

A NOVENA OF MADONNAS:
ALPHONSIAN DEVOTION
TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY
(Adapted from Terry Moran, C.Ss.R.)



CALL TO PRAYER

L. May the grace and peace of Jesus, Son of Mary, be with you.

All: And also with you.

L. Throughout his life, through preaching and prayer, through music, art and poetry, St. Alphonsus Liguori sought to proclaim the glories of Mary. All of his many writings were written under the patronage of Our Lady of Good Counsel. Confidence in her intercession gave him courage to undertake great risks such as the founding of the Redemptorist Congregation. He discovered, through his experience, that sermons on the Blessed Virgin could inspire the most hardened sinner to conversion. May we, like Alphonsus, find in Mary a reflection of God's beauty and a channel of God's hope.

Hymn: O Mother of Perpetual Help

1. O Mother of Perpetual Help, to thee we come imploring help.
Behold us here from far and near, to ask of thee our help to be.
Behold us here from far and near, to ask of thee our help to be.
2. Perpetual help, we beg of thee, our souls from sin and sorrow free.
Direct our wandering feet aright, and be thyself our own true light.
Direct our wandering feet aright, and be thyself our own true light.
3. And when this life is over for me, this last request I ask of thee:
Obtain for me in heaven this grace, to see my God there face to face.
Obtain for me in heaven this grace, to see my God there face to face.

Readings and Responses

Each reader has a flower, to be placed before the image of Mary after the reading.

L. The novena was a form of prayer that was very meaningful to St. Alphonsus. He wanted the Redemptorists to prepare for each of the major feasts of Our Lady by a novena, or nine days, of prayer. We reflect tonight on nine images, or titles, of Mary that spoke to

Alphonsus and which form the tradition of Marian devotion that he left to the Redemptorist family as a precious heritage.

1. Alphonsus, on the day of your conversion, you left the sword that represented your nobility at the feet of the statue of Mary, Our Lady of Mercy, Ransomer of Captives. May we also find in Mary a model of the freedom of the sons and daughters of God.

All: *Ave! Ave! Ave, Maria!
Ave! Ave! Ave, Maria!*

2. Alphonsus, in the abandoned chapel of Scala, you venerated the image of Mary, Mother of the Redeemer. In one arm she held the open Bible, the Word of God. In the other arm she held the child Jesus, the Word made Flesh. By our preaching God=s Word, by word and example, may God again take flesh in the hearts of believers.

All: *Ave! Ave! Ave, Maria! Ave! Ave! Ave, Maria!*

3. Alphonsus, on the missions you displayed an image of Mary as Shepherdess. You wanted the peasants and goatherds to experience the Redeemer and His mother as ones like themselves, sharing their lives and knowing their struggles. May our ministries keep us close to God=s people and may we ever proclaim the God who is Emmanuel, the God who is with us.

All: *Ave! Ave! Ave, Maria! Ave! Ave! Ave, Maria!*

4. Alphonsus, you painted an image of the Madonna of the Holy Spirit. You show Mary lifting her cloak to reveal the dove of the Holy Spirit in her heart. May we be ever mindful that we are the dwelling places of God. Give us a deep respect for the dignity of others.

All: *Ave! Ave! Ave, Maria! Ave! Ave! Ave, Maria!*

5. Alphonsus, you gave Mary, the Immaculate Conception, to the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer as patroness. Mary Immaculate is the great sign of God=s original dream for creation. May she always draw us to hunger and thirst for intimacy with God.

All: *Ave! Ave! Ave, Maria! Ave! Ave! Ave, Maria!*

6. Alphonsus, you wrote your many books, pamphlets and articles under the gaze of the image of Our Lady of Good Counsel. With you, may we experience Mary as mother, wise guide and spiritual director.

All: *Ave! Ave! Ave, Maria! Ave! Ave! Ave, Maria!*

7. Alphonsus, you saw Mary, Our Lady of Sorrows, as the midwife of the Church, born from the open heart of Jesus on Calvary. May we imitate her courage and have the strength to be companions of your suffering people.

All: *Ave! Ave! Ave, Maria! Ave! Ave! Ave, Maria!*

8. Alphonsus, you wrote that, after the Ascension of Jesus, Mary remained on earth to attend to the preaching of the Gospel. For you, Mary was a Missionary. Make us ever conscious of Mary, present and active, among God=s people today.

All: *Ave! Ave! Ave, Maria! Ave! Ave! Ave, Maria!*

9. Alphonsus, you probably never saw the image so dear to Redemptorists today, Our Lady of Perpetual Help. Nevertheless, you were moved by the conviction that Mary was tireless in coming to the aid of God=s people. May our devotion to Our Mother of Perpetual Help energize us to come to the aid of those most in need of the love and mercy of God. May we know the truth of your words, AWorks of mercy are the things which please the Mother of Mercy most.@

All: *Ave! Ave! Ave, Maria! Ave! Ave! Ave, Maria!*

Faith-Sharing

- L. I now invite you to reflect on and share your responses to the following questions: Which of these Alphonsian titles of Mary speaks to you most at this moment? Why?

Intercessions

- L. Let us pray now to Mary in the words of St. Alphonsus.
1. O Mary, Queen of Light...
All: Enlighten sinners and bring them to the heart of Jesus.
 2. O Lady, by the love you bear to Jesus...
All: Help me to love Him.
 3. Hail, Daughter of God the Father...
All: Hail, Mother of God the Son.
 4. Hail, Spouse of the Holy Spirit...
All: Hail, Temple of the Trinity.
- L. Alphonsus compared Mary to Ruth in the Old Testament. Just as Ruth went through the fields to pick the grain left by the gleaners, so Mary goes through the world and is God's instrument of grace for those who are not reached by the ordinary ministry of the Church. Let us now commend to the mercy of God those people and situations that are most in need of it.
All present give voice to their own intercessions and prayers.

Closing Antiphon: ASalve Regina@

Salve, Regina, mater misericordiae:

Vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve!

Ad te clamamus, exsules filii Hevae.

Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes in hac lacrimarum valle.

Eia ergo, advocata nostra,

illos tuos misericordes oculos ad nos converte.

Et Jesum benedictum fructum ventris tui, nobis post hac exilium ostende.

O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.