealth of the nations come to you;  
camels in throngs will cover you,  
and dromedaries of Midian and Ephah;  
everyone in Sheba will come,  
bringing gold and incense  
and singing the praise of Yahweh.  
All the flocks of Kedar will gather inside you,  
the rams of Nebaioth will be at your service.  
They will come up, for acceptance, to my altar,

to adorn the Temple of my glory.  
Who are these flying like a cloud,  
like doves to their cote?  
Yes, for me the ships are assembling,  
vessels of Tarshish in the front,  
to bring your sons from far away,  
and their silver and gold with them,  
for the sake of the name of the Lord your God,  
for the sake of the Holy One of Israel who has  
made you glorious.

### **“O” Antiphon**

O Radiant Dawn,  
splendor of eternal light, sun of justice:  
come and shine on those who dwell in  
darkness and in the  
shadow of death.

### ***Magnificat***

### ***Intercessions***

#### ***Option 1: From the Liturgy of the Hours***

#### ***Option 2***

**P** Jesus is the true light that illuminates every man, woman and child. In Advent hope, we pray for the grace of welcoming him more fully into our lives so that in all our relationships, others may encounter not only us, but Christ shining through us.

**L** Let our response be: Come,  
Lord Jesus, do not delay.

**A** **Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay.**

- L** – For the Church of God: that as the new Jerusalem, her divine light may dispel the shadows of our human limitations, and so fulfil her mission as guide for all the nations on the way of salvation. We pray...
- For the Pope and all bishops, priests and religious: that, in the light of Christ, they may see themselves as earthen vessels chosen by God to carry a precious treasure. We pray...
- For men and women who do not yet know the joy of faith: that they may welcome Christ into their lives and accept his word as a light unto their path. We pray...
- *Additional intentions*

## **22 December**

**Scripture Reading (Rev 1,12-19, 15,3-4)**

*A Vision of Christ and the Victors' Canticle*

I turned round to see who had spoken to me, and when I turned I saw seven golden lamp-stands and, surrounded by them, a figure like a Son of man, dressed in a long robe tied at the waist with

a golden girdle. His head and his hair were white as white wool or as snow, his eyes like a burning flame, his feet like burnished bronze when it has been refined in a furnace, and his voice like the sound of the ocean. In his right hand he was holding seven stars, out of his mouth came a sharp sword, double-edged, and his face was like the sun shining with all its force. When I saw him, I fell in a dead faint at his feet, but he touched me with his right hand and said, 'Do not be afraid; it is I, the First and the Last; I am the Living One. I was dead and now I am to live for ever and ever, and I hold the keys of death and of the underworld. Now write down all that you see of present happenings and things that are still to come'.

And they were singing the hymn of Moses, the servant of God, and of the Lamb:

'How great and wonderful are all your works,  
Lord God Almighty;  
just and true are all your ways,  
King of nations.

Who would not revere and praise your name,  
O Lord?

You alone are holy,  
and all the pagans will come  
and adore you  
for the many acts of justice you have shown.'

## **“O” Antiphon**

O King of all nations and keystone of the Church:  
come and save man,  
whom you formed from the dust!

## **Magnificat**

### **Intercessions**

#### **Option 1: from the Liturgy of the Hours**

#### **Option 2**

**P** We anticipate the coming of the Lord who is Mighty Counsellor and Prince of Peace. Let us entrust to him the needs of the world, that he may heal the wounds of hatred and division and unite the human family in faith, hope and love.

**L** Let our response be: Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay.

**A** **Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay.**

- L** – For the Church of God: that as the new Jerusalem she may attract all nations to her light and build up the People of God, eager to do God’s will. We pray to the Lord.
- For people who do not believe and for those who are indifferent to faith: that

they may recognize the signs of God's saving presence in the world and accept him into their lives as Saviour. We pray to the Lord.

- For those who suffer in body, mind or spirit: that they may find strength, hope and healing in the Lord. We pray to the Lord.
- For our community: that we may be living examples of the Gospel in action, professing what we believe and living what we profess. We pray to the Lord.
- *Additional intentions*

## 23 December

### **Scripture Reading (Is 7,10-15)**

#### *The Prophet's Sign of Emmanuel*

Once again the Lord spoke to Ahaz and said, 'Ask the Lord your God for a sign for yourself coming either from the depths of Sheol or from the heights above'. 'No,' Ahaz answered 'I will not put the Lord to the test.' Then he said: Listen now, House of David: are you not satisfied with trying the patience of men without trying the patience of my God, too? The Lord himself, therefore, will give you a sign. It is this: the maiden is with child and will soon give birth to a son whom she will

call Immanuel. On curds and honey will he feed until he knows how to refuse evil and choose good.

**“O” Antiphon**

O Emmanuel,  
our King and Giver of Law:  
come to save us, Lord our God!

***Magnificat***

***Intercessions***

***Option 1: from the Liturgy of the Hours***

***Option 2***

- P** Let us give thanks to God the Father who, in his merciful love, sent his Son into the world as Emmanuel, “God-with-us”. With confidence in his goodness, we turn to him and pray.
- L** Our response is: Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay.
- A** **Come, Lord Jesus, do not delay.**
- L** – For the Pope and all bishops, priests and religious: that they may always be faithful and credible witnesses of the presence of Christ in their lives and in the world. Let us pray to the Lord.
- For all Christians: that they may

be sentinels of the dawn, faithfully announcing God's creative action in the world and witnessing to his love as the guiding force in their lives.

- For all the people: that they may be open to God's loving kindness and welcome the coming of Christ in their midst. Let us pray to the Lord.
- *Additional intentions*



6

SEASON OF  
CHRISTMAS



## PROCLAMATION OF THE BIRTH OF CHRIST (from the Roman Martyrology)

*Proclaimed after Christmas Evening Prayer I or before the beginning of the Christmas Eve Vigil Mass*

### **English**

The Twenty-fifth Day of December, when ages beyond number had run their course from the creation of the world, when God in the beginning created heaven and earth, and formed man in his own likeness; when century upon century had passed since the Almighty set his bow in the clouds after the Great Flood, as a sign of covenant and peace; in the twenty-first century since Abraham, our father in faith, came out of Ur of the Chaldees; in the thirteenth century since the People of Israel were led by Moses in the Exodus from Egypt; around the thousandth year since David was anointed King; in the sixty-fifth week of the prophecy of Daniel; in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad; in the year seven hundred and fifty-two

since the foundation of the City of Rome;  
in the forty-second year of the reign of Caesar  
Octavian Augustus,  
the whole world being at peace,  
JESUS CHRIST, eternal God and Son of the  
eternal Father,  
desiring to consecrate the world by his most  
loving presence,  
was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
and when nine months had passed since his  
conception,  
was born of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem of  
Judah,  
and was made man:  
The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ  
according to the flesh.

***Latin***

Anno a creatione mundi, quando in principio  
Deus creavit caelum et terram, quinquies  
millesimo centesimo nonagesimo nono; a  
nativitate Abrahae, anno bis millesimo; a  
Moyse et egressu populi Israel de Aegypto,  
anno millesimo ducentesimo quinquagesimo;  
ad unctione David in Regem, anno millesimo  
decimo; Hebdomada sexagesima quinta, juxta  
Danielis prophetiam; Olympiade centesima  
nonagesima quarta; ab urbe Roma condita,  
anno septingentesimo quinquagesimo

secundo; anno Imperii Octaviani Augusti quadragesimo secundo, toto orbe in pace composito, sexta mundi aetate, Jesus Christus, aeternus Deus aeternique Patris Filius, mundum volens adventu suo piissimo consecrare, de Spiritu Sancto conceptus, novemque post conceptionem decursis mensibus (*Hic vox elevatur, et omnes genu flectunt*) in Bethlehem Judae nascitur ex Maria Virgine factus Homo. (*Hic autem in priori voce dicitur, et in tono passionis*). Nativitas Domini nostri Jesu Christi secundum carnem.

## 31 DECEMBER – LAST DAY OF THE CALENDAR YEAR

*At the end of each calendar year, we are encouraged to complete a personal scrutiny of life. This is an opportunity for us, as individuals and as members of a local and provincial community, to do an examen of consciousness and a review of life as an expression of thanksgiving for the grace of another year.*

- P** On this last day of the calendar year, we gather as brothers in the presence of the Lord. We offer God our heartfelt thanks and praise, in our own names and as members of this community, for all the good that God has

lavished upon us over this past year. We also stand humbly before God, and before one another, acknowledging our sins and failures, united in our common need for forgiveness and our trust in divine mercy. With confidence in God's providence, we look forward to the year that lies ahead. Let us be intentional about becoming ever more grateful stewards of all that God entrusts to us. Let us ask for the grace to be more loving to one another and to our God who is always faithful to us.

Let us pray.

God of time and eternity, Father of every grace and blessing, rich in mercy and love, help us to review this past year and to recognize your saving plan for us in the daily circumstances of our lives. Nourish within us a profound desire for conversion, reconcile us to yourself, and guide us on our way, that we may continue to grow into our full stature in Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

### ***Penitential Prayer***

#### **A Reading from the First Letter of Peter**

(1 Pet 4,7-11.17-19)

Everything will soon come to an end, so, to pray better, keep a calm and sober mind. Above all, never let your love for each other grow insincere, since love covers over many a sin. Welcome each other into your houses without grumbling. Each one of you has received a special grace, so, like good stewards responsible for all these different graces of God, put yourselves at the service of others. If you are a speaker, speak in words which seem to come from God; if you are a helper, help as though every action was done at God's orders; so that in everything God may receive the glory, through Jesus Christ, since to him alone belong all glory and power for ever and ever. Amen. The time has come for the judgement to begin at the household of God; and if what we know now is only the beginning, what will it be when it comes down to those who refuse to believe God's Good News? If it is hard for a good man to be saved, what will happen to the wicked and to sinners? So even those whom God allows to suffer must trust themselves to the constancy of the creator and go on doing good.

### ***Penitential Rite***

*(invocation with a sung penitential acclamation)*

- P** Let us come before our Heavenly Father in confidence to seek

forgiveness and implore his mercy.

***Penitential Psalm or other chant***  
**Ps 31,1-9.20.24-25**

In you, O Lord, I take refuge.  
Let me never be put to shame.  
In your justice, set me free,  
hear me and speedily rescue me.

Be a rock of refuge for me,  
a mighty stronghold to save me,  
for you are my rock, my stronghold.  
For your name's sake, lead me and guide me.

Release me from the snares they have hidden  
for you are my refuge, Lord.  
Into your hands I commend my spirit.  
It is you who will redeem me, Lord.

O God of truth, you detest  
those who worship false and empty gods.  
As for me, I trust in the Lord:  
let me be glad and rejoice in your love.

You who have seen my affliction  
and taken heed of my soul's distress,  
have not handed me over to the enemy,  
but set my feet at large.

How great is the goodness, Lord,  
that you keep for those who fear you,

that you show to those who trust you  
in the sight of men.

Love the Lord, all you saints.  
He guards his faithful  
but the Lord will repay to the full  
those who act with pride.

Be strong, let your heart take courage,  
all who hope in the Lord.

**P** Receive, O Lord, the contrite hearts of your faithful. With the light of your presence, purify our world, scatter the shadows of hatred, heal the wounds of violence and indifference. By your grace, make us instruments of your peace and justice. You live and reign for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

### ***Prayer of Praise and Thanksgiving***

**P** Let us give thanks to the Lord for his many gifts to us throughout this past year. We thank him especially for his presence among us and for our Salesian vocation, which invites us to seek the Kingdom of God with a humble spirit, a pure heart, and a simple way of life.

**A All glory and praise to you, Lord, who are the fount of life and the artisan of**

**marvellous works. Accept our sincere gratitude for your countless blessings. Receive the efforts of all people of good will who, in your name, work diligently to bring about a world of peace. Amen.**

***Te Deum***

**P** Let us offer a hymn of praise to the Lord for the marvellous deeds he has worked for us.

**A** **We praise you, O God:**

**We acclaim you as Lord.**

**Everlasting Father,**

**all the world bows down before you.**

**All the angels sing your praise,**

**the hosts of heaven and all the angelic powers,**

**all the cherubim and seraphim**

**call out to you in unending song:**

**Holy, Holy, Holy,**

**is the Lord God of angel hosts!**

**The heavens and the earth are filled**

**With your majesty and glory.**

**The glorious band of apostles,**

**the noble company of prophets,**

**the white-robed army who shed their blood for Christ,**

**all sing your praise.**

**And to the ends of the earth  
your holy Church proclaims her faith in  
you:**

**Father, whose majesty is boundless,  
your true and only son, who is to be  
adored,  
the Holy Spirit sent to be our Advocate.**

**You, Christ, are the king of glory,  
Son of the eternal Father.**

**When you took our nature to save  
mankind  
you did not shrink from birth in the  
Virgin's womb.**

**You overcame the power of death  
opening the Father's kingdom to all who  
believe in you.**

**Enthroned at God's right hand in the  
glory of the Father,  
You will come in judgement according to  
your promise.**

**You redeemed your people by your  
precious blood.**

**Come, we implore you, to our aid.  
Grant us with the saints  
a place in eternal glory.**

- P** Lord, save your people and  
bless your inheritance.

**A Rule them and uphold them for ever and ever.**

**P** Day by day we praise you:

**A We acclaim you now and to all eternity.**

**P** In your goodness, Lord,  
keep us free from sin.

**A Have mercy on us, Lord, have mercy.**

**P** May your mercy always be with us, Lord,

**A For we have hoped in you.**

**P** In you, Lord, we put our trust:

**A We shall not be put to shame.**

### ***Concluding Prayer***

**P** Bless, O Lord, your pilgrim people,  
guide humanity in the ways of your  
Kingdom, set your peace on our hearts  
and store up in heaven whatever  
good we have done during this past  
year through Christ, Our Lord.

**A Amen.**

### ***Solemn Blessing***

**P** [*or deacon*] Bow your heads for the blessing.

### ***Option 1***

**P** God, Our Father, Lord of time and eternity,  
we offer to your glory all the sacrifices  
and acts of charity which you inspired in

us throughout this past year. In the year that lies ahead, bless us with zealous dedication to your service, and renewed confidence in your provident care.

**A Amen.**

**P** Christ Jesus, Emmanuel, who came to us as our brother to show us how to be human, inspire us to be convincing missionary disciples for the world today, so that each passing year may render more visible your plan of salvation.

**A Amen.**

**P** Spirit of grace, who bring divine power to our human condition, deliver us from the allurements of sin and empower us for service through the outpouring of your manifold gifts.

**A Amen.**

**P** May the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, descend upon you and remain with you forever.

**A Amen.**

### ***Option 2***

**P** May God, the source and origin of all blessing,  
grant you grace,  
pour out his abundant blessings upon you

and keep you safe from harm  
throughout the year.

**A Amen.**

**P** May he give you integrity of faith,  
endurance in hope  
and perseverance in charity.

**A Amen.**

**P** May he order your days in his peace,  
grant your prayers in this and in every place,  
and lead you happily to eternal life.

**A Amen.**

### ***Concluding Prayer***

**P** Let us go in peace, glorifying  
the Lord with our lives.

**A Thanks be to God.**

### ***Final Hymn***

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## **1 JANUARY – FIRST DAY OF THE CALENDAR YEAR**

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*This prayer may be inserted to Evening Prayer  
II on 1 January, after the intercessions*

### ***Prayer for peace***

Creator God and Lord of history,  
who keep humanity in your watchful care,  
we turn to you in prayer.

From beyond the reach of time  
your love and mercy are active in the world  
breathing nothingness into being.  
You reveal your majesty in the wonders of the  
universe,  
which you entrust to us as our common home.

In your likeness and image, you fashioned  
man and woman  
the crowning jewel of creation, stewards of all  
your hands have made.

Heaven and earth are a symphony of your  
infinite wisdom and goodness,  
every human life, a song to your glory,  
measured in time, but ringing into eternity.  
The face of humanity reflects your wisdom;  
in every sincere heart, your Spirit dwells.

Jealous guardian of human liberty:  
in your loving-kindness, free us from every  
slavery to sin and death;  
deliver those who seek the truth in your word.

Ineffable presence of peace:  
make every heart restless for you,  
eager for freedom from the seduction of evil.  
Where there is hatred, sow love,  
where there is pride, inspire humility,  
where there is violence, stir up the candour  
of those who heed the cry of the poor.

Patient lover of life:  
gather all humankind into your truth.  
Let those who suffer know your fatherly love  
through the fraternal embrace we offer them.  
Grant to those who give and those who receive  
a living hope that today's sorrow will yield to  
eternal joy.  
Deflate self-centred passions,  
extinguish vengefulness and spite,  
transform greed into responsible stewardship  
that seeks the benefit of all.

We beseech you, our merciful God:  
teach us to be artisans of peace,  
free us from sterile conflicts,  
make us builders of reconciliation and  
communion,  
let all people recognize their own human dignity  
as they honour the dignity of others.  
Watch over all of our endeavours,  
increase our faith.

We thank you  
for your gifts and graces,  
for friendships that sustain us,  
for acts of love that untie knots  
and weave together the tapestry of your  
Kingdom.  
Amen.

## RENEWAL OF BAPTISMAL PROMISES (on the Sunday of the Baptism of the Lord)

*By religious profession  
we mean to live the grace of our baptism  
radically and more fully.  
(Const. 60)*

- P** We bless you, God, our Father of mercy,  
for the loving-kindness you show us.
- A** **For while we were dead through our  
trespasses,  
you restored us to life in Christ.**
- P** We bless you, Jesus Christ, Son of the  
Father,  
who became man for our salvation.
- A** **With generous hearts, we desire to  
follow you on the path of the evangelical  
counsels.**
- P** We bless you, Holy Spirit, the Intercessor,  
who bestows upon us every spiritual  
blessing in the heavens.
- A** **Teach us to be signs and bearers of your  
grace to the young,  
and guide our feet into the way of peace.**
- P** Let us pray.  
Grant us, Lord,  
the grace to stay fervent in our response to

your call,  
zealous missionary disciples to the young  
in the spirit of St. John Bosco.  
May our docility to you in the Salesian  
mission  
redound to your greater glory  
like a symphony of praise offered in your  
name,  
who are Father, Son and Holy Spirit,  
and live and reign for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

### ***Scripture Readings***

#### ***Option 1***

**Second Letter of Peter** (2 Pet 1,2-10)

*The Power of God's Promise*

May you have more and more grace and peace as you come to know our Lord more and more. By his divine power, he has given us all the things that we need for life and for true devotion, bringing us to know God himself, who has called us by his own glory and goodness. In making these gifts, he has given us the guarantee of something very great and wonderful to come: through them you will be able to share the divine nature and to escape corruption in a world that is sunk in vice. But to attain this, you will have to do your utmost

yourselves, adding goodness to the faith that you have, understanding to your goodness, self-control to your understanding, patience to your self-control, true devotion to your patience, kindness towards your fellow men to your devotion, and, to this kindness, love. If you have a generous supply of these, they will not leave you ineffectual or unproductive: they will bring you to a real knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But without them a man is blind or else short-sighted; he has forgotten how his past sins were washed away. Brothers, you have been called and chosen: work all the harder to justify it. If you do all these things there is no danger that you will ever fall away.

### ***Option 2***

#### **Letter to the Romans** (Rom 6,3-14)

You have been taught that when we were baptised in Christ Jesus we were baptised in his death; in other words, when we were baptised we went into the tomb with him and joined him in death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead by the Father's glory, we too might live a new life. If in union with Christ we have imitated his death, we shall also imitate him in his resurrection. We must realise that our former selves have been

crucified with him to destroy this sinful body and to free us from the slavery of sin. When a Christian dies, of course, he has finished with sin. But we believe that having died with Christ we shall return to life with him: Christ, as we know, having been raised from the dead will never die again. Death has no power over him anymore. When he died, he died, once for all, to sin, so his life now is life with God; and in that way, you too must consider yourselves to be dead to sin but alive for God in Christ Jesus. That is why you must not let sin reign in your mortal bodies or command your obedience to bodily passions, why you must not let any part of your body turn into an unholy weapon fighting on the side of sin; you should, instead, offer yourselves to God, and consider yourselves dead men brought back to life; you should make every part of your body into a weapon fighting on the side of God; and then sin will no longer dominate your life, since you are living by grace and not by law.

### **Salesian Reading**

*The first object of our Society is the sanctification of its members.*

*To Don Rua and the other beloved sons of St. Francis de Sales living in Turin:*

It is most likely that our Society will be definitively approved in the near future. I therefore feel the need to speak to my beloved sons more frequently. Since it is not possible for me to see you all in person, I will endeavour at least to reach you by letter.

The first object of our Society is the sanctification of its members. Therefore, each one on entering must strip himself of every other thought, every other concern. Whoever enters to enjoy a tranquil life, to seek comfort and pursue studies, to escape his parents' commands or be exempt from obedience to some superior would have a twisted purpose. He would not be living the Saviour's *Sequere me*, but would be following his own temporal interests and not the good of souls.

The apostles were praised by the Saviour and were promised an eternal kingdom not because they abandoned the world, but because by abandoning it they showed themselves ready to follow him along the way of tribulation, as in fact happened, consuming their life with fatigue, penance and suffering, and eventually suffering even martyrdom for the faith.

Nor is it a good purpose for one to enter or remain in the Society because he believes

he is necessary for it. Let each one have this firmly etched on his mind and in his heart: beginning from the general superior down to the least of the members, no one is necessary in the Society. God alone is its head, its absolute and necessary master. Therefore, its members must turn to God, their head and true master, the one who will reward them. Let each one enrol in the Society out of love for God, and out of love for him to work, obey and abandon whatever he possesses in the world in order to be able to say to the Saviour whom we have chosen as a model: *ecce nos reliquimus [omnia] et secuti sumus te, quid ergo dabis nobis?* [*we have left everything to follow you, what then will you give us?*]...

So, when we say that everyone must enter the Society guided by the sole desire to serve God with greater perfection, and to do good to himself, he intends to do to himself the true good, which is spiritual and eternal.

Whoever is seeking a life of comfort or leisure will not fare well in our Society. We base ourselves on the word of our Saviour who says: "If any want to become my disciples, let them sell all that they possess, give the proceeds to the poor, and then come follow me". But where

shall he lead us, where shall we follow him, if he did not have so much as a place to rest his own weary head? “Whoever wishes to be my disciple”, says the Lord, “will follow me in prayer, through penance, and especially by denying himself, taking up the cross of daily tribulations, and follow me”. But just how far are we to follow him? Until death, and, if he so wills, even by death on a cross. This is what anyone in our Society must do if he truly desires to give himself completely to the sacred ministry, to teaching or any other priestly services, even if that means coming to a violent death in prison, in exile, in chains, tormented by water or flames, so that after having suffered death with Christ on earth he may enjoy with Christ the joys of heaven. This seems to me the meaning of the words which St. Paul addresses to all Christians: “*Qui vult gaudere cum Christo, oportet pati cum Christo*”... Those who wish to rejoice with Christ, must suffer with Christ”.

Once a brother has entered with these good dispositions he must show himself unpretentious and welcome any office that is entrusted to him. Teaching, studying, working, preaching, hearing confessions, in church or out of church: he must accept the humblest tasks cheerfully and without hesitation,

because God does not look at the nature of our work, but looks at the ends for which they are done. Therefore, all responsibilities are equally noble, because they are equally meritorious in the eyes of God. My dearest sons, have confidence in your superiors; they must give a strict account to God for your works; therefore, they discern your capacity and inclinations, trying to meet every need in a way that is compatible with your strengths, always seeking the greater glory of God and the advantage of souls.

Oh! If our brothers enter the Society with this attitude, our houses will truly become heaven on earth. Peace and harmony will reign among the individuals of every community, charity will be the daily garment of those in positions of authority, and a superior's every step, work and thought will be met with respect and obedience. In short, we will be a family of brothers gathered around their father to promote the glory of God on earth so that one day we will be able to love him and praise him in the immense glory of the blessed in Heaven.

May God fill you and your labour with his blessings, the grace of the Lord sanctify your actions and help you persevere in goodness.

### ***Renewal of Baptismal Promises***

**P** Do you renounce Satan, and all his works and empty promises?

**A I do.**

**P** Do you believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth?

**A I do.**

**P** Do you believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered death and was buried, rose again from the dead and is seated at the right hand of the Father?

**A I do.**

**P** Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting?

**A I do.**

**P** This is our faith. This is the faith of the Church. We are proud to profess it in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**A Amen.**

### ***Sprinkling with Holy Water***

**P** The holy water with which we are about to be blessed reminds us of the waters of baptism in which we died to sin and rose again to new life in Christ. Let us

renew our fidelity to this great gift and grace that God has bestowed upon us.

*(The blessing may proceed in one of two ways: (i) the presider sprinkles the assembly with holy water, or (ii) each person comes to the holy water font and blesses himself).*

### **Our Father**

**P** Through baptism we have become members of the body of Christ and children of God. As beloved children, let us turn to the Father in confidence, and offer the Lord's prayer that was passed on to us on the day of our baptism.

**Our Father...**

### ***Final Blessing***







7

SEASON OF  
LENT



*Lent is a privileged time for the conversion of each Salesian and every community. It is an ideal time for retreats, scrutinies and reviews of life, community penitential and reconciliation services, and the ancient practice of the “Via Crucis” or Way of the Cross.*

*Two Ways of the Cross are proposed here. The first is a meditation of the passion and death of Jesus according to St. Luke. The second is a meditation written by St John Paul II in the Jubilee of 2000. The parts are shared by the presider, assembly, and three lectors.*

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## **WAY OF THE CROSS (Meditation on the Passion according to St Luke)**

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### **Hymn**

#### **Introductory rites**

**P** In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

The Lord, Jesus Christ, who precedes us on the way of the cross, be with you.

**A And with your spirit.**

**P** Brothers, let us meditate on the fulfilment of the Scriptures in the condemnation and death of the Son of man. We listen to the testimony of the apostles and participate

in their sorrow. Let us climb Calvary with Jesus to share in his experience of failure and death as a prelude to the joy of fullness of life with him. United with Jesus, let us pray and contemplate.

***Prologue: The disciples journey with Jesus  
(Lk 9,51-56; 18,31-34)***

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A** **Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.**

**R1** Now as the time drew near for him to be taken up to heaven, he resolutely took the road for Jerusalem and sent messengers ahead of him. These set out, and they went into a Samaritan village to make preparations for him, but the people would not receive him because he was making for Jerusalem. Seeing this, the disciples James and John said, 'Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to burn them up?' But he turned and rebuked them, and they went off to another village.

**R2** Then taking the Twelve aside he said to them, 'Now we are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man is to come true. For he will be handed over

to the pagans and will be mocked, maltreated and spat on, and when they have scourged him they will put him to death; and on the third day he will rise again.' But they could make nothing of this; what he said was quite obscure to them, they had no idea what it meant.

**P** Christ gave his life for us.

**A** **Let us share it with our brothers and sisters.**

**P** Lord Jesus, your journey towards the cross is an invitation to follow you: a difficult invitation to understand, one that is more convenient to forget or abandon. Let your Spirit be in us, that, contemplating your way of the cross, we may embrace it more deeply and live it more faithfully as the lens through which we interpret our own pilgrim way. You are Christ, our Lord.

**A** **Amen.**

***First station: Jesus enters Jerusalem (Lk 19,37-40.41-44.45-48)***

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A** **Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.**

**R1** As [Jesus] was approaching the downward slope of the Mount of Olives, the whole

group of disciples joyfully began to praise God at the top of their voices for all the miracles they had seen. They cried out: 'Blessings on the King who comes, in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heavens!' Some Pharisees in the crowd said to him, 'Master, check your disciples', but he answered, 'I tell you, if these keep silence the stones will cry out'.

**R2** As he drew near and came in sight of the city he shed tears over it and said, 'If you in your turn had only understood on this day the message of peace! But, alas, it is hidden from your eyes! Yes, a time is coming when your enemies will raise fortifications all round you, when they will encircle you and hem you in on every side; they will dash you and the children inside your walls to the ground; they will leave not one stone standing on another within you - and all because you did not recognise your opportunity when God offered it!'

**R3** Then he went into the Temple and began driving out those who were selling. 'According to scripture,' he said 'my house will be a house of prayer. But

you have turned it into a robbers' den'. He taught in the Temple every day. The chief priests and the scribes, with the support of the leading citizens, tried to do away with him, but they did not see how they could carry this out because the people as a whole hung on his words.

**P** Christ gave his life for us.

**A** **Let us share it with our brothers and sisters.**

**P** Lord Jesus, like the disciples in the Gospel, it is easier for us to recognize you as the prince of peace than the suffering servant. How often do we invoke you only in words but fail to recognize you in the trials of everyday life? Therefore, we pray: let your strength be with us, so that we may never reject you, eternal God, Word of the Father, who lives and reigns over the centuries.

**A** **Amen.**

*Chant refrain (a strophe from Stabat mater after each station)*

*Stabat mater dolorosa (At the Cross her station keeping,)*

*iuxta crucem lacrimosa, (stood the mournful Mother weeping,)*

*dum pendebat Filius. (close to her Son to the last.)*

***Second station: The Institution of the Lord's Supper (Lk 22,14-15.19-23)***

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A** **Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.**

**R1** When the hour came he took his place at table, and the apostles with him. And he said to them, 'I have longed to eat this passover with you before I suffer; because, I tell you, I shall not eat it again until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God'. Then, taking a cup, he gave thanks and said, "Take this and share it among you, because from now on, I tell you, I shall not drink wine until the kingdom of God comes'. Then he took some bread, and when he had given thanks, broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body which will be given for you; do this as a memorial of me'. He did the same with the cup after supper, and said, 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood which will be poured out for you. And yet, here with me on the table is the hand of the man who betrays me. The Son of Man does indeed go to his fate even as it has been decreed, but alas for that man by whom he is betrayed!' And they began to ask one another which of them it could be who was to do this thing.

**P** Christ gave his life for us.

**A Let us share it with our brothers and sisters.**

**P** Lord Jesus, on your way to the cross you desired to remain with us by giving us bread and wine as your body and your blood, a sign of salvation and fraternal communion. You know all that is within us; help us to celebrate the Eucharist worthily and to live according to what we believe. You are the eternal priest of our salvation.

**A Amen.**

*Chant refrain*

Cuius animam gementem, (*Through her heart,  
His sorrow sharing,*)

contristatam et dolentem all (*His bitter anguish  
bearing,*)

pertransivit gladius. (*now at length the sword  
has passed.*)

**Third station: Jesus prays in the Garden of Olives (Lk 22,39-46)**

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.**

**R2** He then left to make his way as usual to the Mount of Olives, with the disciples following. When they reached the place

he said to them, 'Pray not to be put to the test'. Then he withdrew from them, about a stone's throw away, and knelt down and prayed. 'Father,' he said 'if you are willing, take this cup away from me. Nevertheless, let your will be done, not mine.' Then an angel appeared to him, coming from heaven to give him strength. In his anguish he prayed even more earnestly, and his sweat fell to the ground like great drops of blood. When he rose from prayer he went to the disciples and found them sleeping for sheer grief. 'Why are you asleep?' he said to them. 'Get up and pray not to be put to the test.'

**P** Christ gave his life for us.

**A** **Let us share it with our brothers and sisters.**

**P** Lord Jesus, teach us to pray. In moments of crisis, difficulties and trial, grant us the courage to look towards you and to imitate you in constant and trusting prayer. You are Christ, our Lord.

**A** **Amen.**

*Chant refrain*

*O quam tristis et afflicta (O how sad and sore distressed)*

fuit illa benedicta (*was that Mother, highly blest,*)  
Mater Unigeniti! (*of the sole-begotten One.*)

**Fourth station: Jesus is betrayed and arrested (Lk 22,47-53)**

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A** **Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.**

**R3** He was still speaking when a number of men appeared, and at the head of them the man called Judas, one of the Twelve, who went up to Jesus to kiss him. Jesus said, 'Judas, are you betraying the son of Man with a kiss?' His followers, seeing what was happening, said, 'Lord, shall we use our swords?' And one of them struck out at the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. But at this Jesus spoke. 'Leave off!' he said 'That will do!' And touching the man's ear he healed him. Then Jesus spoke to the chief priests and captains of the Temple guard and elders who had come for him. 'Am I a brigand' he said 'that you had to set out with swords and clubs? When I was among you in the Temple day after day you never moved to lay hands on me. But this is your hour; this is the reign of darkness.'

**P** Christ gave his life for us.

**A Let us share it with our brothers and sisters.**

**P** Lord Jesus, save us from temptation, deliver us from evil and forgive our spiritual indifference. May your thoughts be our thoughts, your actions our actions. Help us to respond to evil with good, to love those who persecute us. You are the Emmanuel, Jesus Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

*Chant refrain*

Quae maerebat et dolebat, (*Christ above in torment hangs,*)

pia Mater, dum videbat (*she beneath beholds the pangs*)

nati poenas incliti. (*of her dying glorious Son.*)

***Fifth station: Jesus before the Council  
(Lk 22,66-71)***

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.**

**R1** When day broke there was a meeting of the elders of the people, attended by the chief priests and scribes. He was brought before their council, and they said to him, 'If you are the Christ, tell us'. 'If I tell you,'

he replied 'you will not believe me, and if I question you, you will not answer. But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right hand of the Power of God'. Then they all said, 'So you are the Son of God then?' He answered, 'It is you who say I am'. 'What need of witnesses have we now?' they said. 'We have heard it for ourselves from his own lips.'

**P** Christ gave his life for us.

**A** **Let us share it with our brothers and sisters.**

**P** Lord Jesus, help us to desire the splendour of your truth. Help us not to fear suffering and setbacks in our efforts to abide in you with a sincere heart. Defend us, O Jesus, from falsehood and error. You who are the eternal truth, Christ Jesus, our Lord.

**A** **Amen.**

*Chant refrain*

Quis est homo, qui non fleret, (*Is there one who would not weep,*)

Matrem Christi si videret (*whelmed in miseries so deep,*)

in tanto supplicio? (*Christ's dear Mother to behold*)

***Sixth station: Jesus before Pontius Pilate  
(Lk 23,1-7)***

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A** **Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.**

**R2** The whole assembly then rose, and they brought him before Pilate. They began their accusation by saying, 'We found this man inciting our people to revolt, opposing payment of the tribute to Caesar, and claiming to be Christ, a king'. Pilate put to him this question, 'Are you the king of the Jews?' 'It is you who say it' he replied. Pilate then said to the chief priests and the crowd, 'I find no case against this man'. But they persisted, 'He is inflaming the people with his teaching all over Judaea; it has come all the way from Galilee, where he started, down to here'. When Pilate heard this, he asked if the man were a Galilean; and finding that he came under Herod's jurisdiction he passed him over to Herod who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

**P** Christ gave his life for us.

**A** **Let us share it with our brothers and sisters.**

**P** Lord Jesus, help us to give faithful witness to you and to proclaim your good news

of salvation. Those who were in darkness refused your light and rejected you, even as you offered your life to save humanity from sin and death. Lord Jesus, who prayed for those who were not of the world, help us to announce your presence and be signs of salvation. You are Christ, the Lord of history.

**A Amen.**

*Chant refrain*

Quis non posset contristari, *(Can the human heart refrain)*

Christi Matrem contemplari *(from partaking in her pain,)*

dolentem cum Filio? *(in that Mother's pain untold?)*

***Seventh station: Jesus before Herod  
(Lk 23,8-12)***

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.**

**R3** Herod was delighted to see Jesus; he had heard about him and had been wanting for a long time to set eyes on him; moreover, he was hoping to see some miracle worked by him. So he questioned him at some length; but without getting

any reply. Meanwhile the chief priests and the scribes were there, violently pressing their accusations. Then Herod, together with his guards, treated him with contempt and made fun of him; he put a rich cloak on him and sent him back to Pilate. And though Herod and Pilate had been enemies before, they were reconciled that same day.

**P** Christ gave his life for us.

**A** **Let us share it with our brothers and sisters.**

**P** Lord Jesus, we thank you for the strength you give to those who suffer injustice and persecution. We too, in our weakness, need the boldness and courage that comes from your Spirit. Give us, Lord, your Spirit of strength and love. You are the presence that brings salvation.

**A** **Amen.**

*Chant refrain*

Pro peccatis suae gentis (*For the sins of His own nation,*)

vidit Iesum in tormentis (*She saw Jesus wracked with torment,*)

et flagellis subditum. (*All with scourges rent.*)

***Eighth station: Jesus is condemned to death  
(Lk 23,13-16.21-24)***

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A** **Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.**

**R1** Pilate then summoned the chief priests and the leading men and the people. 'You brought this man before me' he said 'as a political agitator. Now I have gone into the matter myself in your presence and found no case against the man in respect of all the charges you bring against him. Nor has Herod either, since he has sent him back to us. As you can see, the man has done nothing that deserves death. So I shall have him flogged and then let him go.' But they shouted back, 'Crucify him! Crucify him!' And for the third time he spoke to them, 'Why? What harm has this man done? I have found no case against him that deserves death, so I shall have him punished and then let him go'. But they kept on shouting at the top of their voices, demanding that he should be crucified. And their shouts were growing louder. Pilate then gave his verdict: their demand was to be granted.

**P** Christ gave his life for us.

**A Let us share it with our brothers and sisters.**

**P** Lord Jesus, let those who courageously follow you and endure persecution and insults for your name share in your salvation. Do not abandon them to the culture of death that overshadows this world. May your strength be in them, so that the light of salvation may shine through their days of pain and condemnation. You are the innocent victim who redeems the innocent.

**A Amen.**

*Chant refrain*

Vidit suum dulcem Natum *(She beheld her tender Child,)*

moriendo desolatum, *(Saw Him hang in desolation,)*

dum emisit spiritum. *(Till His spirit forth He sent.)*

***Ninth station: Jesus carries his cross to Calvary (Lk 23,26-32)***

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.**

**R2** As they were leading him away they seized on a man, Simon from Cyrene, who was coming in from the country, and made him shoulder the cross and carry it behind Jesus. Large numbers of people followed him, and of women too, who mourned and lamented for him. But Jesus turned to them and said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep rather for yourselves and for your children. For the days will surely come when people will say, "Happy are those who are barren, the wombs that have never borne, the breasts that have never suckled!" Then they will begin to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!"; to the hills, "Cover us". For if men use the green wood like this, what will happen when it is dry?' Now with him they were also leading out two other criminals to be executed.

**P** Christ gave his life for us.

**A** **Let us share it with our brothers and sisters.**

**P** Lord Jesus, we accept the hand of reconciliation that you extend to us and ask your forgiveness. If the world still does not recognize you as its Saviour, we are partly responsible because of our lukewarm commitment to you and

our reluctance to share our faith with others. O God of mercy, forgive us. Grant us the courage to profess what we believe and to live what we profess.

**A Amen.**

*Chant refrain*

Eia, Mater, fons amoris, (*O thou Mother! fount of love!*)

me sentire vim doloris (*Touch my spirit from above,*)

fac, ut tecum lugeam. (*make my heart with thine accord.*)

**Tenth station: Jesus is crucified (Lk 23,33-38)**

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.**

**R3** When they reached the place called The Skull, they crucified him there and the two criminals also, one on the right, the other on the left. Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them; they do not know what they are doing'. Then they cast lots to share out his clothing. The people stayed there watching him. As for the leaders, they jeered at him. 'He saved others,' they said 'let him save himself if he is the Christ of God, the Chosen One.' The soldiers mocked him too,

and when they approached to offer vinegar they said, 'If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself'. Above him there was an inscription: 'This is the King of the Jews'.

**P** Christ gave his life for us.

**A Let us share it with our brothers and sisters.**

**P** Lord Jesus, your words are demanding; it is difficult for us to love our enemies. Apart from you, we can do nothing, but with you all things are possible. May your cross be the measure of our love, the force by which you allow us to overcome every intemperance, indifference and discouragement. You are life beyond death and a covenant that sets us free.

**A Amen.**

*Chant refrain*

Fac ut ardeat cor meum *(Make me feel as thou hast felt;)*

in amando Christum *(Deum, make my soul to glow and melt)*

ut sibi complaceam. *(with the love of Christ my Lord.)*

***Eleventh station: Jesus and the repentant thief (Lk 23,39-43)***

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A** **Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.**

**R1** One of the criminals hanging there abused him. 'Are you not the Christ?' he said. 'Save yourself and us as well.' But the other spoke up and rebuked him. 'Have you no fear of God at all?' he said. 'You got the same sentence as he did, but in our case we deserved it: we are paying for what we did. But this man has done nothing wrong. 'Jesus,' he said 'remember me when you come into your kingdom.' 'Indeed, I promise you,' he replied 'today you will be with me in paradise.'

**P** Christ gave his life for us.

**A** **Let us share it with our brothers and sisters.**

**P** Lord Jesus, have mercy on us, for we too are sinners. We ask for your help and forgiveness. After being wrapped in the shadow of pain and death, you rose and ascended into heaven, where you are seated at the right hand of your Father. Be mindful of your servants who have hoped in you; bring them to that glorious and holy day when those redeemed by

your death can contemplate your face  
with joy. You are mercy and forgiveness.

**A Amen.**

*Chant refrain*

Sancta Mater, istud agas, (*Holy Mother! pierce  
me through,*)

Crucifixi fige plagas (*in my heart each wound  
renew*)

cordi meo valide. (*of my Saviour crucified.*)

**Twelfth Station: The death of Jesus  
(Lk 23,44-49)**

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A Because by your holy cross, you have  
redeemed the world.**

**R2** It was now about the sixth hour and, with the sun eclipsed, a darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour. The veil of the Temple was torn right down the middle; and when Jesus had cried out in a loud voice, he said, 'Father, into your hands I commit my spirit'. With these words he breathed his last. When the centurion saw what had taken place, he gave praise to God and said, 'This was a great and good man'. And when all the people who had gathered for the spectacle saw what had happened,

they went home beating their breasts. All his friends stood at a distance; so also did the women who had accompanied him from Galilee, and they saw all this happen.

**P** Christ gave his life for us.

**A** **Let us share it with our brothers and sisters.**

**P** Lord Jesus, your anguish over the sins of humanity tormented you as much as your passion and crucifixion. For our sake, you endured loneliness and the fear of being abandoned. Through apparent failure you fulfilled the Scriptures. In our moments of suffering and loneliness, in the humiliation of failure, teach us to commend our spirit to the Father. You are the God of salvation, who died that we might live.

**A** **Amen.**

*Chant refrain*

Tui nati vulnerati, (*Let me share with thee His pain,*)

tam dignati pro me pati, (*who for all my sins was slain,*)

poenas mecum divide. (*who for me in torments died.*)

***Thirteenth station: The burial of Jesus  
(Lk 23,50-53)***

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A** **Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.**

**R3** Then a member of the council arrived, an upright and virtuous man named Joseph. He had not consented to what the others had planned and carried out. He came from Arimathaea, a Jewish town, and he lived in the hope of seeing the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. He then took it down, wrapped it in a shroud and put him in a tomb which was hewn in stone in which no one had yet been laid.

**P** Christ gave his life for us.

**A** **Let us share it with our brothers and sisters.**

**P** Lord Jesus, with profound reverence some of your followers reposed your lifeless body in a newly hewn tomb. But the temple of your body was not destined for ruin and the tomb could not contain you. The empty tomb proclaims your risen glory. You are life and resurrection love.

**A** **Amen.**

*Chant refrain*

Fac me tecum pie fiere, (*Let me mingle tears with thee,*)

Crucifixo condolere, (*mourning Him who mourned for me,*)

donec ego vixero. (*all the days that I may live.*)

**Fourteenth station: The resurrection of Jesus (Lk 24,1-7)**

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A** **Because by your holy cross, you have redeemed the world.**

**L1** On the first day of the week, at the first sign of dawn, they went to the tomb with the spices they had prepared. They found that the stone had been rolled away from the tomb, but on entering discovered that the body of the Lord Jesus was not there. As they stood there not knowing what to think, two men in brilliant clothes suddenly appeared at their side. Terrified, the women lowered their eyes. But the two men said to them, 'Why look among the dead for someone who is alive? He is not here; he has risen. Remember what he told you when he was still in Galilee: that the Son of Man had to be handed over into the power of sinful men and be crucified, and rise again on the third day?'

**P** Christ gave his life for us.

**A** **Let us share it with our brothers and sisters.**

**P** Lord Jesus, the shadow of death could not obscure your name; what was impossible for humanity is possible for God. A new day dawns! A song of victory will rise from Jerusalem to your glory and praise.

**A** **Amen.**

*Chant refrain*

*Iuxta crucem tecum stare (By the Cross with thee to stay,)*

*et me tibi sociare (there with thee to weep and pray,)*

*in planctu desidero. (is all I ask of thee to give.)*

*Quando corpus morietur, (While my body here decays,)*

*fac ut animae donetur (may my soul Thy goodness praise,)*

*paradisi gloria. Amen. (Safe in Paradise with Thee.)*

### **Conclusion**

**P** The passion of Jesus is not over: he continues to suffer in our brothers and sisters who bear the strain of sin and in those who hunger for justice and freedom. Today it is his Church,

you and I, members of his mystical body, who must allow Jesus to “complete his passion in us” for the redemption of the world. But the death of Jesus is not the end; the resurrection removes death’s sting. This is the hope that guides our life: we too will pass through death to share in the glorious life of the Risen Jesus.

**P** Christ gave his life for us.

**A** **Let us share it with our brothers and sisters.**

**P** Lord Jesus, teach us to take up our cross every day as we follow you. Strengthen us to make amends for our sins and those of humanity. Help us to make your salvation known to our brothers and sisters. Make us joyful witnesses of your resurrection. You who live and reign in the glory of eternity.

**A** **Amen.**

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## **WAY OF THE CROSS (ST JOHN PAUL II)**

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### ***Introductory rites***

*Adapted from the introduction of St John Paul II*

**P** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**A** **Amen.**

**P** “If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me.” (Mt 16,24)

For twenty centuries the Church has gathered to remember and to re-live the events of the final stage of the earthly journey of the Son of God. Once again this year, we follow the footsteps of Jesus, who “went out, carrying his cross, to the place called the place of the skull, which is called in Hebrew Golgotha” (Jn 19,17).

We are here because we believe that Jesus’ Way of the Cross was not simply a journey to the place of execution. We believe that every step of the Condemned Christ, every action and every word, as well as everything felt and done by those who took part in this tragic drama, continues to speak to us. In his suffering and death, Christ reveals to us the truth about God and humanity.

Let us contemplate the full meaning of that event, so that what happened then may speak with new power to our minds and hearts today, and become a source of grace as we participate in it.

To share means to have a part. What does it mean to have a part in the Cross of Christ? It means to experience, in the Holy Spirit, the

love hidden within the Cross of Christ. It means to recognize, in the light of this love, our own cross. It means to take up that cross once more and, strengthened by this love, to continue our journey through life in imitation of the one “who endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God” (Heb 12,2).

**Let us pray**

Lord Jesus Christ, fill our hearts with the light of your Spirit, so that by following you on your final journey we may come to know the price of our Redemption and become worthy of a share in the fruits of your Passion, Death and Resurrection. You who live and reign for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

***Chant refrain (to the tune of Stabat Mater)***

**A Jesus, Lord, condemned, defiled,  
May we too be meek and mild,  
As we tread your holy Way.**

**May we feel no bitter hatred,  
When we too are persecuted,  
Left alone to walk with you.**

## FIRST STATION:

### Jesus is condemned to death

---

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A** **Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

**R1** “Are you the King of the Jews?” (Jn 18,33)  
“My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here” (Jn 18,36). Pilate said to him, “So you are a king?” Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. For this I was born, and for this I have come into the world, to bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears my voice.” Pilate said in reply, “What is truth?” At this point, the Roman Procurator saw no need for further questions. He went to the Jews and told them: “I find no crime in him” (cf. Jn 18,37-38).

**R2** The tragedy of Pilate is hidden in the question: What is truth? This was no philosophical question about the nature of truth, but an existential question about his own relationship with truth. It was an attempt to escape from the voice of

conscience, which was pressing him to acknowledge the truth and follow it. When someone refuses to be guided by truth he or she is ultimately ready even to condemn an innocent person to death.

**R3** The accusers sense this weakness in Pilate and so they do not yield. They relentlessly call for death by crucifixion. Pilate's attempts at half measures are of no avail. The cruel punishment of scourging inflicted upon the Accused is not enough. When the Procurator brings Jesus, scourged and crowned with thorns, before the crowd, he seems to be looking for words which he thinks might quench the mob's thirst for blood. Pointing to Jesus he says: *Ecce homo!* Behold the man! But the answer comes back: "Crucify him, crucify him!" Pilate then tries to buy time: "Take him yourselves and crucify him, for I find no crime in him" (Jn 19,5-7).

**R1** Pilate is increasingly convinced that the Accused is innocent, but this is not enough for him to decide in his favour. The accusers use their final argument: "If you release this man, you are no friend of Caesar; everyone who claims to be a

king sets himself against the emperor” (Jn 19,12). This is clearly a threat. Recognizing the danger, Pilate finally gives in and pronounces the sentence. But not without the contemptuous gesture of washing his hands: “I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves!” (Mt 27,24)

And so Jesus, the Son of the living God, the Redeemer of the world, was condemned to death by crucifixion.

**R2** Over the centuries the denial of truth has spawned suffering and death. It is the innocent who pay the price of human hypocrisy. Half measures are never enough. Nor is it enough to wash one’s hands. Responsibility for the blood of the just remains. This is why Christ prayed so fervently for his disciples in every age: Father, “sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth” (Jn 17,17).

### **Prayer**

**P** Lord Jesus Christ, you accepted an unjust judgment. Grant to us and to all the men and women of our time the grace to remain faithful to the truth. Do not allow the weight of responsibility for the sufferings of the innocent to

fall upon us and upon those who come after us. To you, O Jesus, just Judge, be honour and glory for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

**Our Father...**

***Chant refrain (to the tune of Stabat mater)***

**A Now the cross as Jesus bore it,  
has become for us who share it  
the jewelled crown of victory.**

**SECOND STATION: Jesus takes up his Cross**

---

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A Because by your holy Cross you have  
redeemed the world.**

**R3** The cross. The instrument of a shameful death. It was not lawful to condemn a Roman citizen to death by crucifixion: it was too humiliating. The moment that Jesus of Nazareth took up the Cross in order to carry it to Calvary marked a turning-point in the history of the cross. The symbol of a shameful death, reserved for the lowest classes, the cross becomes a key. From now on, with the help of this key, man will open the door of the deepest mystery of God. Through Christ's acceptance of the Cross,

the instrument of his own self-emptying, men will come to know that God is love.

- R1** Love without limits: “God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life” (Jn 3,16).
- R2** This truth about God was revealed in the Cross. Could it not have been revealed in some other way? Perhaps! But God chose the Cross. The Father chose the Cross for his Son, and his Son shouldered it, carried it to Mount Calvary and on it offered his life. “In the Cross there is suffering, in the Cross there is salvation, in the Cross there is a lesson of love. O God, he who once has understood you, desires nothing else, seeks nothing else” (Polish Lenten hymn). The Cross is the sign of a love without limits!

### **Prayer**

- P** Lord Jesus Christ, who accepted the Cross from the hands of your brothers, transforming it into the sign of God’s saving love for humanity, grant us and all the men and women of our time the grace of faith in this infinite love. By passing on to every generation the sign of the Cross, may we be authentic witnesses to

the Redemption. To you, O Jesus, Priest and Victim, be praise and glory forever.

**A Amen.**

**Our Father...**

***Chant refrain***

**A Weakened, prodded, cursed and fallen,  
his whole body bruised and swollen,  
Jesus tripped and lay in pain.**

**THIRD STATION: Jesus falls the first time**  
.....

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A Because by your holy Cross you have  
redeemed the world.**

**R3** “God laid on him the sins of us all” (cf. Is 53,6). “All of us like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all” (Is 53,6).

**R1** Jesus falls under the Cross. This will happen three times along the comparatively short stretch of the “via dolorosa”. Exhaustion makes Jesus fall. His body is stained with blood from the scourging; his head is crowned with thorns. All this causes his strength to fail. So he falls, and the weight of the Cross crushes him to the ground.

**R2** We must go back to the words of the Prophet, who foresaw this fall centuries earlier. It is as though he were contemplating it with his own eyes: seeing the Servant of the Lord, on the ground under the weight of the Cross, he tells us the real cause of his fall. It is this: “God laid on him the sins of us all”. It was our sins that crushed the divine Condemned One to the ground. It was our sins that determined the weight of the Cross that he carries on his shoulders. It was our sins that made him fall.

**R1** With difficulty Christ gets up again to continue his journey. The soldiers escorting him urge him on with shouts and blows. After a moment the procession sets out again.

**R2** Jesus falls and gets up again. In this way, the Redeemer of the world speaks without words to all those who fall. He exhorts them to get up again. “He himself bore our sins in his body on the wood of the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness. By his wounds we have been healed” (cf. 1 Pet 2,24).

## ***Prayer***

**P** O Christ, as you fall under the weight of our faults and rise again for our justification, we pray, help us and all who are weighed down by sin to stand up again and continue the journey. Give us the strength of the Spirit to carry with you the cross of our weakness. To you, O Jesus, crushed under the weight of our faults, be our praise and love for ever.

**A Amen.**

**Our Father...**

*Chant refrain*

**A Jesus met his grieving Mother,  
she who made the Lord our Brother,  
now the sword her heart has pierced.**

**FOURTH STATION: Jesus meets his Mother**  
.....

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A Because by your holy Cross you have  
redeemed the world.**

**R2** "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign

over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end” (Lk 1,30-33).

**R3** Mary remembered these words. She often returned to them in the secret of her heart. When she met her Son on the way of the Cross, perhaps these very words came to her mind with particular force. “He will reign... His kingdom will have no end”, the heavenly messenger had said. Now, as she watches her Son, condemned to death, carrying the Cross on which he must die, she might ask herself an obvious question: So how can these words be fulfilled? In what way will he reign over the House of David? And how can it be that his kingdom will have no end? Humanly speaking, these are reasonable questions.

**R1** But Mary remembered that, when she first heard the Angel’s message, she had replied: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word” (Lk 1,38). Now she sees that her word is being fulfilled as the word of the Cross. Because she is a mother, Mary suffers deeply. But she answers now as she had answered then, at the Annunciation: “May it be done to me according to your

word". In this way, as a mother would, she embraces the cross together with the divine Condemned One. On the way of the Cross, Mary shows herself to be the Mother of the Redeemer of the world.

**R2** "All you who pass by the way, look and see whether there is any suffering like my suffering, which has been dealt me" (Lam 1,12). It is the Sorrowful Mother who speaks, the Handmaid who is obedient to the end, the Mother of the Redeemer of the world.

### ***Prayer***

**P** O Mary, who walked the way of the Cross with your Son, your mother's heart torn by grief, but mindful always of your fiat and fully confident that He to whom nothing is impossible would be able to fulfil his promises, implore for us and for the generations yet to come the grace of surrender to God's love. Help us, in the face of suffering, rejection, and trial, however prolonged and severe, never to doubt his love. To Jesus, your Son, honour and glory for ever and ever.

**A** **Amen.**

**Our Father ...**

### *Chant refrain*

**A** Simon stopped in hesitation,  
not foreseeing his proud station,  
called to bear the cross of Christ.

### **FIFTH STATION: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry his Cross**

---

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A** **Because by your holy Cross you have  
redeemed the world.**

**R3** They compelled Simon to help Jesus (cf. Mk 15,21). The Roman soldiers did this because they feared that in his exhaustion the Condemned Man would not be able to carry the Cross all the way to Golgotha. Then they would not be able to carry out the sentence of crucifixion. They were looking for someone to help carry the Cross. Their eyes fell on Simon. They compelled him to take the weight upon his shoulders. We can imagine that Simon did not want to do this and objected. Carrying the cross with a convict was considered an offensive to the dignity of a free man.

**R1** Although unwilling, Simon took up the Cross to help Jesus.

- R2** In a Lenten hymn we hear the words:  
“Under the weight of the Cross Jesus welcomes the Cyrenean”. These words allow us to discern a total change of perspective: the divine Condemned One is someone who, in a certain sense, “makes a gift” of his Cross. Was it not he who said: “He who does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me?” (Mt 10,38)
- R3** Simon receives a gift. He has become “worthy” of it. What the crowd might see as an offence to his dignity has, from the perspective of redemption, given him a new dignity. In a unique way, the Son of God has allowed him to share in his work of salvation.
- R1** Is Simon aware of this? The evangelist Mark identifies Simon of Cyrene as the “father of Alexander and Rufus” (15,21). If the sons of Simon of Cyrene were known to the first Christian community, it can be presumed that Simon too, while carrying the Cross, came to believe in Christ. From being forced, he freely accepted, as though deeply touched by the words: “Whoever does not carry his cross with me is not worthy of me.” By his carrying of the Cross, Simon was brought to the knowledge of the gospel of the Cross.

**R2** Since then, this gospel has spoken to many, countless “Cyreneans”, called in the course of history to carry the cross with Jesus.

### **Prayer**

**P** O Christ, you gave to Simon of Cyrene the dignity of carrying your Cross. Welcome us too under its weight; welcome all men and women and grant to everyone the gift of readiness to serve. When we are tempted to turn away from those who are crushed by the cross of illness, loneliness, hunger or injustice, let us help you by helping them. As we carry each other’s burdens, help us to become witnesses to the gospel of the Cross and witnesses to you, who live and reign for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

**Our Father...**

### **Chant refrain**

**A Brave but trembling came the woman,  
none but she would flaunt the Roman,  
moved by love beyond her fear.**

### **SIXTH STATION:**

#### **Veronica wipes the face of Jesus**

---

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

**R3** Veronica does not appear in the Gospels. Her name is not mentioned, even though the names of other women who accompanied Jesus do appear. It is possible, therefore, that the name refers more to what the woman did. In fact, according to tradition, on the road to Calvary a woman pushed her way through the soldiers escorting Jesus and with a veil wiped the sweat and blood from the Lord's face. That face remained imprinted on the veil, a faithful reflection, a "true icon". This could be the reason for the name Veronica. If this is so, the name which evokes the memory of what this woman did carries with it the deepest truth about her.

**R1** One day, Jesus drew the criticism of onlookers when he defended a sinful woman who had poured perfumed oil on his feet and dried them with her hair. To those who objected, he replied: "Why do you trouble this woman? For she has done a beautiful thing to me... In pouring this ointment on my body she has done it to prepare me for burial" (Mt 26,10.12). These words could likewise be applied to Veronica.

**R2** Thus we see the profound eloquence of this event. The Redeemer of the world presents

Veronica with an authentic image of his face. The veil upon which the face of Christ remains imprinted becomes a message for us. In a certain sense it says: This is how every act of goodness, every gesture of true love towards one's neighbour, strengthens the likeness of the Redeemer of the world in the one who acts that way.

**R3** Acts of love do not pass away. Every act of goodness, of understanding, of service leaves on people's hearts an indelible imprint and makes us ever more like the One who "emptied himself, taking the form of a servant" (Phil 2,7). This is what shapes our identity and gives us our true name.

### **Prayer**

**P** Lord Jesus Christ, you accepted a woman's selfless gesture of love and in exchange allowed future generations to remember her by the name of your face. Grant that our works, and the works of all those who come after us, will make us like unto you and will leave in the world the reflection of your infinite love. To you, O Jesus, splendour of the Father's glory, be praise and glory forever.

**A Amen.**

## Our Father...

### *Chant refrain*

**A** Can the human heart refrain  
from partaking in her pain,  
in that Mother's untold pain?

### SEVENTH STATION:

#### Jesus falls the second time

---

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A** **Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

**R1** "I am a worm, and no man; scorned by men, and despised by the people" (Ps 22,6). These words of the Psalmist come to mind as we see Jesus fall to the ground a second time under the Cross.

**R2** Here in the dust of the earth lies the Condemned One. Crushed by the weight of his Cross. His strength drains away from him more and more. But with great effort he gets up again to continue his march.

To us sinners, what does this second fall say? More than the first one, it seems to urge us to get up, to get up again on our way of the cross.

**R3** Cyprian Norwid wrote: “Not behind us with the Saviour’s Cross, but behind the Saviour with our own Cross.” A brief saying, but one that conveys much truth! It explains how Christianity is the religion of the Cross. It tells us that every person here below meets Christ who carries the Cross and falls under its weight. In his turn, Christ, on the way to Calvary, meets every man and woman and, falling under the weight of the Cross, does not cease to proclaim the good news.

**R1** For two thousand years the gospel of the Cross has spoken to humanity. For twenty centuries Christ, getting up again from his fall, meets those who fall. Throughout these two millennia many people have learned that falling does not mean the end of the road. In meeting the Saviour, they have heard his reassuring words: “My grace is sufficient for you; for my power is made perfect in weakness” (2 Cor 12,9). Comforted, they have gotten up again and brought to the world the word of hope which comes from the Cross. Today, we are called to penetrate more deeply the meaning of this encounter. Our generation must pass on to future centuries the good news that we are lifted up again in Christ.

## ***Prayer***

**P** Lord Jesus Christ, you fall under the weight of human sin and you get up again to take it upon yourself and cancel it. Give to us, weak men and women, the strength to carry the cross of daily life and to get up again from our falls, so that we may bring to future generations the Gospel of your saving power. To you, O Jesus, our support when we are weak, be praise and glory forever.

**A** **Amen.**

**Our Father...**

## ***Chant refrain***

**A** **May our sympathy for Jesus  
turn to those who here now need us,  
may we see Christ bruised in them.**

## **EIGHTH STATION: Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem**

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A** **Because by your holy Cross you have  
redeemed the world.**

**R2** “Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For the days are surely coming

when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.' Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us'; and to the hills, 'Cover us.' For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?" (Lk 23,28-31). These are the words of Jesus to the women of Jerusalem who were weeping with compassion for the Condemned One.

**R3** "Do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." At the time it was certainly difficult to understand the meaning of these words. They contained a prophecy that would soon come to pass. Shortly before, Jesus had wept over Jerusalem, foretelling the terrible fate that awaited the city. Now he seems to be referring again to that fate: "Weep for your children. Weep, because these, your very children, will be witnesses and will share in the destruction of Jerusalem, the Jerusalem which did not know the time of her visitation" (cf. Lk 19,44).

**R1** If, as we follow Christ on the way of the Cross, our hearts are moved with pity for his suffering, we cannot forget that

admonition. “For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?” For our generation, [...] rather than weep for Christ crucified, it is now the time for us to recognize “the time of our visitation”. Already the dawn of the resurrection is shining forth. “Behold, now is the acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (2 Cor 6,2).

**R2** To each of us Christ addresses these words of the book of Revelation: “Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. He who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I myself conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne” (3,20-21).

### ***Prayer***

**P** O Christ, you came into this world to visit all those who await salvation. Grant that our generation will recognize the time of its visitation and share in the fruits of your redemption. Do not permit that there should be weeping for us and for the men and women of our times because we have rejected our merciful Father’s

outstretched hand. To you, O Jesus, born of the Virgin Daughter of Zion, be honour and praise for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

**Our Father...**

***Chant refrain***

**A Jesus fell again in weakness,  
stumbling as we do, to lead us  
through our sorrow and our pain.**

**NINTH STATION: Jesus falls the third time**

---

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A Because by your holy Cross you have  
redeemed the world.**

**R1** Once more Christ has fallen to the ground under the weight of the Cross. The crowd watches, wondering whether he will have the strength to rise again.

Saint Paul writes: "Though he was in the form of God, he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself taking the form of a servant, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a Cross" (Phil 2,6-8).

**R2** The third fall seems to express just this: the self-emptying, the kenosis of the Son of God, his humiliation beneath the Cross. Jesus had said to the disciples that he had come not to be served but to serve (cf. Mt 20,28). In the Upper Room, bending low to the ground and washing their feet, he sought, as it were, to prepare them for this humiliation of his. Falling to the ground for the third time on the way of the Cross, he proclaims to us once more the mystery of himself. Let us listen to his voice! This Condemned Man, crushed to the ground beneath the weight of the Cross, now very near the place of punishment, tells us: "I am the way, and the truth and the life" (Jn 14,6). "Whoever who follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (Jn 8,12).

**R3** Let us not be dismayed by the sight of a condemned man who falls to the ground exhausted under the cross. Within this outward sign of the death which is approaching, the light of life lies hidden.

### ***Prayer***

**P** Lord Jesus Christ, through your humiliation beneath the Cross you revealed to the world the price of its redemption. Grant

to the men and women of every age the light of faith, so that, as they recognize in you the Suffering Servant of God and man, they may have the courage to follow the same path which, by way of the Cross and self-emptying, leads to life without end. To you, O Jesus, our strength when we are weak, be honour and glory forever.

**A Amen.**

**Our Father...**

*Chant refrain*

**A Stripped and jeered by his own nation,  
Jesus stood in desolation,  
Giving all he had to give.**

**TENTH STATION: Jesus is stripped  
and offered gall and vinegar to drink**  
.....

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A Because by your holy Cross you have  
redeemed the world.**

**R1** "When he tasted it, he would not drink it" (Mt 27,34). Jesus did not want a sedative, which would have dulled his consciousness during the agony. He wanted to be fully aware as he suffered on the Cross, accomplishing the mission he had received from the Father.

**R2** That was not what the soldiers in charge of the execution were used to. Since they had to nail the condemned man to the Cross, they tried to dull his senses and his consciousness. But with Christ this could not be. Jesus knows that his death on the Cross must be a sacrifice of expiation. This is why he wants to remain alert to the very end. Without consciousness, he could not, in complete freedom, accept the full measure of suffering.

**R3** Behold, he must mount the Cross, in order to offer the sacrifice of the New Covenant. He is the Priest. By means of his own blood, he must enter the eternal dwelling-places, having accomplished the world's redemption (cf. Heb 9,12).

**R1** Conscience and freedom: these are the essential elements of a fully human action. The world has so many ways to weaken the will and darken the conscience. They must be carefully defended from all violence. Even the legitimate attempt to control pain must always be done with respect for human dignity.

**R2** If life and death are to retain their true value, the depths of Christ's sacrifice must

be understood, and we must unite ourselves to that sacrifice if we are to hold firm.

### **Prayer**

**P** Lord Jesus who, with supreme dedication, accepted death on the Cross for our salvation, grant to us and to all the world's people a share in your sacrifice on the Cross, so that what we are and what we do may always be a free and conscious sharing in your work of salvation. To you, O Jesus, Priest and Victim, be honour and glory forever.

**A Amen.**

**Our Father ...**

### **Chant refrain**

**A Pierced the hands that blessed and  
cured us,  
pierced the feet that walked to free us,  
Walked the hill of Calvary.**

### **ELEVENTH STATION: Jesus is nailed to the Cross**

---

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A Because by your holy Cross you have  
redeemed the world.**

**R3** "They tear holes in my hands and my feet; I can count every one of my bones"

(Ps 21,17-18). The words of the Prophet are fulfilled. The execution begins. The torturers' blows crush the hands and feet of the Condemned One against the wood of the Cross. The nails are driven violently into his wrists. Those nails will hold the condemned man as he endures inexpressible torments of his agony. In his body and his supremely sensitive spirit, Christ suffers in a way beyond words.

**R1** With him there are crucified two real criminals, one on his right, the other on his left. The prophecy is fulfilled: "He was numbered among the transgressors" (Is 53,12).

Once the torturers raise the Cross, there will begin an agony that will last three hours. This word too must be fulfilled: "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all people to myself" (Jn 12,32).

**R2** What is it that "draws" us to the Condemned One in agony on the Cross? Certainly, the sight of such intense suffering stirs compassion. But compassion is not enough to lead us to bind our very life to the One who hangs on the Cross.

- R3** How is it that, generation after generation, this appalling sight has drawn countless hosts of people who have made the Cross the hallmark of their faith? Hosts of men and women who for centuries have lived and given their lives looking to this sign?
- R1** From the Cross, Christ draws us by the power of love, divine Love, which did not recoil from the total gift of self; infinite Love, which on the tree of the Cross raised up from the earth the weight of Christ's body, to counterbalance the weight of the first sin; boundless Love, which has utterly filled every absence of love and allowed humanity to find refuge once more in the arms of the merciful Father.
- R2** May Christ, lifted high on the Cross, draw us too! In the shadow of the Cross, let us "walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Eph 5,2).

### **Prayer**

- P** O Christ lifted high, O Love crucified, fill our hearts with your love, that we may see in your Cross the sign of our redemption and, drawn by your wounds, we may live and die with you, who live and reign with the Father and the Spirit, now and forever.

**A** Amen.

**Our Father...**

*Chant refrain*

**A** Life eternal, death defiant,  
bowed his head – the world was silent,  
through his death came life anew.

**TWELFTH STATION: Jesus dies on the Cross**

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**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A** **Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

**R1** “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Lk 23,34). At the height of his Passion, Christ does not forget humanity, especially those who are directly responsible for his suffering. Jesus knows that more than anything else humanity needs love; humanity needs the mercy which at this moment is being poured out on the world.

**R2** “Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise” (Lk 23,43). This is how Jesus replies to the plea of the criminal hanging on his right: “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom” (Lk 23,42). The promise of a new life! This is the first

fruit of the Passion and imminent Death of Christ. A word of hope to humanity!

**R3** At the foot of the Cross stood Mary, and beside her the disciple, John the Evangelist. Jesus says: “Woman, behold your son!” and to the disciple: “Behold your mother!” (Jn 19,26-27). “And from that moment the disciple took her to his own home” (Jn 19,27). This is his bequest to those dearest to his heart. His legacy to the Church! The desire of Jesus as he dies is that the maternal love of Mary should embrace all those for whom he is giving his life, the whole of humanity.

**R1** Immediately after, Jesus cries out: “I am thirsty” (Jn 19,28). A word which describes the dreadful burning which consumes his whole body! It is the one word which refers directly to his physical suffering.

Then Jesus adds: “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?” (Mt 27,46; cf. Ps 22,2). These words of the Psalm are his prayer. Despite their tone, these words reveal the depths of his union with the Father.

**R2** In the last moments of his life on earth, Jesus thinks of the Father. From this

moment on, the dialogue will only be between the dying Son and the Father who accepts his sacrifice of love.

When the ninth hour comes, Jesus cries out: "It is accomplished!" (Jn 19,30) Now the work of the redemption is complete. The mission, for which he came on earth, has reached its goal.

**R3** The rest belongs to the Father: "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (Lk 23,46). And having said this, Jesus breathed his last. "The veil of the temple was torn in two..." (Mt 27,51). The "Holy of Holies" of the Jerusalem Temple is opened at the moment when it is entered by the Priest of the New and Eternal Covenant.

### ***Prayer***

**P** Lord Jesus Christ, in the moment of your agony you were not indifferent to humanity's fate, and with your last breath you entrusted to the Father's mercy the men and women of every age, with all their weaknesses and sins. Fill us and the generations yet to come with your Spirit of love, so that our indifference will not render vain in us the fruits of your death. To you, crucified Jesus,

the wisdom and the power of God, be honour and glory for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

**Our Father...**

***Chant refrain***

**A Stunned and stricken, Mary, Mother,  
In your arms we placed our brother,  
“Full of grace” now filled with grief.**

**THIRTEENTH STATION: Jesus is taken down from the Cross and given to his Mother**  
.....

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A Because by your holy Cross you have redeemed the world.**

**R1** They have placed the lifeless body of the Son in the arms of his Mother. The Gospels say nothing of what she felt at that moment. It is as though by their silence the Evangelists wished to respect her sorrow, her feelings and her memories. Or that they simply felt incapable of expressing them. It is only the devotion of the centuries that has preserved the figure of the “Pietà”, providing Christian memory with the most sorrowful image of the ineffable bond of love which blossomed in the Mother’s heart

on the day of the Annunciation and ripened as she waited for the birth of her divine Son. That love was revealed in the cave at Bethlehem and was tested already during the Presentation in the Temple. It grew deeper as Mary stored and pondered in her heart all that was happening (cf. Lk 2,51).

**R2** Now this intimate bond of love must be transformed into a union which transcends the boundary between life and death.

And thus it will be across the span of the centuries: people pause at Michelangelo's statue of the Pietà, [...] and so they learn the difficult love which does not flee from suffering, but surrenders trustingly to the tenderness of God, for whom nothing is impossible (cf. Lk 1,37).

### ***Prayer***

**P** Hail, holy Queen, Mother of mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To you do we cry, poor banished children of Eve, to you do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn then, most gracious advocate, your eyes of mercy towards us, and after this our exile, show unto us the fruit of your womb, Jesus. Implore for us the grace of faith, hope and charity, so that we, like you,

may stand without flinching beneath the Cross until our last breath. To your Son, Jesus, our Saviour, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, all honour and glory for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

**Our Father...**

***Chant refrain***

**A Jesus, Lord, your gift accepted,  
in three days you resurrected,  
You did first what we shall do.**

**FOURTEENTH STATION:  
Jesus is laid in the tomb**

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**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A Because by your holy cross you have  
redeemed the world.**

**R1** "He was crucified, died and was buried..."

The lifeless body of Christ has been laid in the tomb. But the stone of the tomb is not the final seal on his work. The last word belongs not to falsehood, hatred and violence. The last word will be spoken by Love, which is stronger than death.

**R2** "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains alone; but if

it dies, it bears much fruit" (Jn 12,24).  
The tomb is the last stage of Christ's dying through the whole course of his earthly life; it is the sign of his supreme sacrifice for us and for our salvation.

**R3** Very soon this tomb will become the first proclamation of praise and exaltation of the Son of God in the glory of the Father. "He was crucified, died and was buried ... on the third day he rose from the dead". Once the lifeless body of Jesus is laid in the tomb, at the foot of Golgotha, the Church begins the vigil of Holy Saturday. In the depths of her heart, Mary stores and ponders the Passion of her Son; the women agree to meet on the morning of the day after the sabbath, to anoint Christ's body with aromatic ointments; the disciples gather in the seclusion of the Upper Room, waiting for the Sabbath to pass.

**R1** This vigil will end with the meeting at the tomb, the empty tomb of the Saviour. Then the tomb, the silent witness of the Resurrection, will speak. The stone rolled back, the inner chamber empty, the cloths on the ground, this will be what John sees when he comes to the tomb

with Peter: "He saw and he believed" (Jn 20,8). And with him the Church believed, and from that moment she never grows weary of communicating to the world this fundamental truth of her faith: "Christ has been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor 15,20).

**R2** The empty tomb is the sign of the definitive victory of truth over falsehood, of good over evil, of mercy over sin, of life over death. The empty tomb is the sign of the hope which "does not deceive" (Rom 5,5). "[Our] hope is full of immortality" (cf. Wis 3,4).

### **Prayer**

**P** Lord Jesus Christ, by the power of the Holy Spirit, you were drawn by the Father from the darkness of death to the light of a new life in glory. Grant that the sign of the empty tomb may speak to us and to future generations and become a wellspring of living faith, generous love, and unshakeable hope. To you, O Jesus, whose presence, hidden and victorious, fills the history of the world, be honour and glory for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

**Our Father.....**

### **Chant refrain**

**A Jesus, risen, be our lover,  
In your food and in our brother,  
Lead us home to heaven with you.**

### **CLOSING: The Resurrection of Jesus**

*(Optional. Omitted on Good Friday)*

**P** We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you.

**A Because by your holy cross you have  
redeemed the world.**

**P** When the Sabbath was over, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome bought spices, so that they might go and anoint him. And very early on the first day of the week, when the sun had risen, they went to the tomb. They had been saying to one another, "Who will roll away the stone for us from the entrance to the tomb?" When they looked up, they saw that the stone, which was very large, had already been rolled back. As they entered the tomb, they saw a young man, dressed in a white robe, sitting on the right side; and they were alarmed. But he said to them, "Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him" (Mk 16,1-6).

## ***Apostles' Creed***

**A** I believe in God,  
the Father almighty,  
Creator of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our  
Lord,  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, died and was buried;  
he descended into hell;  
on the third day he rose again from the  
dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and is seated at the right hand of God the  
Father almighty;  
from there he will come to judge the  
living and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic Church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and life everlasting.  
Amen.



8

IL TEMPO  
DI PASQUA



*During the Easter Triduum, the community is encouraged to focus its prayer life on the various daily liturgies. It is advisable to pray the Office of Readings together as a community, and where possible to invite lay collaborators or parishioners to participate.*

The Salesian community pays special attention to the Easter season which deepens its knowledge of the Salesian charism.

The Salesians form a community of the baptized called to be in the Church, at the school of Don Bosco, “signs and bearers of the love of God for the young, especially those who are poor” (Const. 2)

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## **VIA LUCIS – THE WAY OF LIGHT**

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*The Via Lucis or the Way of Light is culmination of the Via Crucis, the Way of the Cross. It is a continuation of the spiritual path of the Apostles and the first disciples who passed from utter disillusionment at Christ’s passion and death to the breath-taking amazement of meeting the Risen Saviour. It is presented to youth as a journey of faith that invites them to live the glorious fullness of the Paschal Mystery. The Way of Light follows the pattern of the Way of*

*the Cross: 14 stations, with corresponding New Testament passages from the empty tomb to Pentecost, with contemporary commentary and reflections. It is a quintessentially Easter prayer. Finally, as the Way of the Cross proceeds in the company of Mary, full of sorrow because of her Suffering Son, so along the Way of the Light, Mary continues to accompany us, as our Mother who rejoices in the resurrection of her Son.*

*This devotion is the fruit of the spiritual experience of the “Witnesses of the Risen Lord Towards 2000”, a branch of the Salesian Family. An extended version may be found at <http://www.vialucis.org/index.php/en/>*

*The parts are shared by the presider, assembly, and two readers.*

### **Introduction**

**P** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

**A Amen.**

**P** Life is a journey. We do not travel alone for Jesus has promised us, “I am with you always, until the end of time”. Today we continue our journey with Jesus in the light of God’s word and the Good News of the Resurrection. Our mother Mary,

Star of the Sea, also accompanies us on the Way of Light, forever illumined by her divine Son, the Light of all Nations.

*(A Marian refrain or verse, suited to the Easter season, may be chanted. Eg: "Regina caeli laetare alleluia... Rejoice, Virgin Mother: Christ has been risen. Alleluia")*

### **First Station: JESUS IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD (Mt 28,1-7)**

- P** We adore you, O Risen Christ, and we bless you.
- A** **Because by your resurrection you have given divine life to the world.**

#### **Scripture (Mt 28,1-7)**

**R1** After the sabbath, and towards dawn on the first day of the week, Mary of Magdala and the other Mary went to visit the sepulchre. And all at once there was a violent earthquake, for the angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled away the stone and sat on it. His face was like lightning, his robe white as snow. The guards were so shaken, so frightened of him, that they were like dead men. But the angel spoke; and he said to the women, "There is no need for

you to be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said he would. Come and see the place where he lay, then go quickly and tell his disciples, "He has risen from the dead and now he is going before you to Galilee; it is there you will see him". Now I have told you.'

### ***Reflection***

**R2** O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting? The risen Jesus, victorious over death, has triumphed over every earthly power. He is a light unto our path. In him, there is no darkness.

### ***Prayer***

**P** Lord Jesus, Risen One, you are the radiant sun that never sets. In the storms of life, may our hopes turn to you, the dawning day that dispels every darkness. Grant us living hope that in your light, we will overcome every battle against evil, temptation and even death itself. Help us to think as you think, to love as you love, to serve as you serve, and in this way to bear witness to your Resurrection. Amen.

**Our Father...**

**Glory be...**

***Marian verse or refrain:***

**P** Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin  
Mother of God, Alleluia.

**A** **Because the Lord is truly risen, Alleluia.**

**Second Station: THE DISCIPLES BEHOLD  
THE EMPTY TOMB (*Jn 20,1-8*)**

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**P** We adore you, O Risen Christ,  
and we bless you

**A** **Because by your resurrection you have  
given divine life to the world.**

***Scripture (Jn 20,8)***

**R1** Then the other disciple who had  
reached the tomb first also went  
in; he saw and he believed

***Reflection***

**R2** The empty tomb is the womb of our faith.  
The Risen Jesus transforms emptiness into  
fullness, darkness into light, the silence of  
God into Beautiful News! Mary Magdalene  
and the disciples are stopped in their  
tracks as they behold the empty tomb,  
speechless and confused: their world is  
about to be shaken by the mysterious truth  
that is beyond human understanding.

***Prayer***

**P** Eternal Fullness that transforms all emptiness, flood into our minds and hearts, that we may believe the truth proclaimed by the empty tomb. Help us to distinguish what is permanent from what is temporary, and to understand the difference between them. May we choose wisely how to live as disciples renewed by Jesus' Passover. Amen.

**Our Father...**  
**Glory be...**

***Marian verse or refrain:***

**P** Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin  
Mother of God, Alleluia

**A** **Because the Lord is truly risen, Alleluia.**

**Third Station: JESUS APPEARS TO MARY  
MAGDALEN (*Jn 20,11-18*)**  
.....

**P** We adore you, O Risen Christ,  
and we bless you

**A** **Because by your resurrection you have  
given divine life to the world.**

***Scripture (Jn 20,15,16)***

**R1** Jesus said, 'Woman, why are you weeping?....' Jesus said, 'Mary!' She knew him then and said to him in Hebrew, 'Rabbuni!' - which means Master.

## **Reflection**

**R2** The silence of the tomb is broken by a resounding voice: “Mary”. He whom she believed to be the gardener was in fact her beloved Teacher, risen from the dead! But Mary could not recognize him yet. Her stumbling faith had yet to blossom into bold conviction: Jesus is truly risen and he reveals his love to those who hope in him, bringing to fulfilment the reality which even now we possess in faith.

## **Prayer**

**P** Jesus our Teacher, may our preoccupations and disappointments never blind us to your presence among us. May we always live in awe of your goodness and majesty, our source of strength in times of trial. Open our eyes to recognize you in every moment of our lives, offering us courage and confidence.

**Our Father...**

**Glory be...**

## **Marian verse or refrain:**

**P** Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin  
Mother of God, Alleluia

**A** **Because the Lord is truly risen, Alleluia.**

**Fourth Station: JESUS WALKS WITH HIS  
DISCIPLES ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS**  
*(Lk 24,13-19. 25-27)*

**P** We adore you, O Risen Christ,  
and we bless you

**A** **Because by your resurrection you have  
given divine life to the world.**

**Scripture (Lk 24,15.16)**

**R1** Now as they talked this over, Jesus  
himself came up and walked by  
their side; but something prevented  
them from recognising him.

**Reflection**

**R2** The disciples were broken-hearted. Their  
spirits were shattered. Discouraged and  
afraid, they returned home, dazed by the  
recent events. They tried to resume their  
daily routine as if nothing had happened.  
But indeed, something had happened.  
Everything had changed. The Risen Jesus  
walked among them with deep compassion.

**Prayer**

**P** Lord of the living, when our hopes are  
dashed and our dreams fail, let us never  
forget that you walk with us on our  
pilgrim way. Stay with us Lord, when

doubt and anxiety choke our spirit. As our good shepherd, rescue us from our fears and frustrations. Allow us to walk in faith and acknowledge you by our side, guiding us with new strength to persevere daily in Easter joy. Amen.

**Our Father...**  
**Glory be...**

***Marian verse or refrain:***

**P** Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin  
Mother of God, Alleluia

**A** **Because the Lord is truly risen, Alleluia.**

**Fifth Station: JESUS IS RECOGNIZED  
IN THE BREAKING OF THE BREAD**  
***(Lk 24,28-35)***

**P** We adore you, O Risen Christ,  
and we bless you

**A** Because by your resurrection you  
have given divine life to the world.

***Scripture (Lk 24,30-31)***

**R1** Now while he was with them at table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he had vanished from their sight.

## **Reflection**

**R2** "Stay with us!" They invited their travel companion without knowing who he was or what would happen. Their invitation became an opportunity – an opportunity of their own making - to receive an unexpected blessing. The breaking of bread revealed the stranger as their teacher and friend who would never leave them abandoned.

## **Prayer**

**P** O Lord, your words penetrate our hearts and burn within us. They prepare us to receive your life-giving Bread. Your love inspires our faith: you are with us until the end of days, in your church, in your sacraments, in our brothers and sisters, in our friends and neighbours, especially those who are in need. With your seal on our hearts and your words on our lips, we share you with others as an "Easter people". Make us spirit-filled heralds of your resurrection. Amen.

**Our Father...**

**Glory be...**

***Marian verse or refrain:***

**P** Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin  
Mother of God, Alleluia

**A** **Because the Lord is truly risen, Alleluia.**

## Sixth Station: JESUS APPEARS IN THE CENACLE (*Jn 20,19-23*)

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- P** We adore you, O Risen Christ,  
and we bless you
- A** **Because by your resurrection you have given divine life to the world.**

### **Scripture** (*Jn 20,19*)

- R1** In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you'.

### **Reflection**

- R2** Afraid and confused, the disciples hid themselves behind the false security of stone walls and locked doors. They felt vulnerable, convinced that all their dreams had died with Jesus on Calvary. But no walls can block Jesus from fulfilling his mission. Jesus is there, a friend and brother, a risen Saviour, standing in their midst. His word and his presence announce peace, regenerate life and communicate love.

### **Prayer**

- P** O Lord, Son of the living God, inspire our confidence that everything we are going

through is known to you, our Master. Remind us that the Father has a loving plan for each of us, and that all things work for good for those who trust in you. May we find in your word the light to see beyond every obstacle. Free us from every false image we have of you so that nothing will separate us from your Easter grace. You are the risen Lord. Amen.

**Our Father...**  
**Glory be...**

***Marian verse or refrain:***

**P** Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin  
Mother of God, Alleluia

**A** **Because the Lord is truly risen, Alleluia.**

**Seventh Station: JESUS GIVES THE POWER  
TO FORGIVE SINS (Jn 20,19-23)**

**P** We adore you, O Risen Christ,  
and we bless you

**A** **Because by your resurrection you have  
given divine life to the world.**

***Scripture (Jn 20,23)***

**R1** 'For those whose sins you forgive,  
they are forgiven; for those whose  
sins you retain, they are retained.'

## **Reflection**

**R2** The Son of Man came as our brother for a singular purpose: to reconcile all peoples with the Father and to one another. With his death, Jesus reconciled humanity with the Father; in his resurrection, he extended this gift to all ages through the ministry of reconciliation that he entrusted to the apostles and their successors.

## **Prayer**

**P** Risen Jesus, forgiveness of the Father, reveal to us God's merciful love that heals and restores us day by day, no matter how often we fall. May we never lose heart when we falter, but grow more resolved to open our lives fully to the Father's steadfast love. May we experience the sacrament of reconciliation frequently and sincerely, as a powerful means of transforming our lives into a song of Easter joy.

**Our Father...**

**Glory be...**

## ***Marian verse or refrain:***

**P** Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin  
Mother of God, Alleluia

**A** **Because the Lord is truly risen, Alleluia.**

## **Eighth Station: JESUS CONFIRMS THE FAITH OF THOMAS (Jn 20,24-29)**

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**P** We adore you, O Risen Christ,  
and we bless you

**A** **Because by your resurrection you have  
given divine life to the world.**

### ***Scripture (Jn 20,26)***

**R1** Eight days later the disciples were in the house again and Thomas was with them. The doors were closed, but Jesus came in and stood among them. 'Peace be with you' he said.

### ***Reflection***

**R2** Thomas is burdened by doubts and confusion. His spirit is restless. He demands proof that Jesus is truly risen, seeking the same certainty that already fills the hearts of the other apostles. Finally, his moment for a personal encounter with the Master has come. He sees resurrection light, and is able to profess his faith in Jesus: "My Lord and my God". Thomas' testimony reminds us that each of us bears personal responsibility for deepening our faith; it is a responsibility and privilege not to be neglected. The Spirit assists those who sincerely commit

themselves to this pursuit. Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet believe.

### **Prayer**

**P** O Lord, resurrected Truth, illumine our minds, that we may humbly accept God's awesome designs even when we struggle to believe. Help us to trust your guiding light, especially in the nuanced and perplexing situations of our lives. Grant that we may never doubt your abiding love and constant accompaniment. Empower us to strengthen each other's faith as "Easter people". Amen.

**Our Father...**

**Glory be...**

### **Marian verse or refrain:**

**P** Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin  
Mother of God, Alleluia

**A** **Because the Lord is truly risen, Alleluia.**

### **Ninth Station: JESUS APPEARS TO HIS DISCIPLES AT THE LAKE OF TIBERIAS (*Jn 21,1-13*)**

**P** We adore you, O Risen Christ,  
and we bless you

**A** **Because by your resurrection you have  
given divine life to the world.**

### **Scripture (Jn 21,1-8)**

**R1** Later on, Jesus showed himself again to the disciples. It was by the Sea of Tiberias,... and he said, 'Throw the net out to starboard and you'll find something'. So they dropped the net, and there were so many fish that they could not haul it in.

### **Reflection**

**R2** Confused, frightened and seemingly defeated, the disciples returned to their former lives, having no idea what the next day would bring, presuming it would continue as it was before encountering Jesus. But Jesus awaits them on the beach of their lives. He invites them to put out into the deep and to throw out their fishing nets one more time in obedience to his word. At Jesus' word, everything old is made new. They begin to see what is invisible to human eyes, and to understand in the light of faith!

### **Prayer**

**P** O Lord, your light illuminates our understanding of reality and challenges us to see beyond external things. Remind us that wherever we go, you are already there, waiting for us. May we, like you, trust

that our projects will come to fulfilment only through obedience to the Father's will; a lesson you taught with your life, your death and your resurrection. Help us to follow your example and become true followers of you, our Risen Lord. Amen.

**Our Father...**  
**Glory be...**

***Marian verse or refrain:***

- P** Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin  
Mother of God, Alleluia
- A** **Because the Lord is truly risen, Alleluia.**

**Tenth Station: JESUS CONFERS THE  
PRIMACY ON PETER AS LEADER OF THE  
CHURCH (*Jn 21,15-17*)**

- P** We adore you, O Risen Christ,  
and we bless you
- A** **Because by your resurrection you have  
given divine life to the world.**

***Scripture (*Jn 21,15*)***

- R1** After the meal Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon son of John, do you love me more than these others do?' He answered, 'Yes Lord, you know I love you'. Jesus said to him, 'Feed my lambs'.

### ***Reflection***

**R2** Jesus asked Peter not once, not twice, but three times, “Do you love me?” It was not so much the question but the triple repetition that grieved Peter so much. Distraught, humbled and hopeful, he replied: “Lord, you know how much I love you.” In response, Jesus made him the principal shepherd of his flock.

### ***Prayer***

**P** O Jesus, you are the sacrificial lamb who became our Good Shepherd. Fill us with love for our Pope, the Successor of Peter, to whom you have entrusted your flock. May he teach and lead your disciples in the ways of faith and holiness. May he strengthen them as one people born of your Passover and united by the bonds of charity. Amen.

**Our Father...**

**Glory be...**

***Marian verse or refrain:***

**P** Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin  
Mother of God, Alleluia

**A** **Because the Lord is truly risen, Alleluia.**

## Eleventh Station: JESUS SENDS HIS DISCIPLES TO PREACH THE GOSPEL TO THE WHOLE WORLD (*Mt 28,16-20*)

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- P** We adore you, O Risen Christ,  
and we bless you
- A** **Because by your resurrection you have given divine life to the world.**

### **Scripture** (*Mt 28,16-20*)

**R1** Meanwhile the eleven disciples set out for Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had arranged to meet them. When they saw him they fell down before him, though some hesitated. Jesus came up and spoke to them. He said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And know that I am with you always; yes, to the end of time.'

### **Reflection**

**R2** The Church does not "have" a mission; the Church "is" a mission: "Go and proclaim the Good News, be my witnesses to the ends of the earth". This is the bold mission that Jesus entrusted to his apostles while

they were still trying to make sense of his resurrection. They set out with an uncertain step, but returned invigorated by the Light of the Risen Christ! Today, Jesus sends us to follow in their footsteps by proclaiming him with boldness.

### ***Prayer***

**P** Risen Jesus, make us ready and willing to bring the light of the Gospel even to the ends of the earth. Grant us spiritual boldness for the mission and confidence that you will provide what we need to accomplish what you ask of us. May our example identify us as an Easter people, following you, the Lord of history. Amen.

**Our Father...**

**Glory be...**

### ***Marian verse or refrain:***

**P** Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin  
Mother of God, Alleluia

**A** **Because the Lord is truly risen, Alleluia.**

### **Twelfth Station: JESUS ASCENDS INTO HEAVEN (*Acts 1,6-11*)**

**P** We adore you, O Risen Christ,  
and we bless you

**A** Because by your resurrection you have given divine life to the world.

**Scripture (Acts 1,9)**

**R1** As he said this he was lifted up while they looked on, and a cloud took him from their sight.

**Reflection**

**R2** The apostles gazed up towards heaven, from where Jesus, the Light of the world, had come and to where he ascended. Christ returned to the Father not to distance himself from us - who had abandoned him while he gave his life for us - but to precede us to that house of many rooms where he is preparing a place for us even as he guides our earthly journey and draws us to himself.

**Prayer**

**P** O Divine Light, your return to your Father opens the way to our eternal dwelling place with you. Let your light illuminate our journey, that we may walk and never grow weary, run the good race and never lose our way. Give us confidence to proclaim with every step that we are your Paschal people forever. Amen.

**Our Father...**

**Glory be...**

***Marian verse or refrain:***

**P** Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin  
Mother of God, Alleluia

**A** **Because the Lord is truly risen, Alleluia.**

**Thirteenth Station: THE DISCIPLES  
AND MARY PREPARE FOR THE COMING  
OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (*Acts 1,12-14*)**  
.....

**P** We adore you, O Risen Christ,  
and we bless you

**A** **Because by your resurrection you have  
given divine life to the world.**

***Scripture (Acts 1,14)***

**R1** All these joined in continuous  
prayer, together with several  
women, including Mary the mother  
of Jesus, and with his brothers.

***Reflection***

**R2** Jesus tells us, "It is to your advantage that I should leave, because only when I return to my Father will I send you the Teacher who will instruct you, strengthen you and enlighten you in the Truth". Mary, at the foot of the Cross, became the mother of John and mother of the Church, the mother of the

redeemed because she is the mother of the Redeemer. She kept the disciples close to her maternal heart and united to Jesus, so that they could receive the Spirit of her Son.

### **Prayer**

**P** O Wisdom that guides the world, teach us to recognize the voice of the Holy Spirit and to respond to his promptings, that our lives may redound to the greater glory of the Father. Grant us patience, perseverance, courage and humility as you purify us of all foolishness and set our hearts on the things of heaven. Fill us, that we may desire nothing more than to align our wills to the will of the Father, and so, as stewards and witnesses of the Easter promise, build up the Body of Christ. Amen.

**Our Father...**

**Glory be...**

### ***Marian verse or refrain:***

**P** Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin  
Mother of God, Alleluia

**A** **Because the Lord is truly risen, Alleluia.**

### **Fourteenth Station: THE DISCIPLES RECEIVE THE PROMISED SPIRIT (*Acts 2,1-6*)**

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**P** We adore you, O Risen Christ  
and we bless you

**A** Because by your resurrection you have given divine life to the world.

**Scripture (Acts 2,3-4)**

**R1** And something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak foreign languages as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech.

**Reflection**

**R2** The disciples were touched by the fire of God's love. Everyone who saw them was amazed, because they had been transformed and manifested extraordinary abilities. The apostles were full of God; the Spirit had taken possession of them!

**Prayer**

**P** O Spirit of the living God, gift of the Risen Lord, illuminate our hearts and minds. May our daily lives be a continuous Pentecost as we receive the gifts you bestow upon us and share them in loving service of others. In every encounter, may our brothers and sisters see not just us, but the spirit of Jesus shining through us, even as we reverence his presence in them. Make us credible witnesses of Easter hope and joy. Amen.

**Our Father...**  
**Glory be...**

***Marian verse or refrain:***

**P** Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin  
Mother of God, Alleluia

**A** **Because the Lord is truly risen, Alleluia.**

**P** Let us pray for the intentions of  
our Holy Father, Pope N.

**Our Father...**

**Hail Mary...**

**Glory be...**

***Final Prayer***

**P** Risen Saviour, our light and our hope,  
send forth your spirit and renew the  
face of the earth. Empower us as Easter  
people to lift the darkness of the world  
with the power of your love, to revive  
the weary through your life-giving  
waters, and to strengthen the young as  
witnesses of your eternal springtime as  
they live the joy of the Gospel. You live  
and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

## NOVENA IN PREPARATION FOR PENTECOST

### Hymn

#### Option 1

#### Veni, Creator Spiritus

viii

V



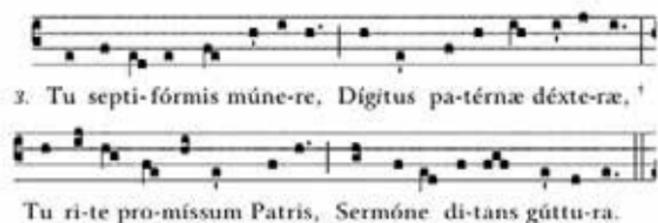
E-ni Cre- á-tor Spi-ri-tus, Men-tes tu- ó-rum ví-si-  
ta: Im-ple su-pérna grá-ti-a Quae tu cre- ásti pécto-ra.

1. Come Creator Spirit, visit the souls of Thy people,  
Fill with grace from on high the hearts  
which Thou hast created.



2. Qui dí-ce- ris Pa- rácli-tus, Altíssimi do-num De- i,  
Fons vi-vus, i-gnis, cá-ri-tas, Et spi-ri- tá-lis úncti- o.

2. Thou Who art called the Comforter, gift of the most high God,  
Living fountain, fire, love and unction of souls.



3. Tu septi-fórmis múne-re, Dígitus pa-térnæ déxte-ræ, †  
 Tu ri-te pro-míssum Patris, Sermóne di-tans gúttu-ra.

3. Sevenfold in Thy gifts, finger of the Father's right hand,  
 Thou promised truly by the Father, giving speech to tongues.



4. Accénde lumen sénsibus, Infúnde amó-rem córdibus,  
 Infirma nostri córpo-ris Virtú-te firmans pérpe-ti.

4. In flame our senses with Thy light, pour Thy love into our hearts,  
 Strengthen our weak bodies with lasting power.



5. Hostem re-péllas lóngi- us, Pa-cémque dones pró-ti-nus:  
 Ductó-re sic te præ-vi- o Vi-témus omne nó-xi- um.

5. Drive far away the enemy, grant peace at all times:  
 So under Thy guidance may we avoid all evil.



6. Per te sci- ámus da Patrem, Noscámus atque Fi- li- um.

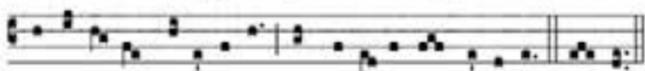


Teque utri- úsque Spí-ri-tum Credámus omni témpo-re.

6. Grant us by Thee to know the Father and to know the Son,  
And Thee, Spirit of both, may we always believe.



7. De- o Pa-tri sit gló-ri- a, Et Fi-li- o, qui a mórtu- is



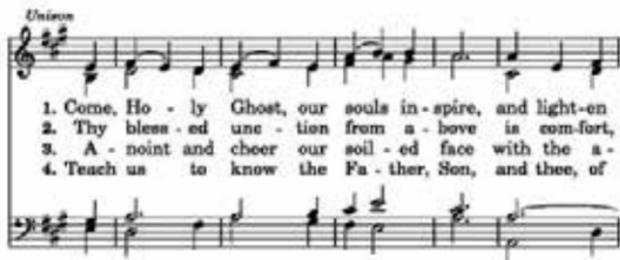
Surré-xit, ac Pa-rácli-to, In saecu-ló-rum saécu-la. A-men.

7. To God the Father be glory, to the Son Who rose from the dead  
And to the Comforter, for all ages. Amen.

## Option 2

### Introductory Rite

*Unison*



1. Come, Ho - ly Ghost, our souls in - spí-re, and light-en
2. Thy bless - ed unc - tion from a - bove is com-fort,
3. A - noint and cheer our soil - ed face with the a -
4. Teach us to know the Fa - ther, Son, and thee, of

9

with ce - les - tial fire; thou the a - noint - ing  
 life, and fire of love; en - a - ble with per -  
 bun - dance of thy grace; keep far our foes; give  
 both, to be but One; that through the a - ges

11

Spir - it art, who dost thy seven - fold gifts im -  
 pet - ual light the dull - ness of our blind - ed  
 peace at home; where thou art guide, no ill can  
 all a - long this, this may be our end - less

14

*After last stanza*

part.  
 sight.  
 come.  
 song.

Praise to thy e - ter - nal mer - it,

21

Fa - ther, Son, and Ho - ly Spir - it. A - men.

**P** The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you.

**A** **And with your spirit.**

### ***Prayer***

**P** Let us pray. O God, who by the mystery of the great feast of Pentecost sanctify your whole Church in every people and nation, pour out the gifts of the Holy Spirit and renew the face of the Earth. May the divine grace that was at work when the Gospel was first proclaimed, fill the hearts of all believers. Through our Lord, Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**A** **Amen.**

## **FIRST DAY: THE CREATOR SPIRIT**

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### **A reading from the Book of Genesis**

(Gen 1,1-2; 2,5-9)

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was a formless void, there was darkness over the deep, and God's spirit hovered over the water. There was as yet no wild bush on the earth nor had any wild plant yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain

on the earth, nor was there any man to till the soil. However, a flood was rising from the earth and watering all the surface of the soil. The Lord God fashioned man of dust from the soil. Then he breathed into his nostrils a breath of life, and thus man became a living being. The Lord God planted a garden in Eden which is in the east, and there he put the man he had fashioned. The Lord God caused to spring up from the soil every kind of tree, enticing to look at and good to eat, with the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the middle of the garden.

### ***Intercessions***

- P** The Spirit is the source of life. We receive it as a gift of love. God reveals to us the power of his love in the wonders of creation, especially in the life of every man, woman and child. Inspired by his goodness, let us turn to the Father, imploring an outpouring of his Holy Spirit through Christ. In confidence, let us pray: *Father, give us your Spirit of love.*
- A** **Father, give us your Spirit of love.**
- L1** For the Church, the living bride of Christ: that she may be renewed continually by the Holy Spirit and set the world on fire with his love, let us pray.

- L2** For all those who promote peace and harmony in the world: that their initiatives may find a generous response in all peoples, we pray.
- L3** For those who are oppressed by anxiety and difficulties: that they may know the consolation of the Spirit, we pray.
- L4** For us gathered here in the name of Jesus: that the Lord may renew in us the grace of Baptism and Confirmation, we pray.
- P** Let us pray. Turn your ears, O God, to your Church, gathered today as in the Upper Room with Mary and your apostles awaiting the gift of Pentecost. Renew us with the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit, inflame our hearts with Easter joy and by the power of your love empower all who have been reborn in baptism to be your witnesses and prophets even to the ends of the earth. We ask this through Christ our Lord.
- A** **Amen.**
- P** In the power of the Holy Spirit, our Almighty God continues to do great things for us. With our Blessed Mother, the Help of Christians, let us exalt and invoke God's holy name.

## ***Blessing***

### ***Regina caeli***

#### *Latin*

**P** Regina caeli, laetare, alleluia.

**A** **Quia quem meruisti portare, alleluia.**

**P** Resurrexit, sicut dixit, alleluia.

**A** **Ora pro nobis Deum, alleluia.**

**P** Gaude et laetare, Virgo Maria, alleluia.

**A** **Quia surrexit Dominus vere, alleluia.**

**P** Oremus. Deus, qui per resurrectionem Filii tui, Domini nostri Iesu Christi, mundum laetificare dignatus es: praesta, quaesumus; ut per eius Genetricem Virginem Mariam, perpetuae capiamus gaudia vitae. Per eundem Christum Dominum nostrum.

**A** **Amen.**

#### *English*

**P** Queen of Heaven, rejoice, alleluia.

**A** **For He whom you did merit to bear, alleluia.**

**P** Has risen, as he said, alleluia.

**A** **Pray for us to God, alleluia.**

**P** Rejoice and be glad, O Virgin Mary, alleluia.

**A** **For the Lord has truly risen, alleluia.**

**P** Let us pray. O God, who gave joy to the world through the resurrection of your

Son our Lord Jesus Christ, grant we beseech you, that through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, His Mother, we may obtain the joys of everlasting life. Through the same Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

## **SECOND DAY: THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST**

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**A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans** (Rom 8,9-11)

*It is the Spirit of God who guides the Messiah in his mission of salvation, directs him on his journey among his brothers and sisters, and works prodigious signs.*

Our interests, however, are not in the unspiritual, but in the spiritual, since the Spirit of God has made his home in you. In fact, unless you possessed the Spirit of Christ you would not belong to him. Though your body may be dead it is because of sin, but if Christ is in you then your spirit is life itself because you have been justified; and if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, then he who raised Jesus from the dead will give life to your own mortal bodies through his Spirit living in you.

## ***Intercessions***

- P** With the voice of the Spirit who prays in us, let us raise our prayerful intentions to the Father.
- A** **Send us your Spirit, O Lord.**
- L** – For the Church, reaching to the ends of the earth: that she may be renewed in love and in zeal for the mission, we pray.
- For the world, awaiting liberation from sin and division: that the hearts of all people may be open to dialogue, forgiveness and reconciliation, we pray.
- For the young, seeking direction in life: that they may find trustworthy witnesses of the Gospel to guide and accompany them, we pray.
- For our community: that we may be sincere models of fraternal love, prophetic witness, and generous self-giving in our mission with the young, we pray.
- P** We have received God's spirit of adoption, and so we have the courage to say:
- A** **Our Father...**
- P** Turn your ears, O God, to your Church, gathered today as in the Upper Room with Mary and your apostles awaiting the gift

of Pentecost. Renew us with the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit, inflame our hearts with Easter joy and by the power of your love empower all who have been reborn in baptism to be your witnesses and prophets even to the ends of the earth. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

### ***Blessing***

**P** In the power of the Holy Spirit, our Almighty God continues to do great things for us. With our Blessed Mother, the Help of Christians, let us exalt and invoke God's holy name.

### ***Regina caeli – Queen of Heaven***

## **THIRD DAY: THE SPIRIT OF HEIRS**

**A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Galatians** (Gal 4,1-7)

*The Spirit introduces us into the family of God. He alone can satisfy our thirst for God, bring us intimately face to face with God, assure us that our lives are held by an eternal Love, and open our hearts to dialogue with God in prayer.*

Let me put this another way: an heir, even if he has actually inherited everything, is no different from a slave for as long as he remains

a child. He is under the control of guardians and administrators until he reaches the age fixed by his father. Now before we came of age we were as good as slaves to the elemental principles of this world, but when the appointed time came, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born a subject of the Law, to redeem the subjects of the Law and to enable us to be adopted as sons. The proof that you are sons is that God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts: the Spirit that cries, 'Abba, Father', and it is this that makes you a son, you are not a slave anymore; and if God has made you son, then he has made you heir.

### ***Intercessions***

**P** With the voice of the Spirit who prays in us, let us present our petitions to the Father.

**A** **Send us your Spirit, O Lord.**

- L** – That the hearts of believers may be supple and receptive to the innovations of the Spirit, eager to discern the truth in new ideas and to overcome fear of what is different. We pray to the Lord.
- That the Holy Spirit may motivate us to test unnamed assumptions, face unchallenged fears and change unhealthy patterns. We pray to the Lord.
- For a new outpouring of the Spirit that will make all people fluent in the

language of love, mercy and peace. We pray to the Lord.

- That the Holy Spirit may renew the faith of all the baptized, allowing them to profess what they believe and to live what they profess. We pray to the Lord.

**P** We have received God's spirit of adoption, and so we have the courage to say:

**A Our Father...**

**P** Turn your ears, O God, to your Church, gathered today as in the Upper Room with Mary and your apostles awaiting the gift of Pentecost. Renew us with the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit and sustain our Easter joy. By the power of your love empower all the baptized to be your witnesses and prophets even to the ends of the earth. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

### ***Blessing***

**P** In the power of the Holy Spirit, our Almighty God continues to do great things for us. With our Blessed Mother, the Help of Christians, let us exalt and invoke God's holy name.

***Regina caeli – Queen of Heaven***

## FOURTH DAY: THE SPIRIT OF RESURRECTION

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### **A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans (Rom 8,18-23)**

*Our life runs its course towards death. There is nothing we can do to stop it because we live under the influence of evil, sin and selfishness. Only the Spirit, gift of the Risen One, can bring us beyond death to a resurrection.*

I think that what we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us. The whole creation is eagerly waiting for God to reveal his sons. It was not for any fault on the part of creation that it was made unable to attain its purpose, it was made so by God; but creation still retains the hope of being freed, like us, from its slavery to decadence, to enjoy the same freedom and glory as the children of God. From the beginning till now the entire creation, as we know, has been groaning in one great act of giving birth; and not only creation, but all of us who possess the first-fruits of the Spirit, we too groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free.

### ***Intercessions***

**P** My dear brothers, let us pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon us, who comes to us through the Father and the Son.

**A** **Father, send us your Spirit.**

- L** – For the Church: that the Lord's Spirit will breathe anew upon the Body of Christ and make it burn with ardent love for the mission. We pray to the Lord.
- For all those who have received new life through baptism and confirmation: that the Spirit, the breath of God, may sustain their faith and let nothing rob them of Easter joy. We pray to the Lord.
- For all young people: that they may be accompanied in the ways of the Spirit so that their maturing faith will be seen in the choices they make. We pray to the Lord.
- For victims of injustice and for those who oppress them: that the Spirit may soften hardened hearts, heal broken lives, and guide the future of humankind in the ways of love and solidarity. We pray to the Lord.

**P** We have received God's spirit of adoption, and so we have the courage to say:

**A** **Our Father...**

**P** Turn your ears, O God, to your Church, gathered today as in the Upper Room with

Mary and your apostles awaiting the gift of Pentecost. Renew us with the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit, inflame our hearts with Easter joy and by the power of your love empower all who have been reborn in baptism to be your witnesses and prophets even to the ends of the earth. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

### ***Blessing***

**P** In the power of the Holy Spirit, our Almighty God continues to do great things for us. With our Blessed Mother, the Help of Christians, let us exalt and invoke God's holy name.

### ***Regina caeli – Queen of Heaven***

## **FIFTH DAY: THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH**

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### **A reading from the First Letter of John**

(1 Jn 1,5-10; 2,1-2)

*We need truth in order to live, to know where we come from and where we are going. Truth is suffocated by sin. Sin is blindness. Sin is a lie. Christ is the truth: he reveals to us God's love, and he reveals to us our sins.*

This is what we have heard from him, and the message that we are announcing to you: God

is light; there is no darkness in him at all. If we say that we are in union with God while we are living in darkness, we are lying because we are not living the truth. But if we live our lives in the light, as he is in the light, we are in union with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we say we have no sin in us; we are deceiving ourselves and refusing to admit the truth; but if we acknowledge our sins, then God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and purify us from everything that is wrong. To say that we have never sinned is to call God a liar and to show that his word is not in us.

I am writing this, my children, to stop you sinning; but if anyone should sin, we have our advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, who is just; he is the sacrifice that takes our sins away, and not only ours, but the whole world's.

### ***Intercessions***

**P** With the voice of the Spirit who prays in us, let us present our needs and intentions to our loving Father.

**A** **Lord, send us your Spirit.**

**L** – For the Church: that the Spirit of humility may purify her for greater effectiveness, fidelity and credibility in her mission We pray to the Lord.

- For all the faithful: that their lives may be guided by God’s saving Word, nourished through the sacraments, and coherent with the dignity of the children of God. We pray to the Lord.
- For all people of goodwill: that the Spirit may awaken in every heart a genuine concern for those on the margins of society, and a commitment to make the world more just and fraternal for the least, the last and the lost. We pray to the Lord.
- For faith in action: that our sharing of the Word of God and the Bread of Life may draw us into communion with God and with one another. We pray to the Lord.

**P** We have received God’s spirit of adoption, and so we have the courage to say:

**A Our Father...**

**P** Turn your ears, O God, to your Church, gathered today as in the Upper Room with Mary and your apostles awaiting the gift of Pentecost. Renew us with the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit, inflame our hearts with Easter joy and by the power of your love empower all who have been reborn in baptism to be your witnesses

and prophets even to the ends of the earth.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

### ***Blessing***

**P** In the power of the Holy Spirit, our Almighty God continues to do great things for us. With our Blessed Mother, the Help of Christians, let us exalt and invoke God's holy name.

### ***Regina caeli – Queen of Heaven***

## **SIXTH DAY: THE SPIRIT OF WITNESSING**

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### **A reading from the Acts of the Apostles**

(Act 5,26-33)

*The Spirit, who works salvation in us, arouses the need to announce to others the gift received. The mission is not the fruit of our commitment, but a free gift of the Spirit.*

The captain went with his men and fetched them. They were afraid to use force in case the people stoned them. When they had brought them in to face the Sanhedrin, the high priest demanded an explanation. 'We gave you a formal warning' he said 'not to preach in this name, and what have you done? You have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and seem

determined to fix the guilt of this man's death on us.' In reply Peter and the apostles said, 'Obedience to God comes before obedience to men; it was the God of our ancestors who raised up Jesus, but it was you who had him executed by hanging on a tree. By his own right hand God has now raised him up to be leader and saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins through him to Israel. We are witnesses to all this, we and the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him.' This so infuriated them that they wanted to put them to death.

### ***Intercessions***

- P** My dear brothers, let us pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit, a gift to us from the Father and the Son.
- A** **Father, send us your Spirit of love.**
- L** – For openness to God's holy word: that all peoples may welcome the transforming newness of the Good News of Jesus Christ. We pray to the Lord.
- For Church leaders: that all pastors of Christian communities may be credible witnesses of God's love and draw all people to the heart of the Father. We pray to the Lord.
- For Christian unity: that the invocation of the name of Jesus may reveal the Church

as the one body of Christ, sign and sacrament of unity for all humanity. We pray to the Lord.

- For peace: that all people may walk the path of nonviolence, seek peaceful resolution of conflict, and promote mutual respect through meek and sincere dialogue. We pray to the Lord.

**P** We have received God's spirit of adoption, and so we have the courage to say:

**A Our Father...**

**P** Turn your ears, O God, to your Church, gathered today as in the Upper Room with Mary and your apostles awaiting the gift of Pentecost. Renew us with the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit, inflame our hearts with Easter joy and by the power of your love empower all who have been reborn in baptism to be your witnesses and prophets even to the ends of the earth. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

### ***Blessing***

**P** In the power of the Holy Spirit, our Almighty God continues to do great things for us. With our Blessed

Mother, the Help of Christians, let us exalt and invoke God's holy name.

### ***Regina caeli – Queen of Heaven***

## **SEVENTH DAY: THE SPIRIT OF HOLINESS**

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### **A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Galatians** (Gal 5,16-25)

*Justice and holiness are not trophies to be earned by accomplishing demanding human feats. Rather, they are the gifts of the Spirit, the "fruits" of the Spirit. It is the Spirit of Jesus that helps us to discover and live the new law of the Beatitudes, purifying our hearts and giving us its strength.*

Let me put it like this: if you are guided by the Spirit you will be in no danger of yielding to self-indulgence, since self-indulgence is the opposite of the Spirit, the Spirit is totally against such a thing, and it is precisely because the two are so opposed that you do not always carry out your good intentions. If you are led by the Spirit, no law can touch you. When self-indulgence is at work the results are obvious: fornication, gross indecency and sexual irresponsibility; idolatry and sorcery; feuds and wrangling, jealousy, bad temper and quarrels; disagreements,

factions, envy, drunkenness, orgies and similar things. I warn you now, as I warned you before: those who behave like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. What the Spirit brings is very different: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control. There can be no law against things like that, of course. You cannot belong to Christ Jesus unless you crucify all self-indulgent passions and desires. Since the Spirit is our life, let us be directed by the Spirit.

### ***Intercessions***

**P** Through the voice of the Spirit who prays in us, let us present our needs and intentions to our loving Father.

**A** **Father, send us your Spirit of love.**

- L** – For new life in the Spirit: that God's breath of life may open all people to the newness of the Gospel as the inspiration for their choices, projects, and relationships. We pray to the Lord.
- For healing: that the Spirit's coming upon us will heal the wounds of sin and division, promote solidarity and restore communion. We pray to the Lord.
- For the Pope and all bishops, priests and religious: that the Spirit of wisdom may

- inspire their words and actions as they lead their brothers and sisters in the ways of the gospel. We pray to the Lord.
- For the young: that the Spirit may set their hearts on fire with love for the Risen Jesus who is forever young in them. We pray to the Lord.

**P** We have received God's spirit of adoption, and so we have the courage to say:

**A Our Father...**

**P** Turn your ears, O God, to your Church, gathered today as in the Upper Room with Mary and your apostles awaiting the gift of Pentecost. Renew us with the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit, inflame our hearts with Easter joy and by the power of your love empower all who have been reborn in baptism to be your witnesses and prophets even to the ends of the earth. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

### ***Blessing***

**P** In the power of the Holy Spirit, our Almighty God continues to do great things for us. With our Blessed Mother, the Help of Christians, let us exalt and invoke God's holy name.

***Regina caeli – Queen of Heaven***

## **EIGHTH DAY: THE SPIRIT OF THE CHURCH**

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### **A reading from the Acts of the Apostles**

(Acts 2,1-4.14-24)

*Born in the mystery of Pentecost, the Church lives and grows in the Spirit. It is the creator Spirit, who builds the body of Christ. The Spirit is the messianic gift, par excellence, who draws humanity into a new and definitive relationship with God and conforms it to Christ; who preserves and nourishes the communion of salvation among all people.*

When Pentecost day came round, they had all met in one room, when suddenly they heard what sounded like a powerful wind from heaven, the noise of which filled the entire house in which they were sitting; and something appeared to them that seemed like tongues of fire; these separated and came to rest on the head of each of them. They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak foreign languages as the Spirit gave them the gift of speech. Then Peter stood up with the Eleven and addressed them in a loud voice: 'Men of Judaea, and all you who live in Jerusalem, make no mistake about this, but listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you imagine; why, it is only the

third hour of the day. On the contrary, this is what the prophet spoke of: In the days to come - it is the Lord who speaks - I will pour out my spirit on all mankind. Their sons and daughters shall prophesy, your young men shall see visions, your old men shall dream dreams. Even on my slaves, men and women, in those days, I will pour out my spirit. I will display portents in heaven above and signs on earth below. The sun will be turned into darkness and the moon into blood before the great Day of the Lord dawns. All who call on the name of the Lord will be saved. Men of Israel, listen to what I am going to say: Jesus the Nazarene was a man commended to you by God by the miracles and portents and signs that God worked through him when he was among you, as you all know. This man, who was put into your power by the deliberate intention and foreknowledge of God, you took and had crucified by men outside the Law. You killed him, but God raised him to life, freeing him from the pangs of Hades.'

### ***Intercessions***

- P** Through the voice of the Spirit who prays in us, let us present our needs and intentions to our loving Father.
- A** **Father, send us your Spirit of love.**

- L – For the Church: that under the guidance of the Holy Spirit she may bear credible witness to the true, the beautiful and the good. We pray to the Lord.
- For all peoples: that they may turn away from hatred, violence and war, and work together for peace. We pray to the Lord.
- For all those who have been born again in the waters of baptism: that they may put on the full armour of God in their struggle against evil, and in the power of the Spirit live as a “new creation” in Christ. We pray to the Lord.
- For each one of us: that we may be docile to the Holy Spirit whose perfect love can cast out all of our fear. We pray to the Lord.

P We have received God’s spirit of adoption, and so we have the courage to say:

**A Our Father...**

P Turn your ears, O God, to your Church, gathered today as in the Upper Room with Mary and your apostles awaiting the gift of Pentecost. Renew us with the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit, inflame our hearts with Easter joy and by the power of your love empower all who have been

reborn in baptism to be your witnesses  
and prophets even to the ends of the earth.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

### ***Blessing***

**P** In the power of the Holy Spirit, our  
Almighty God continues to do great  
things for us. With our Blessed  
Mother, the Help of Christians, let us  
exalt and invoke God's holy name.

### ***Regina caeli – Queen of Heaven***

## **NINTH DAY: THE SPIRIT OF UNITY**

**A reading from the First Letter of St. Paul to  
the Corinthians** (1 Cor 12,4-11)

*In the multiplicity of ministries, in the diversity  
of charisms, in the variety of situations, it is not  
the force of human effort, but the strength of  
the Spirit's love that gathers the Church in unity,  
giving fulfilment to Christ's prayer.*

There is a variety of gifts but always the same  
Spirit; there are all sorts of service to be done,  
but always to the same Lord; working in all  
sorts of different ways in different people, it is  
the same God who is working in all of them.  
The particular way in which the Spirit is given

to each person is for a good purpose. One may have the gift of preaching with wisdom given him by the Spirit; another may have the gift of preaching instruction given him by the same Spirit; and another the gift of faith given by the same Spirit; another again the gift of healing, through this one Spirit; one, the power of miracles; another, prophecy; another the gift of recognising spirits; another the gift of tongues and another the ability to interpret them. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, who distributes different gifts to different people just as he chooses.

### ***Intercessions***

- P** Through the voice of the Spirit who prays in us, let us present our needs and intentions to our loving Father.
- A** **Father, send us your Spirit of love.**
- L** – Come, Spirit of truth, that the Church may understand the gospel more deeply and communicate it more effectively in the new evangelization. We pray.
- Come, Spirit of love, that the Church may be renewed as your instrument of unity and communion. We pray.
- Come, Spirit of peace, that world leaders may turn their swords into ploughshares

and fight against every form of poverty and injustice. We pray.

- Come, Spirit of wisdom, that scientists may discover your creative genius in the secrets of the universe and use their learning to promote human dignity. We pray.
- Come, Spirit of life, that young people may bring about a new spring time in the Church, because they are loved by God, gifted for service in his name, and empowered to draw others to him by their good example. We pray.

**P** We have received God's spirit of adoption, and so we have the courage to say:

**A Our Father....**

**P** Listen, O God, to your Church united in prayer, in eager expectation of the Holy Spirit. May your Spirit illuminate the minds of the faithful and enable all those reborn in Baptism to be witnesses and prophets in the world. Through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

### ***Blessing***

**P** In the power of the Holy Spirit, our Almighty God continues to do great things for us. With our Blessed

Mother, the Help of Christians, let us exalt and invoke God's holy name.

***Regina caeli - Queen of Heaven***

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**PREPARATION FOR  
THE SOLEMNITY OF PENTECOST**

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*The Solemnity of Pentecost closes the Easter Season. The Acts of the Apostles recall the prolonged time of prayer of the early Church waiting for the Holy Spirit. Each community designates a moment in their daily prayer schedule to emphasize this time of invocation of the Spirit.*

*This prayer can be structured around the outline of the Liturgy of the Hours: after a short reading one can prolong the reflection with the texts taken from the Church's magisterium and from the life of Don Bosco. Intercessions from the Liturgy of the Hours may be replaced with the prayers suggested below.*

***Hymn***

***Option 1***

***Veni Creator Spiritus***

## **Latin**

*Veni Creator Spiritus,  
mentes tuorum visita,  
imple superna gratia,  
quae tu creasti, pectora.*

*Qui diceris Paraclitus,  
donum Dei altissimi,  
fons vivus, ignis, caritas,  
et spiritalis unctio.*

*Tu septiformis munere,  
dextrae Dei tu digitus  
tu rite promissum Patris,  
sermone ditans guttura.*

*Accende lumen sensibus,  
infunde amorem cordibus,  
infirma nostri corporis  
virtute firmans perpeti.*

*Hostem repellas longius  
pacemque dones protinus;  
ductore sic te praevio  
vitemus omne noxium.*

*Per te sciamus da Patrem  
noscamus atque Filium,  
te utriusque Spiritum  
credamus omni tempore.*

*Deo Patri sit gloria  
et Filio, qui a mortuis;  
surrexit, ac Paraclito  
in saeculorum saecula.*

*Amen.*

**English**

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator, come  
from thy bright heav'nly throne;  
come, take possession of our souls,  
and make them all thine own.

Thou who art called the Paraclete,  
best gift of God above,  
the living spring, the living fire,  
sweet unction and true love.

Thou who art sevenfold in thy grace,  
finger of God's right hand;  
his promise, teaching little ones  
to speak and understand.

O guide our minds with thy blest light,  
with love our hearts inflame;  
and with thy strength, which ne'er decays,  
confirm our mortal frame.

Far from us drive our deadly foe;  
true peace unto us bring;  
and through all perils lead us safe  
beneath thy sacred wing.

Through thee may we the Father know,  
through thee the eternal Son,  
and thee the Spirit of them both,  
thrice-blessed three in One.

All glory to the Father be,  
with his coequal Son;  
the same to thee, great Paraclete,  
while endless ages run.

Amen.

***Option 2***  
**Come Holy Spirit**

Come, Holy Spirit, Creator blest,  
and in our souls take up your rest;  
come with your grace and heavenly aid  
to fill the hearts which you have made.

O Comforter, to you we cry,  
O heavenly gift of God Most High,  
O fount of life and fire of love,  
and sweet anointing from above.

You in your sevenfold gifts are known;  
You, finger of God's hand we own;  
You, promise of the Father, You  
Who does the tongue with power imbue.

Kindle our senses from above,  
and make our hearts o'erflow with love;

with patience firm and virtue high  
the weakness of our flesh supply.

Far from us drive the foe we dread,  
and grant us your peace instead;  
so shall we not, with you for guide,  
turn from the path of life aside.

Oh, may your grace on us bestow  
the Father and the Son to know;  
and You, through endless times confessed,  
of both the eternal Spirit blest.

Now to the Father and the Son,  
Who rose from death, be glory given,  
with You, O Holy Comforter,  
henceforth by all in earth and heaven. Amen.

**First Day.**

**THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT: WISDOM**  
.....

**A Reading from the First Letter of Paul to  
the Corinthians** (1 Cor 2,6-10)

But still we have a wisdom to offer those who have reached maturity: not a philosophy of our age, it is true, still less of the masters of our age, which are coming to their end. The hidden wisdom of God which we teach in our mysteries is the wisdom that God predestined to be for our glory before the ages began. It

is a wisdom that none of the masters of this age have ever known, or they would not have crucified the Lord of Glory; we teach what scripture calls: the things that no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him. These are the very things that God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit reaches the depths of everything, even the depths of God.

### **From the Church's Magisterium**

Looking forward to the solemnity of Pentecost, towards which the Easter season is proceeding, let us reflect together on the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit, which the Tradition of the Church has constantly proposed based on the famous text of Isaiah, concerning the "Spirit of the Lord" (cf. Is 11.1-2).

The first and most exalted of these gifts is wisdom, which is a light that is received from on high: it is a special participation in that mysterious and supreme knowledge which is proper to God. We read, in fact, in Sacred Scripture: "I prayed, and understanding was given me; I called upon God, and the spirit of wisdom came to me. I preferred her to sceptres and thrones, and I accounted wealth

as nothing in comparison with her” (Wis 7:7-8. Solomon’s prayer for wisdom).

This superior wisdom is the root of a new knowledge, a knowledge imbued with charity, thanks to which the soul acquires familiarity with divine things and begins to yearn for them. St. Thomas speaks of “a certain taste of God” (“Summa Theologiae” II<sup>o</sup> -II<sup>o</sup>, q. 45, a. 2, ad 1), by which the true scholar is not simply one who knows the things of God, but the one who experiences them and lives them.

Sapiential knowledge also gives us a special ability to judge human things according to God’s standards, in the light of God. Enlightened by this gift, a Christian knows how to see into the realities of the world: no one better than he can appreciate the authentic values of creation, looking at them with God’s own eyes.

St. John Paul II, *Regina coeli*, April 16, 1989

### **From the Life of Don Bosco**

The Holy Spirit, through the gift of Wisdom, strengthens in us the virtue of charity, immerses us fully in the history of salvation and gives us the ability to work in harmony with God for the salvation of others. But by what path do we come to possess the gift of

Wisdom? First of all, we must become docile to the action of the Spirit so as to acquire a taste for God and his Word, and grow as much as possible in the virtue of charity.

When Don Bosco was only nine years old, he had a dream that revealed God's divine plans for him. He understood that he had to become "the leader of mischievous boys" in order to teach them to love what is good. Young John protested, telling his interlocutor that this task was impossible because he was only a helpless child. But his interlocutor replied: "I will give you a Teacher, under whose discipline you can become wise and without which all wisdom becomes foolishness"

Mario Galizzi

**P** Let us pray.

Lord, with you is Wisdom who knows your works:

she delights in what pleases you.

Send her forth from your glorious throne that she may help me and join me in my labour,

that I too may delight in what pleases you.

May she guide me prudently in my actions and protect me with her glorious power.

**A Amen.**

**Second Day.**

**THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT: FORTITUDE**

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**A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans (Rom 8,26-28)**

The Spirit too comes to help us in our weakness. For when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the Spirit himself expresses our plea in a way that could never be put into words, and God who knows everything in our hearts knows perfectly well what he means, and that the pleas of the saints expressed by the Spirit are according to the mind of God. We know that by turning everything to their good, God cooperates with all those who love him, with all those that he has called according to his purpose.

**From the Church's Magisterium**

At Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon them, those men went out without fear and began to announce to everyone the good news of Christ crucified and risen. They had no fear whatsoever, because they knew they were in the hands of the mightiest power. Yes, dear brothers and sisters, the Spirit of God, wherever it enters, dispels fear; it makes us know and feel that we are in the hands of

an omnipotent love: whatever happens, his infinite love will not abandon us.

This is demonstrated by the witness of martyrs, the courage of confessors of the faith, the tireless enthusiasm of missionaries, the frankness of preachers, the example of all the saints, some even adolescents and children. This is demonstrated by the very existence of the Church which, despite human limitations and failings, continues to cross the ocean of history, driven by the breath of God and animated by his purifying fire. With this faith and this joyful hope we repeat today, through the intercession of Mary: "Send forth your Spirit, Lord, to renew the earth!"

Pope Benedict XVI,  
*from a Pentecost Homily, 2009*

### **From the Life of Don Bosco**

John Bosco recounts: "One day, several bullies planned to annoy and beat up Comollo and another harmless boy...I decided to intervene but no one paid attention to me. 'Whoever keeps bothering those two had better watch out,' I said loudly. Thereupon several of the more brazen and strong among them assumed a threatening and defensive stance toward me, while another dealt Comollo two resounding slaps across the

face. At that I completely forgot myself. Brute force and not reason was now moving me. I could not grab a chair or a stick because there were none and so I gripped one of them by the shoulders and used him as a battering ram against those bullies. I knocked four of them to the floor and the others lost no time in taking to their heels.....” After the description of the scuffle in the classroom, Don Bosco, in his memoirs, continues as follows “Comollo taught me many other lessons”. ‘John’, he said to me as soon as we were alone, ‘your strength scares me. Believe me, God didn’t give it to you for slaughtering your classmates. He wants us to love one another, to forgive one another and to do good to those who do evil to us’ (BM I, 252-253).

Many years later, when Don Bosco was provoked again by two people, he responded in a very different way, saying: “The strength of the priest is his patience and forgiveness”. (Carlo Maria Zanotti)

**P** Let us pray.  
Faithful God,  
if I climb to the mountains, you are there;  
if I settle at the farthest ends of the sea, you  
are there.  
When difficulties beset me, be my fortress

and my rock.

With your strong hand, hold me fast.

By the grace of your Spirit,

grant me fortitude and perseverance in faith,

that I may stand firm

in year steadfast your love for me.

**A Amen.**

### **Third Day. THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: UNDERSTANDING**

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#### **A reading from the Gospel of John**

(Jn 14,25-27)

I have said these things to you while still with you; but the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you. Peace I bequeath to you, my own peace I give you, a peace the world cannot give, this is my gift to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.

#### **From the Church's Magisterium**

We know well that faith is adherence to God in the *chiaroscuro* of mystery; it is also, however, a desire to seek greater and deeper knowledge of the truth that has been revealed. Now, this interior thrust comes to us from the Spirit, who through faith grants the special gift of intelligence almost

as an intuition of divine truth.

Through this gift, the Holy Spirit who “searches the depth of God” (1 Cor 2,10), communicates a spark to the believer. This spark has such a capacity to penetrate that it can open the believer’s heart to the joyful perception of God’s loving design. In this way, then, the Spirit continually renews the experience of the disciples of Emmaus, who, after recognizing the Risen One in the breaking of the bread, said to each other: “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking with us along the way, while he was explaining the Scriptures to us?”(Lk 24,32)

This supernatural intelligence is given not only to individuals, but also to the believing community: to the Pastors who, as successors of the apostles, are heirs of the specific promise made to them by Christ (cf Jn 14,26; 16,13), and to the faithful who, thanks to the “anointing” of the Spirit (cf 1 Jn 2,20 and 27), possess a special “sense of faith” which guides them in their concrete choices.

St. John Paul II, *Regina caeli*, 16 April 1989

### **From the Life of Don Bosco**

Everyone would agree that Don Bosco never allowed himself to be influenced by external

appearances, no matter what form they took. Rather, he saw clearly the substance of everything. He looked at all things with an inner eye which allowed him to cut to the chase and render a precise assessment of the deepest realities. Don Bosco did not hide the fact that his knowledge grew through his continuous efforts as a lifelong learner and through a serious commitment to regular reading on many topics.

One example of this was Don Bosco's discovery of the book, "The Imitation of Christ", which he described as an opportunity to make a qualitative leap in his intellectual development. "I am indebted to this book", acknowledged Don Bosco, "for so much doctrine and morality". In fact, the author of the Imitation of Christ taught Don Bosco to free his heart from intellectual vanity and to go instead to the school of the Master of the interior life who opens new horizons for his acute mind to contemplate with love. Don Bosco perceived deeply the importance of opening oneself to the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

"Guided by the Spirit, it was easier for him to acquire divine truths and to develop further his sense of the things of God, avoiding any

danger of error or being led astray. In Don Bosco's life, the virtue of humility developed little by little as he renounced the temptation of displaying how learned he was, and to speak instead in ways that were accessible to the humble, the little, the uneducated. If the gift of knowledge allowed him to see his children in the light of God, the gift of intelligence made him contemplate the foundations of a true Christian education, namely, to bring everyone to a true knowledge of God. It was the gift of intelligence that opened Don Bosco to Christ, the true revealer of the Father, and who made him an authentic Christian educator. When he wrote his Sacred History, he endeavoured to present Jesus in the New Testament as a model to imitate because his total self-giving reveals the love of the Father and in all his words and deeds he indicates the way to the Father" (Mario Galizzi).

**P** Let us pray.

Come, Creator Spirit, visit our minds and fill our hearts with your grace.

Sweet comforter, gift of the Father Most High, living water, fire of love, finger of the hand of God, promised one of the Saviour, bestow your seven gifts upon us. Awaken in us the power of the Word.

Be a light for our intellect, a burning flame in our hearts, a healing balm for our wounded souls. Defend us from the enemy, guide us safely from evil, refresh us with your gift of peace.

Light of eternal wisdom, reveal to us the great mystery of God who is Eternal Father, Risen Son, and Consoling Spirit of Love. All glory and praise to the God who creates, redeems and sanctifies, now and forever.

**A Amen.**

#### **Fourth Day. THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT: KNOWLEDGE**

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##### ***Option 1***

**A reading from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians** (1 Cor 3,16-19)

Didn't you realise that you were God's temple and that the Spirit of God was living among you? If anybody should destroy the temple of God, God will destroy him, because the temple of God is sacred; and you are that temple. Make no mistake about it: if any one of you thinks of himself as wise, in the ordinary sense of the word, then he must learn to be a fool before he really can be wise. Why? Because the wisdom of this world is foolishness to God. As scripture

says: The Lord knows wise men's thoughts: he knows how useless they are.

### ***Option 2***

#### **A reading from the First Letter of St. Paul to Timothy** (1 Tim 6,3-5.20-21)

Anyone who teaches anything different, and does not keep to the sound teaching which is that of our Lord Jesus Christ, the doctrine which is in accordance with true religion, is simply ignorant and must be full of self-conceit - with a craze for questioning everything and arguing about words. All that can come of this is jealousy, contention, abuse and wicked mistrust of one another; and unending disputes by people who are neither rational nor informed and imagine that religion is a way of making a profit. My dear Timothy, take great care of all that has been entrusted to you. Have nothing to do with the pointless philosophical discussions and antagonistic beliefs of the 'knowledge' which is not knowledge at all; by adopting this, some have gone right away from the faith. Grace be with you.

#### **From the Church's Magisterium**

Thanks to science we can know the true value of creatures in their relationship with the Creator.

We know that contemporary man, precisely because of scientific development, is particularly exposed to the temptation of giving a naturalistic interpretation of the world: before the multiform wealth of things, their complexity, variety and beauty, he runs the risk of absolutizing them and almost making them into gods until they become the supreme goal of his own life.

Enlightened by God's gift of knowledge, man discovers the infinite distance that separates created things from the Creator, their intrinsic limitations, and, when misused because of sin, the pitfalls into which they can lead us. It is a discovery that leads man to regret his misery and urges him to turn with greater enthusiasm and confidence to the one who, alone, can fully satisfy his yearning for the infinite.

This has always been the experience of the saints; but in a completely unique way this experience was lived by Our Lady, who with the example of her personal journey of faith teaches us to walk "among the events of the world, while fixing our hearts on what can bring true joy".

St. John Paul II, *Regina coeli*, 16 April 1989

### **From the life of Don Bosco**

The Holy Spirit comes to help our faith with the gift of knowledge and gives us the ability

to understand, without error of any kind, every reality of the physical, human and spiritual world, in its relationship with God, and to see everything in the light of God, the Highest Good and the ultimate end of all things. Now, among these existing and visible realities, we find above all the human person. So many contemplate the natural beauties: the mountains, the seas, the sky, etc. which leads them to exclaim with conviction: "Truly, God exists!" But is it possible to say this with conviction when millions of human beings are hungry or subject to others as slaves? Is not man the most important masterpiece of creation? With the Psalmist, I ask myself: "When I see the heavens, the work of your hands, the moon and the stars which you arranged, what is man that you should keep him in mind, mortal man that you care for him?" And with the Psalmist, I find the answer: "And yet you have made him little less than a god, with glory and honour you crowned him, gave him power over the works of your hands, and put all things under his feet"(Ps 8,4.6-7). (Mario Galizzi)

The gift of knowledge is the gift through which we are helped by the Holy Spirit in a particular way to know the created reality and

especially human beings in the light of God. When the gift of knowledge is not developed, due to laziness or lack of opportunity, creatures can easily lead to temptation, distraction, and deformation. But when things are seen in the light of God, that is, with the gift of knowledge, they proclaim the Lord, reveal him, and are signs of his glory.

Don Bosco's knowledge developed in this way. He loved his young people very much: "My dear young people", he would say to them, "you would be hard pressed to find anyone who loves you more than I do in Jesus Christ, and who wants your happiness more than me". And to his Salesians he loved to repeat: "Strive to make yourself loved". This love brought Don Bosco to a profound conviction: anyone who loves understands others more quickly and more deeply. This "science" is also the root of Don Bosco's optimism. (Carlo Maria Zanotti)

**P** Let us pray.

**L** **You, O Lord, are my only treasure.**

**L** – Lord, to know you is the source of my hope and the object of all my desires. In a world marked by

constant and rapid change, keep my soul firmly anchored in you.

- Lord, set my heart on fire with your Spirit of Knowledge. Open my mind to recognize you in the beauty of your creation, to marvel at the work of your hands, and so to know you better and love you more.
- Lord, through your Spirit's gift of knowledge, grant me a deeper understanding of your promises, that I may proclaim your transforming love to my brothers and sisters with greater conviction.

**P** Come Holy Spirit, mighty Sanctifier, Fire of love.

As in ancient days  
when you filled the Virgin Mary with  
gratitude,  
miraculously transformed the hearts of the  
Apostles,  
and infused heroic faith in your martyrs,  
come now and sanctify us:  
illuminate our minds, strengthen our wills,  
purify our desires, enflame our hearts with  
love,  
make us responsive to your promptings  
so that we may be your faithful co-workers

in renewing the face of the earth.

**A Amen.**

## **Fifth Day. THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT: GOOD COUNSEL**

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### **A reading from the First Letter of St. Paul to the Corinthians (1 Cor 2,9-13)**

We teach what scripture calls: the things that no eye has seen and no ear has heard, things beyond the mind of man, all that God has prepared for those who love him. These are the very things that God has revealed to us through the Spirit, for the Spirit reaches the depths of everything, even the depths of God. After all, the depths of a man can only be known by his own spirit, not by any other man, and in the same way the depths of God can only be known by the Spirit of God. Now instead of the spirit of the world, we have received the Spirit that comes from God, to teach us to understand the gifts that he has given us. Therefore we teach, not in the way in which philosophy is taught, but in the way that the Spirit teaches us: we teach spiritual things spiritually.

### **From the Church's Magisterium**

Good counsel, or advice, is given to the

Christian to illuminate the conscience in moral choices, which arise in everyday life

Good counsel is very much needed today because we live in times that are marked by a widespread uncertainty about true values. There is a need to neutralize certain destructive forces, which easily creep into the human spirit when it is agitated by the passions, and to introduce healthy and positive elements in their place. The gift of counsel acts as a new breath in the conscience, suggesting to it what is lawful, what is appropriate, what is most conducive to the good of the soul (cf St. Bonaventure, *Collationes de septem donis Spiritus Sancti*, VII, 5).

The conscience then becomes like the “healthy eye” of which the Gospel speaks (Mt 6.22), and acquires a new pupil of sorts, thanks to which it is possible to see better what needs to be done in a given situation, even if what needs to be done is intricate and difficult. Helped by this gift, the Christian penetrates the true meaning of gospel values, in particular those expressed in the Sermon on the Mount (cf Mt 5-7).

St. John Paul II, *Regina coeli*, May 7, 1989

### **From the Life of Don Bosco**

Don Cafasso was for Don Bosco, as indeed

he was for all the Piedmontese priests and saints of the 19th century, a true “Man of Good Counsel”. This is demonstrated by his relationship with Don Bosco, for whom he was a pivotal spiritual guide. One day a young John Bosco went to Don Cafasso to tell him that he wanted to become a religious. Don Cafasso’s response was clear, firm and to the point: “no”. But John Bosco did not understand, so Don Cafasso explained that “in order for a vocation to be firmly determined, it needs to be further considered before the Lord and matured in prayer”, and he sent John Bosco to do the Spiritual Exercises.

But the idea of becoming a religious did not go away. John returned to Don Cafasso and said: “I want you to tell me what is the will of God for me”. Don Cafasso replied: “Go and take a few weeks off and I’ll take care of you”. Even Don Cafasso needed to pray for the people who sought his spiritual guidance. He was not a “vending machine” for advice. There is much to learn from him in this regard.

Some days later John was determined to have an answer from Don Cafasso. He went to him and reported that he had already packed a trunk and was ready to go to the convent.

Don Cafasso told him to go unpack his trunk and offered this counsel: "Continue your work among the young. This and nothing else is God's will for you". On hearing Don Cafasso's advice, John lowered his head with a smile. He finally knew God's will for him, and so came to understand that even the dream he had when he was nine years old, which repeated itself on various occasions, but which he found hard to believe, had truly come by divine inspiration. From that day onward, John dedicated his life entirely to young people and matured into Don Bosco, "the Man of Good Counsel" for young people.

**P** Let us pray.

Holy Spirit of God, we come into your awesome presence.

Mindful of our weakness, we entrust ourselves to your mercy.

By your gift of good counsel, lift the veil of ignorance from our eyes,  
and bring order to the confusion in our minds.

Teach us to discern what you want us to do,  
show us the right path to follow,  
accomplish in us all that you inspire,  
be our steadfast guide when facing difficult decisions.

In your love for peace and order, deliver us from all injustice.

Free us from all bias and prejudice, courting neither the rich because they are powerful,

nor the poor because they are weak.

In all things, help us to seek the truth that sets us free.

As we heed your good counsel,

bring our lives into harmony with yours.

Keep us faithful day by day.

**A Amen.**

## **Sixth Day. THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT: PIETY**

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### **A reading from the Second Letter of St. Paul to Timothy (2 Tim 1,6-9)**

That is why I am reminding you now to fan into a flame the gift that God gave you when I laid my hands on you. God's gift was not a spirit of timidity, but the Spirit of power, and love, and self-control. So you are never to be ashamed of witnessing to the Lord, or ashamed of me for being his prisoner; but with me, bear the hardships for the sake of the Good News, relying on the power of God who has saved us and called us to be holy - not

because of anything we ourselves have done but for his own purpose and by his own grace. This grace had already been granted to us, in Christ Jesus, before the beginning of time.

### **From the Church's Magisterium**

With the gift of piety the Spirit heals our hardened hearts and opens them to tenderness towards God and towards our brothers and sisters. Tenderness, as a sincerely filial attitude towards God, is expressed in prayer. The experience of one's existential poverty, of the emptiness that earthly things leave in the soul, arouses in man the need to turn to God to obtain grace, help and forgiveness.

The gift of piety guides and nurtures this need, enriching it with sentiments of deep trust in God, whom we experience as a good and provident Father. This is St. Paul's conviction when he tells us: "God sent forth his Son ... so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!' Therefore, you are no longer a slave but a son..." (Gal 4.4-7; cf Rom 8.15).

Tenderness, as an authentically fraternal opening towards one's neighbour, manifests

itself in meekness. With the gift of piety, the Spirit instils in the believer a new capacity for love for his brothers and sisters, making his heart participate in some way in the very meekness of the Heart of Christ. The “pious” Christian always sees others as so many children of the same Father, called to be part of the family of God which is the Church. He is therefore inclined to treat them with the concern and the amiability of a frank, fraternal relationship.

Moreover, the gift of piety extinguishes in the heart those sources of tension and division which are bitterness, anger and impatience, and nourishes feelings of understanding, tolerance and forgiveness. This gift, therefore, is at the root of that new human community which is rooted in the civilization of love.

St. John Paul II, *Regina coeli*, May 28, 1989

### **From the Life of Don Bosco**

The gift of piety is the deep feeling of being children; it is the intimate ease with which one can call God “Father”. Piety is therefore at the root of every authentic devotion, of every spirituality, and of every Christian prayer. One testimony describes the piety of Don Bosco as “simple, and yet his concentration in prayer was

enchanting. Still and recollected in his physical demeanour, his hands clasped on the kneeler or leaning against his chest, his head tilted slightly, his gaze fixed, his face smiling, with no affectation; so pious was his bearing that those who saw him were themselves stimulated to pray well, perceiving in his face the splendid reflection of his faith and love of God”.

For Don Bosco, piety was also an important educational force. He understood that piety was a means to bring each young person and indeed everyone to God, the source of all happiness. It can be said that Don Bosco spent his whole life loving Jesus, especially in the Eucharist, and inspiring others to do the same. How often he exhorted the young with these or similar words: “Ah, my dear ones, when you enter the Church, fix your eyes on the tabernacle, where Jesus Christ is truly present. Although you don't see him, he is there! Revive your faith; consider that in every tabernacle lives the One before whom all the legions of Angels tremble and all the hosts of the Saints bow down”.

“The Holy Tabernacle, that is, the Eucharistic Jesus, is the source of all blessings and all grace”.

Fr. Albera, who grew up at Don Bosco's school, wrote these words to the Salesians: "If the Salesian is not solidly pious, he will never be fit to be an educator. But the best way to teach piety is by example ... The great illness of many people in the service of God is the agitation and exaggeration with which they deal with external things. How difficult it is to put healthy limits on our various activities and keep them from dragging us into activism! Let us do all we can to stay fervent in our piety. And what is fervour but a burning desire, a generous desire to please God in all things" (Carlo Maria Zanotti).

**P** Let us pray.  
Come, Holy Spirit,  
as you came upon the Blessed Virgin Mary,  
that we too may ponder the example and  
teachings of Jesus,  
and treasure them in our hearts.  
Transform us by your life-giving presence  
among us.  
As individuals and as the Body of Christ  
make us more credible signs of  
God's saving action in the world.

**A** **Amen.**

## **Seventh Day. THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT: FEAR OF THE LORD**

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### **A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Philippians (Phil 2,12-16)**

So then, my dear friends, continue to do as I tell you, as you always have; not only as you did when I was there with you, but even more now that I am no longer there; and work for your salvation ‘in fear and trembling’. It is God, for his own loving purpose, who puts both the will and the action into you. Do all that has to be done without complaining or arguing and then you will be innocent and genuine, perfect children of God among a deceitful and underhand brood and you will shine in the world like bright stars because you are offering it the word of life. This would give me something to be proud of for the Day of Christ, and would mean that I had not run in the race and exhausted myself for nothing.

### **From the Church’s Magisterium**

Sacred Scripture affirms that “the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord” (Ps 111 [110],10; Prov 1,7). But what is this fear? Certainly not that “fear of God” which pushes us to avoid thinking and remembering him, as if from

something or someone who disturbs and worries us. This was the state of mind that, according to the Bible, led our ancestors, after sin, to “hide themselves from the Lord God among the trees of the garden” (Gen 3,8); this was also the attitude of the unfaithful and wicked servant of the Gospel parable, who hid the talent he received underground (see Mt 25,18.26). But this type of anxious fear is not the true concept of the fear-gift of the Spirit.

Here we are dealing with something much more noble, lofty and exalted: it is the sincere sense of awe and trepidation evoked in man before the “*tremenda maiestas*”, the infinite majesty of God, especially when he reflects on his own infidelities and on the danger of “being weighed on the scales and found wanting” (Dan 5,27) at the eternal judgment, which no one can escape. The believer presents himself and places himself before God with a “contrite spirit” and with a “broken heart” (cf Ps 51[50],19), knowing full well that he must wait for his own salvation “with fear and trembling” (Phil 2,12). However, this does not mean irrational fear, but a sense of responsibility and the need to return to fidelity to God’s law.

It is all this that the Holy Spirit assumes and elevates with the gift of the fear of God. It certainly does not exclude the trepidation that comes from the awareness of sins committed and from the perspective of divine punishment, but it tempers it with faith in divine mercy and with the certainty of the paternal concern of God who desires eternal salvation for everyone. With this gift, however, the Holy Spirit infuses above all a healthy filial fear, which is a disposition rooted in love for God: the soul is then concerned not to cause sorrow to God, whom we loved as our Father, not to offend God in anything, to “remain” and grow in charity (cf Jn 15,4-7).

St. John Paul II, *Regina coeli*, 11 June 1989

### **From the Life of Don Bosco**

There is a beautiful episode from the childhood of John Bosco that beautifully depicts his filial fear. One day when he was only eight years old, Mamma Margaret was out and John was home alone. He wanted to get something from a high shelf in the kitchen. Unable to reach it from the floor, he climbed up on a chair and tried again. As his little arm stretched towards the prize, he hit a vase full of oil that came crashing down on the floor.

Realizing that he would not be able to hide this accident from his mother, he thought of a way to at least reduce her annoyance when she learned about it. He cut a long branch from a hedge, cleaned it well and went to meet his mother as she arrived. He handed her the branch. He was not afraid of punishment, but it hurt him to know his mother would be displeased with him.

This is the true sense of filial fear: avoiding anything that displeases your loved ones, especially God, who is the most beloved of all. Those who truly fear God can no longer distinguish between venial sin and mortal sin because they always try to avoid every act, no matter how small, that is not pleasing to God who is so full of love for his creatures. The surest sign of filial love is to be aware of the horror of sin, even the smallest sin, because of the fear of losing our friendship and intimacy with God. “Why do we fear God? For one reason only. In our weakness and human frailty, we have the frightening power to separate ourselves from God. More than God, we fear our will because it is an easy prey to the deceptions and seductions of sin. In short, to fear God is to fear losing God”.

**P** Let us pray.

**A** Come Holy Spirit,

wash us in your grace  
and bring forth a new Pentecost  
in your Church!

Come down upon your bishops and priests,  
upon consecrated men and women,  
upon all the faithful and those who do not  
believe,  
upon the most hardened sinners  
upon each one of us!

Come down upon the world,  
upon all nations and peoples!  
Fill us anew with your breath of life,  
cleanse us from all sin  
and deliver us from all deceit and evil!

Refiner's fire, purify our hearts of every  
selfish desire.

Consume us with zeal for God's house.  
Help us to seek our fulfilment in God alone  
who is the source of every joy,  
and in whom our past, present, and future  
find their deepest meaning.

Come to us Holy Spirit:  
transform us, reconcile us, unite us,  
consecrate us!  
Teach us to be totally for Christ, totally

for the Father, totally for you!

We ask this through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus and our Mother!

**A Amen.**

### **Eighth Day. THE GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT: PEACE**

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#### **A reading from the Letter of St. Paul to the Ephesians (Eph 4,1-7)**

I, the prisoner in the Lord, implore you therefore to lead a life worthy of your vocation. Bear with one another charitably, in complete selflessness, gentleness and patience. Do all you can to preserve the unity of the Spirit by the peace that binds you together. There is one Body, one Spirit, just as you were all called into one and the same hope when you were called. There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God who is Father of all, over all, through all and within all. Each one of us, however, has been given his own share of grace, given as Christ allotted it.

#### **From the Church's Magisterium**

In every person the desire for peace is an essential aspiration which coincides in a

certain way with the desire for a full, happy and successful human life. In other words, the desire for peace corresponds to a fundamental moral principle, namely, the duty and right to an integral social and communitarian development, which is part of God's plan for mankind. Man is made for the peace which is God's gift. All of this led me to draw inspiration for this Message from the words of Jesus Christ: 'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God' (Mt 5.9)". This beatitude "tells us that peace is both a messianic gift and the fruit of human effort ... It is peace with God through a life lived according to his will. It is interior peace with oneself, and exterior peace with our neighbours and all creation" (ibid., 2, 3). Indeed, peace is the supreme good to ask as a gift from God and, at the same time, that which is to be built with our every effort.

We may ask ourselves: what is the basis, the origin, the root of peace? How can we experience that peace within ourselves, despite problems, darkness and anxieties? The reply is given to us by the readings of today's liturgy. The biblical texts, especially the one just read from the Gospel of Luke, ask us to contemplate the interior peace of Mary, the

Mother of Jesus. During the days in which “she gave birth to her first-born son” (Lk 2,7), many unexpected things occurred: not only the birth of the Son but, even before, the tiring journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem, not finding room at the inn, the search for a chance place to stay for the night; then the song of the angels and the unexpected visit of the shepherds. In all this, however, Mary remains even tempered, she does not get agitated, she is not overcome by events greater than herself; in silence she considers what happens, keeping it in her mind and heart, and pondering it calmly and serenely. This is the interior peace which we ought to have amid the sometimes tumultuous and confusing events of history, events whose meaning we often do not grasp and which disconcert us.

Pope Benedict XVI, *Homily*, 1 January, 2013

### **From the Life of Don Bosco**

The Count of Camburzano was a great friend and benefactor of Don Bosco. He spoke often and willingly of Don Bosco and his work, not hiding his admiration for Bosco’s ever-expanding work, and especially for the supernatural gifts with which God had blessed him. One day in Nice, while he was speaking

publicly about Don Bosco, Camburzano became the object of ridicule. One lady in particular challenged him. "I would like to see", she said, "if this good priest of yours might be able to tell me the state of my soul". The lady wrote to Don Bosco. So did Count Camburzano.

Don Bosco sent a prompt reply to the count, saying: "Kindly inform the lady that, if she wants peace, she must reunite with her husband, from whom she is separated". And to the unknown lady he wrote: "Madame, your conscience will be at peace only when you return to the sacrament of reconciliation which you abandoned twenty years ago, and make amends for all the transgressions you have committed in the past". How did Don Bosco know this? The truth is that God came to his aid, giving him as much boldness to speak the truth as he had zeal for the good of souls. Peaceful in the knowledge that God was leading him, Don Bosco would not be intimidated by anyone in the battle for the souls and the good of the Church (BM VI, 13).

**P** Let us pray.  
Spirit of truth,  
memory and prophetic voice of the Church,  
you search us and you know us,

you draw us into the infinite mystery of  
God.

Lead all people to recognize in Jesus of  
Nazareth  
the Lord of glory, the Saviour of the world,  
the supreme fulfilment of history.

**A *Come, Spirit of love and peace!***

**P** Creator Spirit, eternal artisan of the  
Kingdom,  
enrich the Church with your holy gifts.  
Make her a shining light to the nations,  
drawing every generation  
to the God who saves.

Spirit of holiness, divine breath that moves  
the cosmos,  
come, renew the face of the earth.  
Stir up in Christians a desire for unity.  
Make them witnesses of intimacy with God  
and builders of fraternity  
with all humankind.

**A *Come, Spirit of love and peace!***

**P** Spirit of communion, soul and strength of  
the Church,  
bring into harmony the diverse charisms  
and ministries that you inspire.  
Teach lay people, consecrated religious and  
ordained ministers

to collaborate fruitfully in the Lord's  
vineyard,  
so that the Body of Christ may grow,  
and the Church become more attractive  
as a sign and sacrament of the Reign of God.

Spirit of consolation, inexhaustible source  
of joy and peace,  
comfort the sick,  
reassure the doubtful,  
give hope to those who suffer,  
and invigorate our common commitment  
to build a better future for all.

**A *Come, Spirit of love and peace!***

**P** Spirit of wisdom, inspiration of hearts and  
minds,  
guide the path of science and technology  
in the service of life and human dignity  
from conception to natural death.  
Shape our dialogue with people of other  
religions and no religion,  
that all cultures may advance  
in the light of the Gospel.

Spirit of life, through whom the Eternal  
Word became flesh in a Virgin's womb,  
and is conceived anew in every discerning  
heart,  
make us docile to your stirrings.

Open our eyes to your presence in the ordinary events of daily life, and in the signs of the times by which you guide the course of history.

**A** ***Come, Spirit of love and peace!***

**P** To you, Spirit of love, with the almighty Father and only-begotten Son, be all honour, glory and praise, now and forever.

**A** **Amen.**

### **Ninth Day. THE GIFTS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT: JOY**

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#### **A reading from the Gospel of John**

(Jn 16,5-8.22-23)

But now I am going to the one who sent me. Not one of you has asked, "Where are you going?" Yet you are sad at heart because I have told you this. Still, I must tell you the truth: it is for your own good that I am going because unless I go, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I do go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will show the world how wrong it was, about sin, and about who was in the right, and about judgement: So it is with you: you are sad now, but I shall see you again, and

your hearts will be full of joy, and that joy no one shall take from you. When that day comes, you will not ask me any questions. I tell you most solemnly, anything you ask for from the Father he will grant in my name.

### **From the Church's Magisterium**

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace ...” (Gal 5,22). Only the Holy Spirit gives the profound, full and lasting joy which every human heart desires. Man is a being made for joy, not for sadness, as Paul VI reminded Christians and all people of our time with the apostolic exhortation “*Gaudete in Domino*”. True joy is a gift of the Holy Spirit. Paul tells us that joy is linked to charity (cf. Gal 5,22). It cannot therefore be an egoistic experience, the fruit of disordered love. True joy includes the justice of the kingdom of God, which St. Paul describes as a kingdom of “justice, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom 4,17). It is a question of evangelical justice, consisting in conformity to the will of God, in obedience to his laws, in personal friendship with him. Outside of this friendship there is no real joy.

The Gospel is an invitation to joy, a joy that is true and profound. Thus, in the Annunciation, Mary is invited to joy: “Rejoice (*Khaire*), full of

grace” (Lk 1,28). In the Visitation, Elizabeth is full of the Holy Spirit and joy, as she shares physically and spiritually, naturally and supernaturally, in the stirring of the son who is still in her womb: “The child rejoiced in my womb” (Lk 1,44). Elizabeth perceives her son’s joy, and she manifests it, but in both cases, it is the Holy Spirit, according to the evangelist, who is the source of this joy. Mary, in her turn, is also overcome by joy. A song of exultation wells up in her heart in which she expresses the humble, clear and profound joy which is the fruit of total availability to the Holy Spirit: “My spirit rejoices in God, my saviour” (Lk 1,47).

In the Gospel pages concerning the public life of Jesus, we read that, at a certain moment, he himself “rejoiced in the Holy Spirit” (Lk 10,21). Jesus expresses joy and gratitude in a prayer that celebrates the benevolence of the Father: “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; yes, Father, for such was your gracious will”. In Jesus, joy is strongest when it directs him towards the Father. This remains true for any joys inspired and sustained by the Holy Spirit in the life of men: true joy is recognized by its power to inspire love and

gratitude for the Father. Every true joy has the Father as its last word.

St. John Paul II, *General Audience*, June 19, 1991

### **From the Life of Don Bosco**

St. Francis de Sales was fond of saying, “God is the God of joy”. Another way of saying this might be, in “God Himself everything is joy, because everything is gift”. Don Bosco, as a profound Christian educator, made joy “the constitutive element of his [educational] system, inseparable from study, work and piety”, “the fruit par excellence of an authentic practice of Salesian pedagogy”.

Joy is a basic need of life, a desire that is intimately felt especially by the young. For Don Bosco, joy is “the result of a Christian understanding of life ... Because it is a religion of love, salvation, and grace, it follows that Christianity gives rise to joy, elation, confident and positive optimism”. It is precisely for this reason that at any Salesian house, “holiness consists in being joyful”. This is eloquently exemplified by the life of Dominic Savio and in the other biographies written by Don Bosco. “A young person”, says Don Caviglia, “who lives in the grace of God will naturally experience joy”. Don Bosco knew that while all young people,

by virtue of their youth, tend to cheerfulness and need fun and games, only those who live in the grace of God will know true joy.

Don Bosco, obviously, was not the first “to make the connection between happiness and religion”. (...) His profound conviction that there was no conflict between serving God and living a happy life was based on the intense love he nurtured for his young people: because he loved them, he wanted them to be happy now and in eternity, as he used to repeat so often. (...) The fruit and proof of Don Bosco’s pastoral charity is his educational system in which “joy plays an indispensable role”. For Don Bosco, joy is “not only recreation and fun, but an authentic, irreplaceable pedagogical reality”, the “trademark of [his] educational love”.

Juan José Bartolomé, SDB,  
*Note di Pastorale Giovanile*, March 2018

**P** Let us pray.

Lord, grant me sufficient humour  
to live my life in joyful service to others,  
even in the most difficult moments.

Teach me to experience human suffering  
not as a curse,  
but as an opportunity to draw closer to you

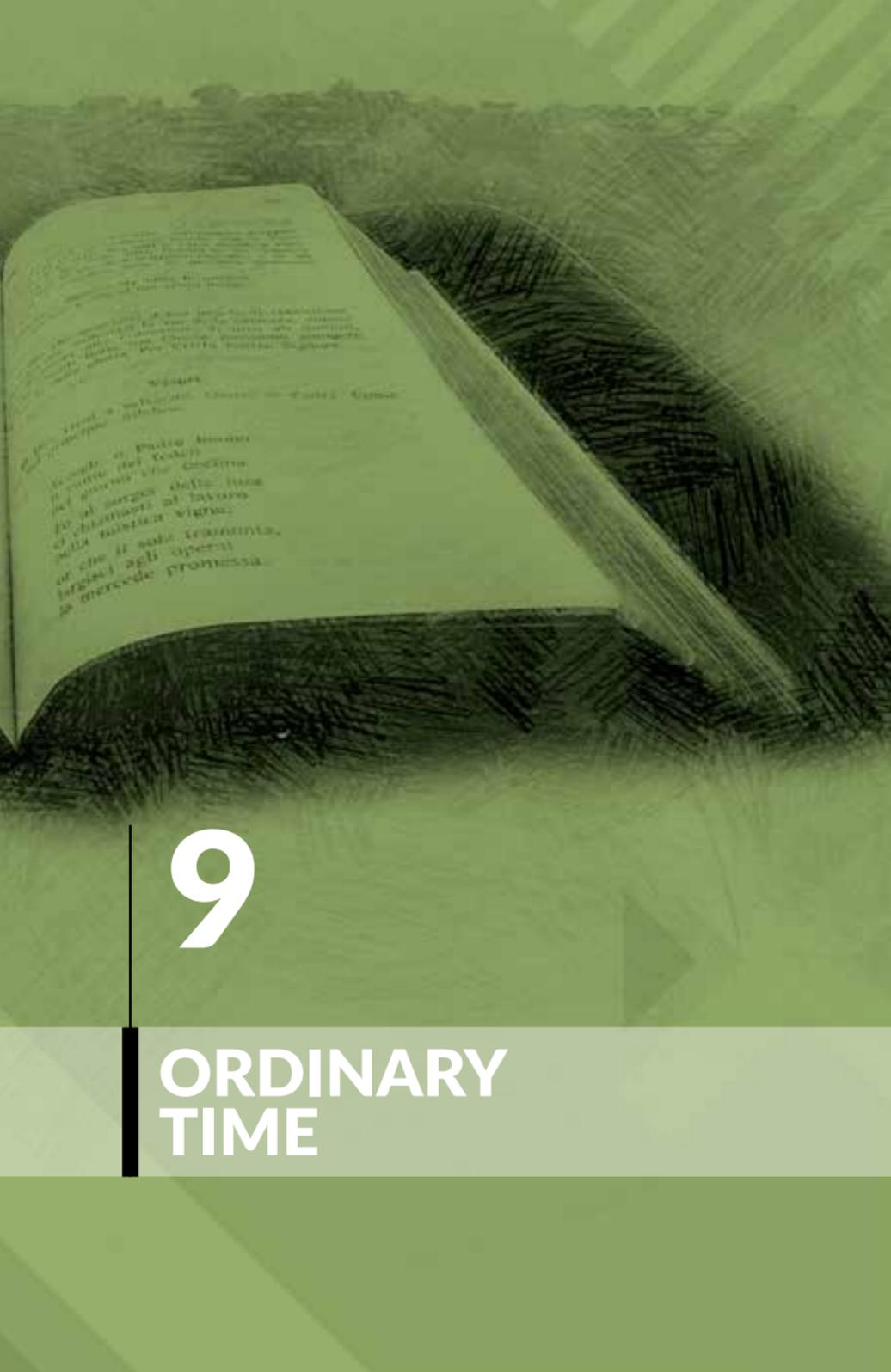
who suffered and died for me.  
In moments of fear and anguish, restore my  
hope  
as I draw inspiration from your temptation  
in the desert,  
your agony in Gethsemane,  
your death on the Cross,  
and finally, your glorious resurrection.  
As I meditate your total self-giving for me  
let my spirit be consoled.

Grant me, Lord, the courage to follow your  
example  
and commend my spirit into the Father's  
hands,  
confident that I will find there the serenity,  
meekness, charity and mercy I seek.  
In all my thoughts, words and actions, may  
your healing balm have its effect.  
Grant me robust faith, living hope and  
ardent charity,  
that I may interpret all things according to  
your truth  
and love all people as you do,  
secure in the knowledge that nothing  
can separate me from your love.

**A Amen.**







# 9

## ORDINARY TIME



## NOVENA IN PREPARATION FOR THE FEAST OF ST JOHN BOSCO

- P** O God, come to my assistance.  
**A** **Lord, make haste to help me.**  
**P** Glory be to the Father and to the  
Son and to the Holy Spirit,  
**A** **As it was in the beginning is now, and  
ever shall be world without end. Amen.**

### FIRST DAY (22 JANUARY)

#### **Theme: Love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament**

St. John Bosco, you had a fervent love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and tireless zeal for spreading true worship of his real presence among us. By your words and example you encouraged the devout celebration of Mass, heartfelt and frequent reception of communion and daily visits with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. Pray for us, that we, your spiritual sons, may follow your example and grow in love for Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. Nourished daily by his body and blood, may we live in holy communion with all those we encounter on earth until we come to the eternal banquet of heaven. Amen

Through your intercession, may God grant us and our lay mission partners the grace we need [*pause*], that we may inspire young people with a deep love for Jesus in the Eucharist.

***Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...***

**Hymn/song in honour of St. John Bosco**

**Final invocation**

**A St. John Bosco and Mary, Help of Christians, pray for us.**

**P** May the blessing of almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, descend upon us and remain with us always.

**A Amen.**

**P** Let us bless the Lord.

**A Amen.**

## **SECOND DAY (23 JANUARY)**

**Theme: Devotion to Mary, Help of Christians**

St. John Bosco, you had a filial love for the Blessed Virgin Mary and invoked her as the Immaculate Help of Christians. Your trust in her as Mother and Guide made you an ardent

promoter of true Marian devotion. Pray for us, that we, your spiritual sons, may be inspired by your example. May we grow in love for her, seek her assistance, and obtain her powerful protection throughout our lives and at the hour of death. Amen.

Through your intercession, may God grant us and our lay mission partners the grace we need [*pause*], that we may imbue young people with love for the Church and for the Holy Father.

***Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...***

*Conclusion as on the First Day.*

### **THIRD DAY (24 JANUARY)**

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**Theme: Fidelity to the Church  
and to the Pope**

St. John Bosco, you nurtured in your spiritual family a filial love for the Church and for the Pope. With courage and conviction, you spoke out courageously and wrote passionately in their defence.

Pray that we, your spiritual sons, may follow your example. May we become ever more faithful to holy mother Church, and witnesses

of genuine love and fidelity towards our Holy Father, the Vicar of Christ on earth.

Through your intercession, may God grant us and our lay collaborators the grace we need [pause], that we may imbue young people with love for the Church and for the Holy Father.

**Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...**

*Conclusion as on the First Day.*

#### **FOURTH DAY (25 JANUARY)**

**Theme: love for the young and their families**

St. John Bosco, we honour you as the father, teacher and friend of youth because of your boundless love, tireless self-sacrifice for the salvation of the young and the poor.

Pray for us, your spiritual sons, that we may be inspired by your example. May we love the young, especially those who are poor, and support their families in raising them to attain their full stature in Christ. May we give ourselves generously in their service, guided by the pastoral charity of the Good Shepherd. Help us to welcome in every young person the very presence of Jesus himself.

Through your intercession, may God grant us and our lay mission partners the grace we need [*pause*], that we may assist, accompany and guide young people to dream God's dreams for the world today.

***Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...***

*Conclusion as on the First Day.*

## **FIFTH DAY (26 JANUARY)**

**Theme: Vocational Perseverance  
for Salesians and Daughters of Mary,  
Help of Christians**

St. John Bosco, you founded the Salesian Society and the Institute of the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians to continue and extend your mission to the young and the poor. In your fatherly love, we ask you to pray for all members of these two religious families. Inspired by your example and imbued with your spirit, may we be faithful to our religious consecration and persevere in the fulfilment of our mission.

Through your intercession, may God grant us the grace we need [*pause*], that we may assist, accompany and guide the young in the Salesian style and spirit that you have entrusted to us.

***Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...***

*Conclusion as on the First Day.*

## **SIXTH DAY (27 JANUARY)**

### **Theme: Salesian Cooperators and the Other Members of the Salesian Family**

St. John Bosco, you founded the Association of Salesian Cooperators, the seed of the Salesian Family throughout the world, to ensure the widest possible participation in your charitable work for young people.

Pray for all the members of the Salesian Family. May they be inspired by your example and united in your spirit. May they share generously and faithfully in the Salesian mission, imbuing their zealous work with educational and pastoral charity.

Through your intercession, may God grant us and all the members of the Salesian family the grace we need [*pause*], that we may collaborate wisely in our shared mission of accompanying and educating young people today.

***Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...***

*Conclusion as on the First Day*

## SEVENTH DAY (28 JANUARY)

### **Theme: Salesian Missionaries**

St John Bosco, in your love and commitment to all the dispersed children of God, you sent your sons and daughters to the furthest ends of the earth with the promise of eternal life, which is to know God and his merciful love through the light of the Gospel.

Pray for all our missionary priests, brothers, sisters and lay volunteers, and pray for us too: that inspired by your example and united in your spirit, all of our corporal and spiritual works of mercy may bring new brothers and sisters to the Body of Christ.

Through your intercession, may God grant us and all Salesian missionaries around the world the grace they need [pause], that we may accompany young people who are not Christian to know and love Christ.

***Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...***

*Conclusion as on the First Day.*

## EIGHTH DAY (29 JANUARY)

### **Theme: Loving and Defending Purity**

St. John Bosco, you gave the virtue of purity a privileged place in your educational and pastoral project, and did everything to nurture a love for purity in the hearts of adults and young people.

Pray for us, your spiritual sons, that we may be inspired by your example. May we protect and promote purity in our hearts, minds, and bodies. May we artisans of a culture of life that effectively defends young people from the pervasiveness of sexual perversion, confusion and violence.

Through your intercession, may God grant us, our lay mission partners, and all those who influence modern culture, the grace we need [*pause*], that we may protect the purity of young people and empower them to love purity as they mature into their full stature in Christ.

***Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...***

*Conclusion as on the First Day.*

## NINTH DAY (30 JANUARY)

### **Theme: Our Families, Friends, and People in Need**

St. John Bosco, you were full of compassion towards all those who suffer from illness, poverty, hunger, injustice and alienation, especially the young and the poor. Pray for all those in need, and also for us, that God's blessings and the protection of Mary, Help of Christians may bring healing, strength and comfort to all.

Pray for our families, and especially for the young, that they may be kept safe from all harm and grow daily in the grace of God. Intercede for us in life and in death, that we may sing God's praises forever in heaven. Amen.

Through your intercession, may God grant us and all our lay mission partners the grace we need [pause], that we may empower young people to love and serve Christ in the least of their brothers and sisters: in their relatives, their friends, and in those who are most in need.

***Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory be...***

*Conclusion as on the First Day.*

## WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR CONSECRATED LIFE

(2 February - Presentation of our Lord)

*Father, You consecrated me to yourself  
on the day of my baptism  
(Const. 24)*

- P** Loving Father, you are our God.
- A** **You are all that our hearts desire.**
- P** Lord Jesus, you are the way,  
the truth and the life.
- A** **You were presented at the temple by  
Mary and Joseph  
and offered to God by Simeon who  
anticipated your coming.  
We ask you now to present us to your  
Father,  
who calls us to follow you more closely  
as consecrated disciples.**
- P** Holy Spirit, you are infinite love.
- A** **Fill our hearts with love, that we may  
live our consecration as an offering  
pleasing to God.**

### ***Penitential Rite***

- L** Lord Jesus, obedient servant, your strength  
is to do the will of the Father who sent you  
and to accomplish his mission, even to

the point of accepting death, and death on a cross. Forgive our intemperance, our lukewarm commitment, our pursuit of personal gratification. Lord, have mercy.

**A Lord, have mercy.**

**L** Lord Jesus, you did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at, but emptied yourself and became poor so that we might become rich. In your mercy, free us from unhealthy attachment to earthly consolations. Keep us sensitive to those who suffer, especially the young and the poor. Christ, have mercy.

**A Christ, have mercy.**

**L** Lord Jesus, you came to reveal the Father's love, that we might have life, and have it to the full. Tear down the walls that hinder our total dedication to the young: negativity, carelessness, indifference, laziness. Empower us with apostolic zeal. Lord, have mercy.

**A Lord, have mercy.**

### **From the Letter of St. Paul to the Romans**

(Rom 12,1-12)

Think of God's mercy, my brothers, and worship him, I beg you, in a way that is worthy

of thinking beings, by offering your living bodies as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to God. Do not model yourselves on the behaviour of the world around you, but let your behaviour change, modelled by your new mind. This is the only way to discover the will of God and know what is good, what it is that God wants, what is the perfect thing to do. In the light of the grace I have received I want to urge each one among you not to exaggerate his real importance. Each of you must judge himself soberly by the standard of the faith God has given him. Just as each of our bodies has several parts and each part has a separate function, so all of us, in union with Christ, form one body, and as parts of it we belong to each other. Our gifts differ according to the grace given us. If your gift is prophecy, then use it as your faith suggests; if administration, then use it for administration; if teaching, then use it for teaching. Let the preachers deliver sermons, the almsgivers give freely, the officials be diligent, and those who do works of mercy do them cheerfully. Do not let your love be a pretence, but sincerely prefer good to evil. Love each other as much as brothers should, and have a profound respect for each other. Work for the Lord with untiring effort and with

great earnestness of spirit. If you have hope, this will make you cheerful. Do not give up if trials come; and keep on praying.

- P** In faith, let us turn to the Father who has called us to follow Christ on the radical path of the evangelical counsels.
- L** God our Father, we ask you:
- A** **Help us to love the evangelical counsels as your gift, and to remain faithful in our consecrated obedience, chastity and poverty.**
- L** Through our rebirth in baptism you consecrated us to your service.
- A** **Strengthened by the Holy Spirit, may we live faithful to the example of Jesus who came among us to fulfil your will and to show us how to be human.**
- L** Your son Jesus became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.
- A** **With the assistance of our Constitutions, of those in the service of authority, and our confreres in community, teach us to discern your will in our lives and to obey it wholeheartedly in a free movement of love.**
- L** Lord, grant us your strength.

- A** **May our obedience always be the conscious expression of a living faith: intelligent, mature, free and responsible.**
- L** Your Son Jesus accepted to become poor to reveal his solidarity with the lowly and to make us rich in his friendship.
- A** **Grant us to be joyful in our poverty, trusting in your divine providence and united with our neediest brothers and sisters in a courageous spirit of gratitude and humility.**
- L** In Nazareth, Jesus served you by rendering humble service to others as a conscientious tradesman.
- A** **Teach us to express our poverty through zealous work and sacrifice, sharing the lot of the poor and standing shoulder to shoulder with those who earn their living by the sweat of their brow.**
- L** Jesus revealed your fatherly heart through his gratuitous love for all people. From us, he took our human misery, and from him, we received eternal life.
- A** **We believe that chastity for the Kingdom of God is not a choice we make ourselves, but a gift we receive from you. Make our consecrated chastity fruitful, a school of**

**human maturity, an expression of total self-giving to others, and a path towards communion.**

- L** Your gift of consecrated chastity is the seed of our spiritual paternity as missionary servants of the young.
- A** **Guided by faith, may we courageously embrace your gift, grow constantly in our pursuit of holiness, and witness authentically to the liberating force of purity.**

*Lighting of individual candles from the Paschal Candle and renewal of religious vows.*

- A** **God my Father,  
you consecrated me to yourself  
on the day of my baptism.  
In response to the love of the Lord Jesus  
your Son,  
who calls me to follow him more closely  
and led by the Holy Spirit,  
who is light and strength  
I renew the total offering of myself to you.**
- I pledge myself to devote all my strength  
to those to whom you will send me,  
especially to young people who are poorer;  
to live in the Salesian Society**

**in communion of spirit and action with my  
brothers,  
and in this way to share  
in the life and mission of the Church.**

**And so, in the presence of my brothers,  
I renew the vow to live obedient, poor  
and chaste,  
according to the way of the Gospel  
set out in the Salesian Constitutions.**

**Father, may your grace,  
the intercession of Mary Help of  
Christians,  
of St. Joseph, of St. Francis de Sales,  
and of St. John Bosco  
together with the assistance of my  
brother Salesians  
keep me faithful day by day. Amen.**

### ***Final Blessing***

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## **AVAILABILITY FOR THE MISSIONS** **(Salesian World Mission Day)**

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*We form a community of the baptized (...)  
signs and bearers of the love of God for the poor*  
*(Const. 2)*

**P** Let us give thanks to Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**A He has made us worthy to proclaim his Gospel.**

**P** Let us praise his mighty name,

**A That we might one day share in the eternal feast in heaven.**

### ***Penitential Rite***

**P** Lord Jesus, our teacher, you have entrusted us with your mission of salvation, commissioning us to be your witnesses to the ends of the earth by reaching out to the young, the stranger, the outcast and those who do not yet know the Father's love, and making them our brother and sister in your name. We acknowledge that at times we have not been the missionaries you empower us to be because our pastoral zeal was dampened by human weakness: our fears and prejudices, our harsh judgments of others, our presumptions, laziness and indifference. We ask your forgiveness.

**L** Lord Jesus, you have done all things well to win the hearts of your brothers and sisters. You overcame fear, rejection and misunderstanding by your fidelity to the will of the Father. Lord, have mercy.

**A Lord, have mercy.**

**L** Christ Jesus, you are meek and humble of heart, never harsh in your judgment of others, always ready to extend your hand in forgiveness and reconciliation to those who have gone astray. Christ, have mercy.

**A Christ, have mercy.**

**L** Lord Jesus, you have redeemed humanity at the price of your own blood, sacrificing everything for the good of others, always ready to help others carry their cross, always present to those in need. Lord, have mercy.

**A Lord, have mercy.**

### ***Prayer***

**P** God our Father,  
you consecrated us to yourself in Baptism  
and have chosen us to be Salesians,  
instruments of your grace and hope among  
the young.

May we be zealous missionary disciples in  
the spirit of Don Bosco,  
attentively listening to your word,  
and tirelessly proclaiming you as the way,  
the truth, and fullness of life.

Through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

## **From the book of the Prophet Ezekiel**

(Ezek 34,11-16)

*God, the True Shepherd*

For the Lord God says this: I am going to look after my flock myself and keep all of it in view. As a shepherd keeps all his flock in view when he stands up in the middle of his scattered sheep, so shall I keep my sheep in view. I shall rescue them from wherever they have been scattered during the mist and darkness. I shall bring them out of the countries where they are; I shall gather them together from foreign countries and bring them back to their own land. I shall pasture them on the mountains of Israel, in the ravines and in every inhabited place in the land. I shall feed them in good pasturage; the high mountains of Israel will be their grazing ground. There they will rest in good grazing ground; they will browse in rich pastures on the mountains of Israel. I myself will pasture my sheep, I myself will show them where to rest - it is the Lord Yahweh who speaks. I shall look for the lost one, bring back the stray, bandage the wounded and make the weak strong. I shall watch over the fat and healthy. I shall be a true shepherd to them.

***Responsorial Psalm (Ps 23)***

**A The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want.**

The Lord is my shepherd;  
there is nothing I shall want.  
Fresh and green are the pastures  
where he gives me repose.  
Near restful waters he leads me,  
to revive my drooping spirit.

He guides me along the right path;  
he is true to his name.  
If I should walk in the valley of darkness  
no evil would I fear.  
You are there with your crook and your staff;  
with these you give me comfort.

You have prepared a banquet for me  
in the sight of my foes.  
My head you have anointed with oil;  
my cup is overflowing.

Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me  
all the days of my life.  
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell.  
for ever and ever.

**Gospel**

**A Reading from the Gospel of Luke** (*Lk 10,1-9*)

After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them out ahead of him, in

pairs, to all the towns and places he himself was to visit. He said to them, "The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers to his harvest. Start off now, but remember, I am sending you out like lambs among wolves. Carry no purse, no haversack, no sandals. Salute no one on the road. Whatever house you go into, let your first words be, "Peace to this house!" And if a man of peace lives there, your peace will go and rest on him; if not, it will come back to you. Stay in the same house, taking what food and drink they have to offer, for the labourer deserves his wages; do not move from house to house. Whenever you go into a town where they make you welcome, eat what is set before you. Cure those in it who are sick, and say, "The kingdom of God is very near to you."

**From a letter from Don Bosco to Don Lasagna** (*BM XVII, 568*)

My dear Fr. Lasagna,  
I have been wanting to write to you for several months now, but as my hands have become old and weary I kept putting off this pleasure. But now it seems the time is right for me to share with you some thoughts that I send to you as a written testament of one who has always loved you and continues to do so.

You have confirmed for me what I already believed was the Lord's will for the Catholic Missions that have been entrusted to you. Your intuition is correct. Mary will continue to be your faithful guide. You will certainly have to face difficulties and even malice on the part of the world, but don't be discouraged. Mary will protect you. We want souls and nothing else. Never get tired of reminding our brothers of this. O Lord, we are prepared to endure all sorts of crosses and thorns and persecutions, if we can save souls and save our own at the same time.

We are quickly approaching the annual retreat season in America. Insist on the charity and sweetness of Saint Francis of Sales that we must imitate: on the exact observance of our rules, on the constant reading of the Chapter deliberations, on carefully meditating the particular regulations of the houses. Believe me, dear Fr. Lasagna, I too have had to deal with confreres who completely ignore our precious deliberations, and others who have never read those parts of the rules or disciplines that concern the duties entrusted to them.

Another plague that is menacing our communities is the forgetfulness or, more

specifically, the disregard for the rubrics of the Breviary and of the Roman Missal. I am convinced that the spiritual exercises will achieve their goal if they manage to help every Salesian pray the Mass and the Breviary with an exact observance of the rubrics.

In some other letters that I have managed to send in these days, I have insisted upon the importance of nurturing vocations for both Salesians and the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians.

Study, make plans, spare no costs, do whatever it takes to get more priestly vocations for the Church, especially for the Missions. When you can speak to our sisters or to our brothers, please assure that I have received their letters and greetings with much delight, and that it brought profound consolation to my heart to know that they have been keeping me in their prayers.

May Mary bless and protect our Congregation. Heaven's help will never fail us: our collaborators are increasing, enthusiasm seems to be growing, material means may not be abundant, they are certainly enough.

God bless you, dear Fr. Lasagna, and all our sons and daughters, religious and students.

May Mary continue to guide us all safely on the path to heaven.

My health is faltering a little, but I keep on going the best I can. God keep us all in his holy grace.

Your most affectionate friend,  
Fr. John Bosco,  
Turin, 30 September 1885

*A symbolic gesture is offered as a sign of renewed commitment to the mission (e.g. the distribution of a crucifix)*

### **Prayer**

- P** Lord Jesus, you have called us through religious consecration to follow you more closely and to share in your mission of salvation.
- A** **Send us your Spirit, that we may willingly leave everything in response to your call and dedicate ourselves to you fully in the service of the Kingdom.**
- P** You accomplished your mission of salvation through the suffering you endured.
- A** **Grant us fortitude and courage when we experience pain and suffering in our ministry; help us to bear them with serenity, as a sign of our trust in you.**

- P** Lord Jesus, you fulfilled your mission by conforming yourself perfectly to the will of the Father.
- A** **Send us your Spirit of love to unite us more intimately with the Father, so that in times of trial we may draw strength, courage and perseverance from the depths of his heart.**
- P** Lord Jesus, you call us to build up your Church through our mission to the young.
- A** **May our apostolic service help them to grow in faith, hope and love, and inspire them to make their unique contribution to the vitality of the Church and the Christian transformation of the world.**
- P** Let us pray. Raise us up, O Lord, and strengthen us, that we may be faithful witnesses and courageous stewards of the mission you have entrusted to us. Through Christ our Lord.
- A** **Amen.**

## NOVENA IN HONOUR OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS

### FIRST DAY (15 MAY): MARY, MOTHER AND HELP OF THE CHURCH

#### **Introductory rite**

- P** In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- A Amen.**
- P** May almighty God, who made Mary the Virgin mother, model and help of the Church, be with you.
- A And with your spirit.**
- P** Mary's role in the history of salvation and all the privileges that God has granted her are connected to the mystery of her motherhood: Mother of the Redeemer and Mother of all the redeemed. St. Paul VI, at the end of the third session of the Second Vatican Council, solemnly proclaimed her "Mother of the Church". Precisely because she is Mother, Mary is the Help of the Church, of the Help of Pastors and the Help of all Christians. Therefore, the Blessed Virgin is invoked by the Church "under the titles of Advocate, Auxiliatrix, Adjutrix, and Mediatrix" (LG 62).

Mary found in Don Bosco a zealous advocate of her role as helper. How often he reminded his children that “the Madonna wishes us to honour Her under the title of Mary, Help of Christians” (BM VII, 197). As we strive to become more like the Blessed Virgin in her capacity for listening and prayer, let us entrust ourselves with greater confidence to her motherly assistance.

- P** Lord, our God, you have given us the Blessed Virgin Mary as Mother of the Church and powerful Help of Christians. As our knowledge of her deepens, grant that we may become more aware of her loving initiative in our lives. You live and reign for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

### **Liturgy of the Word**

*The presider may introduce the scripture reading with these or similar words.*

- P** In the Old Testament, God raised up women of great stature, through whom he wanted to reveal his goodness and his power to save his people. In these women the Church sees “types” or prefigurations of the Blessed Virgin Mary and her unique mission in salvation history. In this light, we consider Judith and her victory over Holofernes.

## ***First reading***

### **A reading from the Book of Judith**

(Jud 13,11-15.17-20)

From a distance, Judith shouted to the guards on the gates, 'Open the gate! Open! For the Lord our God is with us still, displaying his strength in Israel and his might against our enemies, as he has today!' Hearing her voice, the townsmen hurried down to the town gate and summoned the elders. Everyone, great and small, came running down, since her arrival was unexpected. They threw the gate open, welcomed the women, lit a fire to see by and crowded round them. Then Judith raised her voice and said, 'Praise God! Praise him! Praise the God who has not withdrawn his mercy from the House of Israel, but has shattered our enemies by my hand tonight!' She pulled the head out of the bag and held it for them to see. 'This is the head of Holofernes, general-in-chief of the Assyrian army; here is the canopy under which he lay drunk! The Lord has struck him down by the hand of a woman!' Overcome with emotion, the people all fell on their knees and worshipped God, exclaiming as one man, 'Blessings on you, O our God, for confounding your people's enemies today!' Uzziah then said

to Judith: 'May you be blessed, my daughter, by God Most High, beyond all women on earth; and may the Lord God be blessed, the Creator of heaven and earth, by whose guidance you cut off the head of the leader of our enemies. The trust you have shown shall not pass from the memories of men, but shall ever remind them of the power of God. God grant you to be always held in honour, and rewarded with blessings, since you did not consider your own life when our nation was brought to its knees, but warded off our ruin, walking undeterred before our God.' All the people answered, 'Amen! Amen!'

### ***Second Reading***

**From the Canticle of Judith** (Jud 16,1-2a.13-15)

**A You are the glory of Jerusalem, the honour of our people.**

Praise my God with the tambourine,  
sing to the Lord with the cymbal,  
let psalm and canticle mingle for him,  
his name, invoke it!

For the Lord is a God who shatters war;  
he has pitched his camp in the middle of  
his people  
to deliver me from the hands  
of my enemies.

'I will sing a new song to my God.  
Lord, you are great, you are glorious,  
wonderfully strong, unconquerable.

May your whole creation serve you!  
For you spoke and things came into being,  
you sent your breath and they were put  
together,  
and no one can resist your voice.

Should mountains topple  
to mingle with the waves,  
should rocks melt like wax before your face,  
to those who fear you,  
you will show mercy'.

### ***Third Reading***

**P** Faithful to the example of Don Bosco, our Salesian tradition has always promoted devotion to the Virgin Mary and sought to deepen our appreciation of her role as Mother and Help of the Church and of Christians. What follows are some reflections from the homily of Fr Ángel Fernández Artime for the Solemnity of Pentecost, prior to the feast of Mary Help of Christians in Turin-Valdocco, in the context of the 2015 bicentenary of Don Bosco's birth.

**R1** Dear young people, dear everyone, do you

want to live in the Spirit of Jesus? Then stay close to Mary at all times, and you will become true missionary disciples, moved by the Spirit. I repeat, Mary is the best guarantee we have of living intimately in the Spirit of God! Mary is the young virgin of the Annunciation and the virgin mother who was with the apostles at Pentecost. She was the protagonist in these two pivotal moments in the history of humanity and of all creation. The Annunciation and Pentecost are the two exceptional milestones without which we cannot explain human history. They are two very solemn moments where the true central protagonist is the Spirit of God in person, and with Him, the fullness of the Triune God. These two moments highlight the unique bond between the Holy Spirit and Mary, the Mother of Jesus.

**R2** In the first event, the Annunciation, Mary participates in an unexpected way, in a surprising, “creative” action of the Spirit. In 1874, a contemporary of Don Bosco, Metropolitan Philaret, of Moscow, expressed in a sermon for the Feast of the Annunciation that: “In the days of the creation of the world, when God

pronounced his life-giving and almighty 'Let there be', the word of the Creator introduced creatures into the world. But on that unprecedented day in the history of the world, when Mary pronounced her short and obedient 'Let it be', something so unexpected happened that I barely have the courage to say it: the word of a creature introduced the Creator into the world".

**R3** Indeed, he "barely" [had] the courage to say "what happened because Mary's response gave a surprisingly new opening for the Spirit to accomplish the will of the Father, namely, that God's eternal Son was able to become man. Without Mary's availability to the action of the Spirit, our history today would not be the history marked by the presence of the Son, Jesus, the Risen Lord who gives meaning to our life and whom we want to follow. Here, a young woman, a girl, let herself not only be guided by the Spirit, but allowed herself to be fully inhabited by him. In so doing, she has radically changed the history of the world. She became a collaborator with the Spirit and remained so for her entire life.

**R1** You see, dearest young people, how powerful it can be to say "Yes" to God... "Let it be done" according to your will. You are

courageous by nature, because courage is proper to young people and to those who, over the years, have preserved their youthfulness deep in their hearts. Do not be afraid to say “Yes” to the Lord of Life and to become collaborators, you too, with the Spirit of the Lord. If you do, you will see that your life, although not without difficulties, will be a life worth living.

**R2** The second event in which Mary is present in a significant way is Pentecost (...). Let us allow her to take our hands. Let us allow her to lead us into the mystery of intimate and effective prayer. Let us allow her to help us.

Once, in a *Regina Caeli* message, Pope Benedict XVI expressed with great conviction: “In any place where Christians gather in prayer with Mary, the Lord gives his Spirit”. My dearest friends, there are many places in our world today where dark storm clouds loom on the horizon, where the future seems bleak, and families and communities are tall on betrayals and short on smiles. In our world today, the possibility of living in harmony with others and enjoying tenderness and love is no more obvious than it was in ages

past. But we can be like Mary, that young woman, that girl who was able to change the world and who, once she became a collaborator of the Spirit, helped other disciples to become collaborators as well. This is why Mary is Mother and Teacher.

**R3** Don Bosco understood this very well. Mamma Margaret was able to show by her example and her simple words how Our Lady helps us to be open to the Spirit who transforms us into courageous missionary disciples of Jesus, the Lord.  
Ángel Fernández Arttime, Pentecost Homily,  
2015

## **Magnificat**

### **Closing prayer**

**P** Let us pray.  
Almighty God, Father of Mercy, from the cross, Jesus gave us his Mother to be our mother as well. May your Church, supported by the maternal love of the Blessed Virgin Mary, rejoice in the holy lives of her children and unite all people in your family of faith. Through Christ our Lord.

**A** **Amen.**

## SECOND DAY (16 MAY): THE BLESSED VIRGIN, GUIDE AND HELPER OF THE APOSTLES AND OF THE YOUNG

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### Hymn

### Introductory rites

- P** In the name of the Father...  
The Lord, who “with the motherly intervention of Mary”, raised up St. John Bosco for the salvation of youth, be with you.
- A** **And with your spirit.**
- P** Don Bosco assures us that the Virgin Mary, Help of Christians imparts a special blessing on those who take care of youth (cf. BM XVI,186). Just as Jesus showed signs of particular affection and tenderness for the young, so too is Mary’s maternal kindness focused on them. For this reason, when the Lord first revealed to John Bosco his unique call for the salvation of the young, in the prophetic dream which he had at nine years of age, he assured John that: “I will give you the Teacher”; and Mary, taking John kindly by the hand, referred to all the children in that dream as “my own children”.

Like Don Bosco, we too are called by the Lord

and guided by Mary's maternal intervention to walk "side by side with the young to lead them to the Risen Lord". In so doing, we feel that "the Virgin Mary is present in the process as a mother" (Const. 34). As she enlightened Don Bosco, she herself also enlightens us on the beauty and importance of this mission, and supports our efforts to bring it forward.

**P Let us pray.**

God of boundless providence, you entrusted Don Bosco and his educational mission to the motherly care and powerful help of your Mother. May our hearts and minds be open to her teachings and our lives be docile to her guidance as Mother and Teacher. You live and reign for ever and ever.

**A Amen.**

## **Liturgy of the Word**

### ***First Reading***

**P** Mary, seat of wisdom, helper of educators and maternal support of the young, nurture in your children, whom God entrusts to us, a profound desire for divine Wisdom as their trustworthy guide on their journey of life.

### **A Reading from the Book of Sirach**

(Sir 51,13-17.20.23-26)

When I was still a youth, before I went  
travelling,  
in my prayers I asked outright for wisdom.  
Outside the sanctuary I would pray for her,  
and to the last I will continue to seek her.  
From her blossoming to the ripening of her  
grape  
my heart has taken its delight in her.  
My foot has pursued a straight path,  
I have been following her steps  
ever since my youth.  
By bowing my ear a little I have received her,  
and have found much instruction.  
Thanks to her I have advanced;  
the glory be to him who has given me wisdom!  
I have directed my soul towards her,  
and in purity have found her;  
having my heart fixed on her from the outset,  
I shall never be deserted;  
Come close to me, you uninstructed,  
take your place in my school.  
Why complain about lacking these things  
when your souls are so thirsty for them?  
I have opened my mouth and spoken:  
'Buy her without money,  
put your necks under her yoke,  
and let your souls receive instruction;  
she is not far to seek.

## Hymn to Mary

### ***Second Reading***

**P** In our call to Salesian life, we recognize the motherly intervention of Mary. She teaches us to be apostles to the young. Like Don Bosco, we feel supported and encouraged by her motherly presence as we rely on her help to fulfil this delicate mission. “We entrust ourselves to her ... that we may become witnesses to the young of her Son’s boundless love” (Const. 8).

**R1** I would like to comment on the biblical passage of the wedding feast at Cana, in the light of the interpretation that Don Bosco offers in his booklet, “*The Wonders of the Mother of God*”. This is the most beautiful text written by Don Bosco on Mary Help of Christians and Mother of the Church. In it he writes:

“At the wedding at Cana, Mary manifests her zeal and her power of intercession with her son Jesus. *Vinum not habent*: Mary prays, pleads and intercedes as a tender and merciful Mother. One of the characteristics of mercy is to make the needs of others our own. Concern and

diligence in foreseeing and providing the appropriate help at the right moment is both an expression and fruit of the intimate union of the Mother with her Son in the work of salvation. Mary shines forth as a splendid example of faith, a teacher of trust, love and obedience, and an example of humility, promptness and prudence.”

**R2** *Mary prays, begs and intercedes.* These three verbs describe Mary’s maternal mediation. Mary is the woman who intercedes with the power of love. The power of prayer must sustain us on our journey, in our relationships, in the choices we make, and in the hardships and trials of family life. The family must not deprive itself of the protection of prayer. When the wine of joy, harmony, and peace runs short, prayer must intensify. Many people and many families are marked by loneliness, abandonment and often resentment, because they have run short of the wine of joy that enhances the flavour to life. The weakness and fragility of the family today is often due to the absence of prayer and the spiritual emptiness that follows. “The family that prays together, stays together,” said Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta.

**R3** Mary is a tender and merciful Mother who confirms the truth of God's love from generation to generation. It is precisely in the daily life of our families, and in marital, parental and fraternal relationships, that the merciful love of God must be revealed. Our relationships are often wounded, unhealthy and resentful. They need to experience a love that welcomes, a love that offers and seeks forgiveness, a love that is able to rebuild relationships and open them and extend them to new horizons.

One of the qualities of mercy is to make the needs of others our own. This insight helps us to understand that true love, the love that heals, comes from the ability to be moved by the needs of the other. This is compassion: taking to heart and doing something about the tears, the mistakes, the needs of a husband, wife, son, brother, sister, grandparent or relative... healing and renewing the relationships.

**R1** *Concern and diligence in foreseeing and providing*: in this expression we have a wonderful synthesis of our preventive system which Don Bosco learned through the inspiration and guidance of Mary Help of Christians and at the school of Mamma

Margaret. Led by Mary Help of Christians, we too learn the art of an attentive, intuitive love, like that of a mother, a woman who can foresee and provide discreetly and at the right time. What a lesson for family life! It is the practice of this attentive, prompt and diligent love that builds and strengthens the network of emotional relationships in the family, in the daily exercise of a charity that makes visible the foreseeing and provident love of God. The light it radiates is the light of mercy and salvation for the whole world, the light of truth for every person, for individual families, and for the universal human family. This light encourages us to bring human warmth to those family situations where, for various reasons, peace, harmony and forgiveness are absent. Practical solidarity is also needed, especially towards families who are experiencing difficult situations of illness, unemployment, discrimination, or emigration.

**R2** *Mary as a splendid example of faith:* Mary was present at a wedding feast at the beginning of Jesus' public life. His presence at the beginning of a new family reminds us that Jesus should always have first

place at the heart of the family. When parents and children breathe together this atmosphere of faith, they have an energy that allows them to face even the most difficult trials. Faith is a lamp that shines. It has to be transmitted as a precious heritage from generation to generation through the testimony of a life inspired by authentic gospel values.

**R3** *Teacher of trust, love and obedience:* Once again Mary is the teacher at whose school we can learn wisdom, as young John was told in his dream at nine years of age. She is the teacher of trust, love and obedience as she demonstrated in the miracle of the wedding at Cana. She trusted her Son and turned to him to plead for what was needed. She showed her love for the young couple. She displayed obedience in faith to God's will and she taught the servants to obey, telling them to do whatever Jesus told them. Relationships within the family grow where there is trust, where love given and received becomes the lifeblood of the family, and where there is obedience through listening, availability and sharing the journey together.

**R1** *Mary is an example of humility, promptness and prudence.* Humility is the foundation of the spiritual life. It is like the foundation of a house. Promptness allows of no delay in responding to the call of God and to the inspirations of the Spirit. It is like the walls of the house that define the living space. Prudence means ordering everything towards goodness. It is like the roof of the house that complete and protects the dwelling place.

(...) Today we ask Mary to be the Help of the domestic church that is the family, defending it from the many that seek to destroy it, and freeing it from all that is contrary to God's designs.

Ángel Fernández Artime, VII International ADMA Congress homily, Turin, 2015

### **Invocation of Mary Help of Christians**

- P** United with Don Bosco, who said:  
“Mary has always protected us; our trust in her will never fail”, let us make our filial prayer to the Virgin.
- A** **Hear us, Mary, and intercede for us.**
- L** O Virgin, Help of Christians, you loved as your own children all the young people

whom you entrusted to Don Bosco's care. Renew in us what you inspired in him: the joy of participating in your gift of predilection for the young.

- L** O Virgin, Help of Christians, the beauty and urgency of our mission to the young is fraught with challenges and difficulties. Support and comfort those who dedicate their lives to the education and salvation of the young.
- L** O Virgin, Help of Christians, you showed Don Bosco how to attract the young and raise up his first collaborators from among the boys he served. Teach us to form the young as apostles to their peers, and to attract many zealous vocations from among those we serve.
- L** O Virgin, Help of Christians, Don Bosco knew that "young people are the delight of Jesus and Mary". Protect all young people from harm. Guide them to Jesus who is alive and wants to live in them, the hope of society and of the Church.
- P** Let us pray.  
Mary Help of Christians, Mother of the Church, inspiration and guide of the

Salesian Family, you perceive with a mother's heart the inner needs of every confrere; you enliven and preserve his apostolic consecration; you know and guide his pastoral projects; you understand his weaknesses, limitations and sufferings; you love each young person entrusted to his care as a privileged gift to be cherished. Holy Virgin, Mother of God, powerful help of the Pope, the Bishops and all who labour in the Lord's vineyard, watch over the Society of Saint Francis of Sales. Under your benevolent gaze, keep us humble and zealous for souls. Renew our filial trust in you. Teach us, as you taught Don Bosco, to love and imitate your virtues.

**A Amen.**

## **Closing hymn**

**THIRD DAY (17 MAY):  
MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS AND  
THE SALESIAN CONGREGATION**

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## **Hymn**

## **Introductory rites**

**P** In the name of the Father...  
The joy of the Lord, who gave us

Mary as our caring mother and powerful help, be with you.

**A And with your spirit.**

- P** Mary is the Mother and Help of the Church. She has a special love for the young, “the most delicate and most precious part of human society” (Const. 1). Through her motherly intercession, she raised up Don Bosco and the Salesian Congregation for their salvation. Don Bosco was convinced of this: “We owe everything to Mary” (BM XVII, 471). The faith, devotion and trust of Don Bosco for the Help of Christians are the faith, devotion and trust of every Salesian. We “believe that Mary is present among us and continues her mission as Mother of the Church and Help of Christians” (Const. 8). We ask her to help us be more aware of her presence and to put more trust in her guidance. We are certain that “the Congregation was born and developed through the intervention of Mary, and it will be renewed only to the extent that we restore Mary to the status she deserves in our charism” (GC21, 589).
- P** Immaculate Virgin, Help of Christians, through your help and your guidance,

may we open our hearts and minds to the illumination of the Spirit, and so become witnesses and instruments of God's love for young people.

**A Amen.**

## **Liturgy of the Word**

### ***First Reading***

**P** Our souls rejoice in the Lord for entrusting Mary with an active maternal presence in his saving plan for his people. The Church boldly celebrates this presence through the liturgy by proposing Masses in honour of Mary and proclaiming scripture passages that speak of the wisdom of God. The Blessed Virgin in the midst of the People of God is both the "Seat of Wisdom" and an instrument of God's wisdom actively at work in his people.

**A Reading from the Book of Sirach** (Sir 24,1.3-4.8-12.19-21)

Wisdom speaks her own praises,  
in the midst of her people she glories in  
herself.

'I came forth from the mouth of the Most High,  
and I covered the earth like mist.

I had my tent in the heights,

and my throne in a pillar of cloud'.

Then the creator of all things instructed me,  
and he who created me fixed a place for my  
tent.

He said, "Pitch your tent in Jacob, make Israel  
your inheritance".

From eternity, in the beginning, he created me,  
and for eternity I shall remain.

I ministered before him in the holy tabernacle,  
and thus was I established on Zion.

In the beloved city he has given me rest,  
and in Jerusalem I wield my authority.

I have taken root in a privileged people,  
in the Lord's property, in his inheritance.

Approach me, you who desire me,  
and take your fill of my fruits,

for memories of me are sweeter than honey,  
inheriting me is sweeter than the honeycomb.

They who eat me will hunger for more,  
they who drink me will thirst for more.

**Hymn or Psalm** (Jud 13:18bc.19-20)

**A You are the great pride of our nation**

'May you be blessed, my daughter, by God  
Most High,

beyond all women on earth;

and may the Lord God be blessed,  
the Creator of heaven and earth.

The trust you have shown shall not pass from the memories of men,  
but shall ever remind them of the power of God.

God grant you to be always held in honour,  
and rewarded with blessings’.

### ***Second Reading***

- P** Devotion to Mary Help of Christians, in the experience and teachings of Don Bosco, is not just an accessory to Salesian spirituality, but is rather, as affirmed by Fr Egidio Viganò, the seventh successor of Don Bosco, “an essential element of our charism”.
- R1** Devotion to Mary as Helper is an integral element of the “Salesian phenomenon” in the Church, because it becomes a vital part of its totality. It would make no sense, indeed it would be detrimental, to try to separate our spirituality from devotion to Mary Help of Christians, just as it would be absurd to try to isolate Don Bosco from Our Lady. Therefore, devotion to the Help of Christians is an essential element of our Charism; it permeates every recognizable feature and vitalizes its components.

**R2** Without a healthy and vital Marian dimension, our spirituality would lose its vigour and fruitfulness; conversely, giving appropriate attention to a profound Marian vitality will reinvigorate the whole Salesian vocation.

This becomes obvious if we recognize how our devotion to the Help of Christians has a very intimate, mutually life-giving connection with both the Salesian “mission” and the “spirit” proper to our Charism.

**R3** First of all, the intimate link between Mary, the Helper and the Salesian mission: it is Mary, the “Shepherdess” of dreams, who designates the particular parameters of the mission and also identifies those to whom she will entrust it, assigning to us the field of “youth ministry”; it is her characteristic as Help of Christians that opens the Salesian mission to the great horizons of today’s socio-religious challenges, and expresses a clear choice in favour of service to the universal Church including close collaboration with her Bishops; it is her maternal goodness that inspires our pastoral criteria and teaches us a method of supporting those whom we serve.

**R1** Next, we consider the Helper's profound relationship with the Salesian spirit: our spirituality finds its inspiration and model in Mary, embraced as Help of Christians. It is centred on "pastoral charity", inspired by the motherly love of the Madonna and reflected in the maternal love of the Church, which implies an attentive listening to the initiative of God, a total adherence to Christ and total availability to his ways; a spirit imbued with hope (certain that "help" from on High will never fail), an unshakeable inner disposition of optimism in the natural and supernatural resources of man; a spirit of apostolic fruitfulness enlivened by zeal for the Church; a spirit of industrious initiative and adaptability appropriate to the changing vicissitudes of our times; a family spirit characterized by straightforward relationships, goodness and uncomplicated attitudes that come from a sincere heart; a spirit of magnanimity (as in the "Magnificat") which has the humble boldness to do all the good that can be done, even when it seems reckless, letting oneself be guided by the courage of faith and common sense, while steering clear of any extremism or perfectionism ...

**R2** In Don Bosco's experience, devotion to the Help of Christians became increasingly explicit as his vocation matured. It was at the same time both the launching pad for his vast apostolic project and the point of arrival after a life-long journey of growth. So too for us. Devotion to Mary as Help of Christians constitutes the concrete synthesis of the various components of our Salesian spirituality, and the vital source of its dynamism and fruitfulness.

Egidio Viganò, *AGC* 289, pp. 28-30

### **Invoking Mary's intercession**

- P** Mary was called by God, formed by His Spirit, and accompanied by Joseph and Jesus for one singular purpose: that she might grow in faith and remain committed to God's plan for her. Precisely because she remained faithful to Jesus, even at the foot of the cross, Jesus in his last breath gave her to us as our mother.
- A** **Mary, Mother and Teacher of every disciple of your Son, we turn to you and contemplate you as the first consecrated person who responded to the Father's call with an undivided heart and an unconditional surrender. Aware**

**that only God makes possible what is humanly impossible, you allowed yourself to be inhabited and formed by the Holy Spirit to conceive the Son of God within your being.**

**P** You lived to the full your unique mission as Mother of the Son of God. You gave Jesus flesh and brought him to the light of day. With Joseph, you educated him in the ways of truth. Under your care, Jesus grew in wisdom, age and grace before God and all people. As a true mother you passed on to your Son the deepest convictions and values that guided your own journey of faith: continuously seeking the will of God; joyfully accepting God's will even when you could not understand it; pondering God's action in your life and treasuring it in your heart; recognizing and responding promptly to those in need.

**A** **It is no surprise, then, to see your example reflected in your Son. Jesus withdrew to the mountains to spend nights in prayer, in communion with the Father. Through this supreme expression of faith in action, your Son aligned himself fully with the Father's will for**

him, making this his only program of life. *Son though he was, Jesus learned obedience through what he suffered; and having been made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him.* For this purpose, Jesus had no better occupation, no higher concern, no other food than to do the Father's will. From you he learned how to live his God-given vocation in responsible service to others: *the Son of man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.*

- P** Mary, our Help, you lived your life in the fullness of charity. You reflect every Gospel virtue and renew every charism of consecrated life. Support us in our daily commitment as consecrated disciples of your Son, that we may give shining testimony to his divine love, and so, like you, we may fulfil St. Paul's exhortation to "lead a life worthy of the calling to which we have been called."
- A** **Mary, you were given to Don Bosco as mother and teacher. From the first dream that gave meaning to his life, you formed in him the heart of a father and educator,**

**capable of total dedication to the mission that you would entrust to him. Be our constant guide, too. Fill our hearts with passion for God and for the young. We entrust ourselves to you, our Mother and our Teacher. From you we learn to be children of God and disciples of your Son. Amen.**

Pascual Chávez, *AGC* 416, pp. 53-54

## **Closing rite**

### **Blessing of Mary, Help of Christians**

**P** Our help is in the name of the Lord,

**A** **Who made heaven and earth.**

**Hail Mary...**

We fly to your Patronage, O holy Mother of God; despise not our petitions in our necessities, but deliver us always from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

**P** Mary Help of Christians,

**A** **Pray for us.**

**P** O Lord, hear my prayer.

**A** **And let my cry come unto you.**

**P** The Lord be with you.

**A** **And with your spirit.**

**P** Let us pray. Almighty and everlasting God, who by the cooperation of the Holy Spirit did prepare the body and soul of the glorious Virgin Mother Mary to become a worthy dwelling for your Son, grant that as we rejoice in her commemoration, we may, by her loving intercession, be delivered from present evils and from everlasting death. Through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

**P** May the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, descend on you and remain with you forever.

**A Amen.**

## **FOURTH DAY (18 MAY): MARY, MOTHER OF MERCY**

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### **Hymn**

#### **Introductory rites**

**P** In the name of the Father...  
May the Lord of grace and peace,  
who, in the fullness of time sent us  
his Son to be born of the Virgin Mary  
by the Holy Spirit, be with you.

**A And with your spirit.**

**P** Let us pray.

Lord our God, you made the Virgin Mary the model for those who seek to welcome your Word and live it day by day. Open our hearts to the beatitude of listening. Through the power of the Spirit, make us, like Mary, dwelling places in whom your living Word abides and bears fruit. Through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

## **Liturgy of the Word**

### ***First Reading***

#### **A reading from the Acts of the Apostles**

(Acts 1,12-14)

*They were devoted to prayer with Mary*

So from the Mount of Olives, as it is called, they went back to Jerusalem, a short distance away, no more than a sabbath walk; and when they reached the city they went to the upper room where they were staying; there were Peter and John, James and Andrew, Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew, James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Jude son of James. All these joined in continuous prayer, together with several women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

### **Hymn or Psalm**

## **Ps 103 (1-2.3-4.6.8.13-17)**

### **A The Lord's kindness is everlasting**

My soul, give thanks to the Lord  
all my being, bless his holy name.

My soul, give thanks to the Lord  
and never forget all his blessings.

It is he who forgives all your guilt,  
who heals every one of your ills,  
who redeems your life from the grave,  
who crowns you with love and compassion.

The Lord does deeds of justice,  
gives judgment for all who are oppressed.  
The Lord is compassion and love,  
slow to anger and rich in mercy.

As a father has compassion on his sons,  
the Lord has pity on those who fear him;  
for he knows of what we are made,  
he remembers that we are dust.

As for man, his days are like grass;  
he flowers like the flower of the field;  
the wind blows and he is gone  
and his place never sees him again.

But the love of the Lord is everlasting  
upon those who hold him in fear;  
his justice reaches out to children's children.

## ***Second Reading***

Mary is Mother of Mercy because her Son, Jesus Christ, was sent by the Father as the revelation of God's mercy (cf. Jn 3,16-18). Christ came not to condemn but to show mercy and forgiveness (cf. Mt 9,13). The greatest mercy of all is that he is present in our midst, calling us to meet him and to confess with Peter that he is "the Son of the living God" (Mt 16,16). No human sin can erase the mercy of God, or prevent him from unleashing all his triumphant power, whenever we only call upon him. Indeed, sin itself makes even more radiant the love of the Father who, in order to ransom a slave, sacrificed his Son: his mercy towards us is Redemption. This mercy reaches its fullness in the gift of the Spirit who bestows new life and demands that it be lived. No matter how many or how great the obstacles which are put in his way by human frailty and sin, the Spirit, who renews the face of the earth (cf. Ps 104,30), makes possible the miracle of the perfect accomplishment of the good.

This renewal, which bestows the ability to do what is good, noble, beautiful, pleasing to God and in conformity with his will, is in some way the flowering of the gift of mercy, which offers

liberation from the slavery of evil and gives the strength to sin no more. Through the gift of new life, Jesus makes us sharers in his love and leads us to the Father in the Spirit.

Such is the consoling certainty of Christian faith, the source of its profound humanity and extraordinary simplicity. At times, in the discussions about new and complex moral problems, it can seem that Christian morality is in itself too demanding, difficult to understand and almost impossible to practice. None of this is true, since Christian morality consists, in the simplicity of the Gospel, in following Jesus Christ, in abandoning oneself to him, in letting oneself be transformed by his grace and renewed by his mercy, which are gifts that come to us in the living communion of his Church. Saint Augustine reminds us that “he who would live has a place to live, and has everything needed to live. Let him draw near, let him believe, let him become part of the body, that he may have life. Let him not shrink from the unity of the members”. By the light of the Holy Spirit, the living essence of Christian morality can be understood by everyone, even the least learned, but particularly those who are able to preserve an “undivided heart” (Ps 86,11). On the other hand, this evangelical simplicity

does not exempt one from facing reality in its complexity; rather it can lead to a more genuine understanding of reality, inasmuch as following Christ will gradually bring out the distinctive character of authentic Christian morality, while providing the vital energy needed to carry it out. It is the task of the Church's Magisterium to see that the dynamic process of following Christ develops in an organic manner, without falsifying or obscuring its moral demands, with all of their consequences. The one who loves Christ keeps his commandments (cf. Jn 14,15).

Mary is also Mother of Mercy because it is to her that Jesus entrusts his Church and all humanity. At the foot of the Cross, when she accepts John as her son, when she asks, together with Christ, forgiveness from the Father for those who do not know what they do (cf. Lk 23,34), Mary experiences, in perfect docility to the Spirit, the richness and the universality of God's love, which opens her heart and enables it to embrace the entire human race. Thus, Mary becomes Mother of each and every one of us, the Mother who obtains for us divine mercy.

Mary is the radiant sign and inviting model of the moral life. As Saint Ambrose put it, "The life of this one person can serve as a model

for everyone”, and while speaking specifically to virgins, but within a context open to all, he affirms: “The first stimulus to learning is the nobility of the teacher. Who can be more noble than the Mother of God? Who can be more glorious than the one chosen by Glory Itself?” Mary lived and exercised her freedom precisely by giving herself to God and accepting God’s gift within herself. Until the time of his birth, she sheltered in her womb the Son of God who became man; she raised him and enabled him to grow, and she accompanied him in that supreme act of freedom which is the complete sacrifice of his own life. By the gift of herself, Mary entered fully into the plan of God who gives himself to the world. By accepting and pondering in her heart events which she did not always understand (cf. Lk 2,19), she became the model of all those who hear the word of God and keep it (cf. Lk 11,28), and merited the title of “Seat of Wisdom”. This Wisdom is Jesus Christ himself, the Eternal Word of God, who perfectly reveals and accomplishes the will of the Father (cf. Heb 10,5-10). Mary invites everyone to accept this Wisdom. To us too she addresses the command she gave to the servants at Cana in Galilee during the marriage feast: “Do whatever he tells you” (Jn 2,5).

Mary shares our human condition, but in complete openness to the grace of God. Not having known sin, she is able to have compassion on every kind of weakness. She understands sinful man and loves him with a Mother's love. Precisely for this reason she is on the side of truth and shares the Church's burden in recalling always and to everyone the demands of morality. Nor does she permit sinful man to be deceived by those who claim to love him by justifying his sin, for she knows that the sacrifice of Christ her Son would thus be emptied of its power. No absolution offered by beguiling doctrines, even in the areas of philosophy and theology, can make man truly happy: only the Cross and the glory of the Risen Christ can grant peace to his conscience and salvation to his life.

St John Paul II, *Veritatis splendour* 118-120

## **Invocation of Mary**

### **Closing hymn**

## **FIFTH DAY (19 MAY): MARY, STAR OF HOPE**

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### **Hymn**

### **Introductory rites**

- P** In the name of the Father...  
The Lord, who is our peace and

has crowned his Mother Queen  
of peace, be with you.

**A And with your spirit.**

**P** Let us pray.

Holy and merciful God, who listen to the  
humble and accomplish in them, through  
the power of the Spirit, the wonders of  
salvation, look upon the innocence of  
the Virgin Mary and grant us a gentle  
and receptive heart. Make us prompt to  
welcome your word and zealous to fulfil  
your will. Through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

## **Liturgy of the Word**

### ***First Reading***

#### **A reading from the Book of Revelation**

(Rev 11,19a; 12,1-6a.10ab)

*A great portent appeared in heaven, a woman  
clothed with the sun.*

Then the sanctuary of God in heaven opened  
and the ark of the covenant could be seen  
inside it. Then came flashes of lightning, peals  
of thunder and an earthquake, and violent  
hail. Now a great sign appeared in heaven: a  
woman, adorned with the sun, standing on the  
moon, and with the twelve stars on her head

for a crown. She was pregnant, and in labour, crying aloud in the pangs of childbirth. Then a second sign appeared in the sky, a huge red dragon which had seven heads and ten horns, and each of the seven heads crowned with a coronet. Its tail dragged a third of the stars from the sky and dropped them to the earth, and the dragon stopped in front of the woman as she was having the child, so that he could eat it as soon as it was born from its mother. The woman brought a male child into the world, the son who was to rule all the nations with an iron sceptre, and the child was taken straight up to God and to his throne, while the woman escaped into the desert, where God had made a place of safety ready, for her to be looked after in the twelve hundred and sixty days. Then I heard a voice shout from heaven, 'Victory and power and empire for ever have been won by our God, and all authority for his Christ, now that the persecutor, who accused our brothers day and night before our God, has been brought down'.

### **Hymn or Responsorial Psalm**

#### **A Hail, Virgin Mary, hope of God's people**

'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit exults in God my saviour;

because he has looked upon his lowly  
handmaid.

Yes, from this day forward all generations will  
call me blessed,  
for the Almighty has done great things for me.  
Holy is his name.

His mercy reaches from age to age for those  
who fear him.

He has shown the power of his arm,  
he has routed the proud of heart.

He has pulled down princes from their thrones  
and exalted the lowly.  
The hungry he has filled with good things,  
the rich sent empty away.

He has come to the help of Israel his servant,  
mindful of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our  
ancestors of his mercy  
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever.'

### ***Second Reading***

#### **Mary, Star of Hope**

With a hymn composed in the eighth or ninth  
century, thus for over a thousand years, the  
Church has greeted Mary, the Mother of God,  
as "Star of the Sea": Ave Maris Stella. Human

life is a journey. Towards what destination? How do we find the way? Life is like a voyage on the sea of history, often dark and stormy, a voyage in which we watch for the stars that indicate the route. The true stars of our life are the people who have lived good lives. They are lights of hope. Certainly, Jesus Christ is the true light, the sun that has risen above all the shadows of history. But to reach him we also need lights close by—people who shine with his light and so guide us along our way. Who more than Mary could be a star of hope for us? With her “yes” she opened the door of our world to God himself; she became the living Ark of the Covenant, in whom God took flesh, became one of us, and pitched his tent among us (cf. Jn 1,14).

So we cry to her: Holy Mary, you belonged to the humble and great souls of Israel who, like Simeon, were “looking for the consolation of Israel” (Lk 2,25) and hoping, like Anna, “for the redemption of Jerusalem” (Lk 2,38). Your life was thoroughly imbued with the sacred scriptures of Israel which spoke of hope, of the promise made to Abraham and his descendants (cf. Lk 1,55). In this way we can appreciate the holy fear that overcame you when the angel of the Lord appeared to

you and told you that you would give birth to the One who was the hope of Israel, the One awaited by the world. Through you, through your “yes”, the hope of the ages became reality, entering this world and its history. You bowed low before the greatness of this task and gave your consent: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word” (Lk 1,38). When you hastened with holy joy across the mountains of Judea to see your cousin Elizabeth, you became the image of the Church to come, which carries the hope of the world in her womb across the mountains of history. But alongside the joy which, with your Magnificat, you proclaimed in word and song for all the centuries to hear, you also knew the dark sayings of the prophets about the suffering of the servant of God in this world. Shining over his birth in the stable at Bethlehem, there were angels in splendour who brought the good news to the shepherds, but at the same time the lowliness of God in this world was all too palpable. The old man Simeon spoke to you of the sword which would pierce your soul (cf. Lk 2,35), of the sign of contradiction that your Son would be in this world. Then, when Jesus began his public ministry, you had to step aside, so that a new family could

grow, the family which it was his mission to establish and which would be made up of those who heard his word and kept it (cf. Lk 11,27f). Notwithstanding the great joy that marked the beginning of Jesus's ministry, in the synagogue of Nazareth you must already have experienced the truth of the saying about the "sign of contradiction" (cf. Lk 4,28ff). In this way you saw the growing power of hostility and rejection which built up around Jesus until the hour of the Cross, when you had to look upon the Saviour of the world, the heir of David, the Son of God dying like a failure, exposed to mockery, between criminals. Then you received the word of Jesus: "Woman, behold, your Son!" (Jn 19,26) From the Cross you received a new mission. From the Cross you became a mother in a new way: the mother of all those who believe in your Son Jesus and wish to follow him. The sword of sorrow pierced your heart. Did hope die? Did the world remain definitively without light, and life without purpose? At that moment, deep down, you probably listened again to the word spoken by the angel in answer to your fear at the time of the Annunciation: "Do not be afraid, Mary!" (Lk 1,30) How many times had the Lord, your Son, said the same thing to his disciples: "do not be afraid"! In your heart,

you heard this word again during the night of Golgotha. Before the hour of his betrayal he had said to his disciples: "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (Jn 16,33). "Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" (Jn 14,27). "Do not be afraid, Mary!" In that hour at Nazareth the angel had also said to you: "Of his kingdom there will be no end" (Lk 1,33). Could it have ended before it began? No, at the foot of the Cross, on the strength of Jesus's own word, you became the mother of believers. In this faith, which even in the darkness of Holy Saturday bore the certitude of hope, you made your way towards Easter morning. The joy of the Resurrection touched your heart and united you in a new way to the disciples, destined to become the family of Jesus through faith. In this way you were in the midst of the community of believers, who in the days following the Ascension prayed with one voice for the gift of the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 1,14) and then received that gift on the day of Pentecost. The "Kingdom" of Jesus was not as might have been imagined. It began in that hour, and of this "Kingdom" there will be no end. Thus, you remain in the midst of the disciples as their Mother, as the Mother of hope. Holy Mary, Mother of God, our Mother, teach us to believe,

to hope, to love with you. Show us the way to his Kingdom! Star of the Sea, shine upon us and guide us on our way.

Benedict XVI, *Spe salvi*, 49-50

## **Invocation of Mary**

**P** Let us pray.

Lord our God, you give us the joy of honouring the Blessed Virgin Mary as the Star of divine hope. In your mercy grant that, through her prayers and help, we may live as good citizens of this world, with our hearts fixed on the world to come, and so receive what we await in faith: the fulfilment of all our hopes. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, One God for ever and ever.

**A** **Amen.**

## **Closing hymn**

**SIXTH DAY (20 MAY): "MOTHER OF THE WORD AND MOTHER OF JOY"**  
.....

## **Hymn**

## **Introductory rites**

**P** In the name of the Father...

The Lord, who from the Cross entrusted us to his Mother, constituting her Mother of the Church and Mother of all the redeemed, be with you.

**A And with your spirit.**

**P** Let us pray.

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we contemplate the Virgin Mary who lived her entire journey of faith in a spirit of selflessness and gratitude. Grant us the gift of incessant prayer and interior silence, that in our daily life we too may be transformed by the life-giving presence of your Holy Spirit. Through Christ, our Lord.

**A Amen.**

## **Liturgy of the Word**

### ***First Reading***

**A reading from the Book of Revelation** (Rev 21,1-5a)

*I saw a new Jerusalem, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.*

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; the first heaven and the first earth had disappeared now, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the holy city, and the new Jerusalem,

coming down from God out of heaven, as beautiful as a bride all dressed for her husband. Then I heard a loud voice call from the throne, 'You see this city? Here God lives among men. He will make his home among them; they shall be his people, and he will be their God; his name is God-with-them. He will wipe away all tears from their eyes; there will be no more death, and no more mourning or sadness. The world of the past has gone.' Then the One sitting on the throne spoke: 'Now I am making the whole of creation new' he said.

## **Hymn or Psalm**

### ***Second Reading***

#### ***“Mater Verbi et Mater laetitiae”***

The close relationship between God's word and joy is evident in the Mother of God. Let us recall the words of Saint Elizabeth: "Blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfilment of what was spoken to her by the Lord" (*Lk* 1:45). Mary is blessed because she has faith, because she believed, and in this faith she received the Word of God into her womb in order to give him to the world. The joy born of the Word can now expand to all those who, by faith, let themselves be changed

by God's word. The Gospel of Luke presents this mystery of hearing and joy in two texts. Jesus says: "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it" (8,21). And in reply to a woman from the crowd who blesses the womb that bore him and the breasts that nursed him, Jesus reveals the secret of true joy: "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it!" (11,28). Jesus points out Mary's true grandeur, making it possible for each of us to attain that blessedness which is born of the word received and put into practice. I remind all Christians that our personal and communal relationship with God depends on our growing familiarity with the word of God. Finally, I turn to every man and woman, including those who have fallen away from the Church, who have left the faith or who have never heard the proclamation of salvation. To everyone the Lord says: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me" (*Rev 3,20*).

May every day of our lives thus be shaped by a renewed encounter with Christ, the Word of the Father made flesh: he stands at the beginning and the end, and "in him all things

hold together" (*Col* 1,17). Let us be silent in order to hear the Lord's word and to meditate upon it, so that by the working of the Holy Spirit it may remain in our hearts and speak to us all the days of our lives. In this way the Church will always be renewed and rejuvenated, thanks to the word of the Lord which remains forever (cf. *1 Pet* 1,25; *Is* 40,8). Thus, we too will enter into the great nuptial dialogue which concludes sacred Scripture: "The Spirit and the bride say: 'Come'. And let everyone who hears say: 'Come!'" The one who testifies to these things, says: 'Surely I am coming soon!' Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!" (*Rev* 22,17.20)

Benedict XVI, *Verbum Domini* 124

## **Invocation of Mary**

### **Closing hymn**

## **SEVENTH DAY (21 MAY): MARY, MOTHER OF THE HOLY EUCHARIST**

### **Hymn**

### **Introductory rites**

- P** In the name of the Father...  
The Lord, who gave us Mary as  
the *maternal sign of his love* for his  
pilgrim Church, be with you.

**A And with your Spirit.**

**P** Let us pray.

O Spirit of love, you accepted Mary's "yes" as part of your saving plan. Imbue us with her wisdom and holiness, so that we too may listen to your word in faith, and lead lives that are coherent with the Gospel. Through Christ our Lord.

**A Amen.**

## **Liturgy of the Word**

### ***First Reading***

#### **A Reading from the Gospel of Luke**

(Lk 1,39-47)

*Blessed is she who believed*

Mary set out at that time and went as quickly as she could to a town in the hill country of Judah. She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. Now as soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the child leapt in her womb and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. She gave a loud cry and said, 'Of all women you are the most blessed, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. Why should I be honoured with a visit from the mother of my Lord? For the moment your greeting reached my ears, the child in my womb leapt for joy. Yes, blessed is

she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled.’ And Mary said: ‘My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord and my spirit exults in God my saviour.’

## **Hymn or Psalm**

### ***Second Reading***

From the relationship between the Eucharist and the individual sacraments, and from the eschatological significance of the sacred mysteries, the overall shape of the Christian life emerges, a life called at all times to be an act of spiritual worship, a self-offering pleasing to God. Although we are all still journeying towards the complete fulfilment of our hope, this does not mean that we cannot already gratefully acknowledge that God’s gifts to us have found their perfect fulfilment in the Virgin Mary, Mother of God and our Mother. Mary’s Assumption body and soul into heaven is for us a sign of sure hope, for it shows us, on our pilgrimage through time, the eschatological goal of which the sacrament of the Eucharist enables us even now to have a foretaste.

In Mary most holy, we also see perfectly fulfilled the “sacramental” way that God comes down to meet his creatures and involves them

in his saving work. From the Annunciation to Pentecost, Mary of Nazareth appears as someone whose freedom is completely open to God's will. Her immaculate conception is revealed precisely in her unconditional docility to God's word. Obedient faith in response to God's work shapes her life at every moment. A virgin attentive to God's word, she lives in complete harmony with his will; she treasures in her heart the words that come to her from God and, piecing them together like a mosaic, she learns to understand them more deeply (cf. Lk 2,19,51); Mary is the great Believer who places herself confidently in God's hands, abandoning herself to his will. This mystery deepens as she becomes completely involved in the redemptive mission of Jesus. In the words of the Second Vatican Council, "the blessed Virgin advanced in her pilgrimage of faith, and faithfully persevered in her union with her Son until she stood at the Cross, in keeping with the divine plan (cf. Jn 19,25), suffering deeply with her only-begotten Son, associating herself with his sacrifice in her mother's heart, and lovingly consenting to the immolation of the victim who was born of her. Finally, she was given by the same Christ Jesus, dying on the Cross, as a mother to his disciple, with these

words: ‘Woman, behold your Son.’” From the Annunciation to the Cross, Mary is the one who received the Word, made flesh within her and then silenced in death. It is she, lastly, who took into her arms the lifeless body of the one who truly loved his own “to the end” (Jn 13,1).

Consequently, every time we approach the Body and Blood of Christ in the eucharistic liturgy, we also turn to her who, by her complete fidelity, received Christ’s sacrifice for the whole Church. The Synod Fathers rightly declared that “Mary inaugurates the Church’s participation in the sacrifice of the Redeemer.” She is the Immaculata, who receives God’s gift unconditionally and is thus associated with his work of salvation. Mary of Nazareth, icon of the nascent Church, is the model for each of us, called to receive the gift that Jesus makes of himself in the Eucharist.

Benedict XVI, *Sacramentum caritatis* 33

## **Invocation of Mary**

### **Closing hymn**

**EIGHTH DAY (22 MAY): MARY,  
JESUS’ GIFT TO HIS PEOPLE**

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### **Hymn**

### **Introductory rites**

**P** In the name of the Father...

The Lord, who for our journey of faith gave us Mary as the *sign of sure hope and cause of our joy*, be with you.

**A** **And with your spirit.**

**P** Let us pray. Lord Jesus, who came into the world to establish your kingdom of justice, love and peace, grant that, through the intercession of the Virgin Mary, your Mother, we may welcome your word of truth and live as your holy people. You live and reign for ever and ever.

**A** **Amen.**

## **Liturgy of the Word**

### ***First Reading***

#### **A Reading from the Gospel of Luke**

(Lk 2,15-19)

*Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart.*

Now when the angels had gone from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us'. So they hurried away and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw the child they

repeated what they had been told about him, and everyone who heard it was astonished at what the shepherds had to say. As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart.

## **Hymn or Psalm**

### ***Second Reading***

*Jesus' gift to his people*

On the cross, when Jesus endured in his own flesh the dramatic encounter of the sin of the world and God's mercy, he could feel at his feet the consoling presence of his mother and his friend. At that crucial moment, before fully accomplishing the work which his Father had entrusted to him, Jesus said to Mary: "Woman, here is your son". Then he said to his beloved friend: "Here is your mother" (Jn 19,26-27). These words of the dying Jesus are not chiefly the expression of his devotion and concern for his mother; rather, they are a revelatory formula which manifests the mystery of a special saving mission. Jesus left us his mother to be our mother. Only after doing so did Jesus know that "all was now finished" (Jn 19,28). At the foot of the cross, at the supreme hour of the new creation, Christ led us to Mary. He brought us to her because he did not want us to journey

without a mother, and our people read in this maternal image all the mysteries of the Gospel. The Lord did not want to leave the Church without this icon of womanhood. Mary, who brought him into the world with great faith, also accompanies “the rest of her offspring, those who keep the commandments of God and bear testimony to Jesus” (Rev 12,17). The close connection between Mary, the Church and each member of the faithful, based on the fact that each in his or her own way brings forth Christ, has been beautifully expressed by Blessed Isaac of Stella: “In the inspired Scriptures, what is said in a universal sense of the virgin mother, the Church, is understood in an individual sense of the Virgin Mary... In a way, every Christian is also believed to be a bride of God’s word, a mother of Christ, his daughter and sister, at once virginal and fruitful... Christ dwelt for nine months in the tabernacle of Mary’s womb. He dwells until the end of the ages in the tabernacle of the Church’s faith. He will dwell forever in the knowledge and love of each faithful soul”.

Mary was able to turn a stable into a home for Jesus, with poor swaddling clothes and an abundance of love. She is the handmaid of the Father who sings his praises. She is the friend

who is ever concerned that wine not be lacking in our lives. She is the woman whose heart was pierced by a sword and who understands all our pain. As mother of all, she is a sign of hope for peoples suffering the birth pangs of justice. She is the missionary who draws near to us and accompanies us throughout life, opening our hearts to faith by her maternal love. As a true mother, she walks at our side, she shares our struggles and she constantly surrounds us with God's love. Through her many titles, often linked to her shrines, Mary shares the history of each people which has received the Gospel and she becomes a part of their historic identity. Many Christian parents ask that their children be baptized in a Marian shrine, as a sign of their faith in her motherhood which brings forth new children for God. There, in these many shrines, we can see how Mary brings together her children who with great effort come as pilgrims to see her and to be seen by her. Here they find strength from God to bear the weariness and the suffering in their lives. As she did with Juan Diego, Mary offers them maternal comfort and love, and whispers in their ear: "Let your heart not be troubled... Am I not here, who am your Mother?"

Francis, *Evangelii gaudium* 285-286

## Invocation of Mary

### Closing hymn

## NINTH DAY (23 MAY): MARY, QUEEN OF ALL CREATION

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### Hymn

### Introductory rites

**P** In the name of the Father...  
The strength of the Spirit, who through the intercession of Mary, the faithful Virgin, helps us to conform our lives to the Gospel, be with you.

**A** **And with your spirit.**

**P** Let us pray.  
Eternal Father, who made of the Virgin Mary the throne of your Wisdom, illuminate the Church with the light of your Living Word, that she may walk in the splendour of truth towards the full knowledge of the mystery of your love. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

**A** **Amen.**

### Liturgy of the Word

#### *First Reading*

## **A reading from the Gospel of Luke**

(Lk 2,41-51)

*Your father and I have been looking for you anxiously*

Every year his parents used to go to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover. When he was twelve years old, they went up for the feast as usual. When they were on their way home after the feast, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem without his parents knowing it. They assumed he was with the caravan, and it was only after a day's journey that they went to look for him among their relations and acquaintances. When they failed to find him they went back to Jerusalem looking for him everywhere. Three days later, they found him in the Temple, sitting among the doctors, listening to them, and asking them questions; and all those who heard him were astounded at his intelligence and his replies. They were overcome when they saw him, and his mother said to him, 'My child, why have you done this to us? See how worried your father and I have been, looking for you.' 'Why were you looking for me?' he replied 'Did you not know that I must be busy with my Father's affairs?' But they did not understand what he meant. He then went down with them and came to

Nazareth and lived under their authority. His mother stored up all these things in her heart.

### **Hymn or Psalm**

#### ***Second Reading***

Mary, the Mother who cared for Jesus, now cares with maternal affection and pain for this wounded world. Just as her pierced heart mourned the death of Jesus, so now she grieves for the sufferings of the crucified poor and for the creatures of this world laid waste by human power. Completely transfigured, she now lives with Jesus, and all creatures sing of her fairness. She is the Woman, “clothed in the sun, with the moon under her feet, and on her head a crown of twelve stars” (Rev 12,1). Carried up into heaven, she is the Mother and Queen of all creation. In her glorified body, together with the Risen Christ, part of creation has reached the fullness of its beauty. She treasures the entire life of Jesus in her heart (cf. Lk 2,19.51), and now understands the meaning of all things. Hence, we can ask her to enable us to look at this world with eyes of wisdom.

At her side in the Holy Family of Nazareth, stands the figure of Saint Joseph. Through his

work and generous presence, he cared for and defended Mary and Jesus, delivering them from the violence of the unjust by bringing them to Egypt. The Gospel presents Joseph as a just man, hard-working and strong. But he also shows great tenderness, which is not a mark of the weak but of those who are genuinely strong, fully aware of reality and ready to love and serve in humility. That is why Joseph was proclaimed custodian of the universal Church. He too can teach us how to show care; he can inspire us to work with generosity and tenderness in protecting this world which God has entrusted to us.

Francis, *Laudato Si'* 241-242

## **Invocation of Mary**

## **Closing hymn**

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