



Novena to the Immaculate Conception 2026

Day 9: The Immaculate Conception

Dear friends, over these days we have meditated on the mysteries of the Virgin's heart, kept immaculate by the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, by the goodness of the Father, by the action of the Holy Spirit, by the will of the Most Holy Trinity.

Today we celebrate this solemnity, formally approved and established liturgically by Pope Pius IX, but already lived in tradition—in the East since the 8th century and in the West since the 9th century—as a reality of Christian life. From someone above us, more exalted than us, with a purer heart than ours, the Savior had to be born; this is the *sensus fidelium* that led to the dogmatic proclamation on 8 December 1854.

The Gospel text given for today—and we have seen it throughout these days—is the text of the Annunciation, and simply, after having gone through it during this novena, I want to pause at Mary's response. Faced with the Lord's call, Mary surrenders and answers the angel: "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

The Lord comes to announce salvation to us in a thousand different ways, in a thousand forms, through a thousand mediations. For Mary, it was through the angel, giving her a mission, calling her by name. For you and for me, He also does so through our life, through those mediations by which the Lord—as the Book of Revelation says—knocks at our door so that we will let Him enter. Today, as we celebrate this Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, we look to Mary as a model of holiness. We celebrate this solemnity that calls you and me to live the true vocation to holiness, as the second reading of today's liturgy tells us.

Mary teaches us how to open the door. Preserved from all sin by the Lord's redemption and by the merits of that redemption, Mary teaches us to say "yes." That is why, as the prophet Isaiah says, Mary can sing: "I rejoice heartily in the Lord, my soul exults in my God; for he has clothed me with garments of salvation, wrapped me in a mantle of justice, like a bride adorned with her jewels."

How wonderful this text from Isaiah 61 is, where we too must find a model for thanksgiving. Do you "overflow with joy in the Lord"? Or rather, why is it that so often we do not? Because we go on clothing ourselves with the garments of iniquity and sin instead of taking our Mother by the hand, she who with her "yes" places herself at the service of each of our needs so that we may walk. The Holy Trinity, wishing to save humanity, chose Mary to be the Mother of the Son of God made man.

How marvelous the generosity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who before creation itself looked upon us with such goodness, thinking of Mary so that you and I might attain

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salvation. And this, dear listener, must move you deeply; it must move us. Even before we were created, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were dreaming of living eternity with us.

For that reason, Mary, with her “yes,” shows us what our generosity must be like. God willed that Mary be bound with a single indissoluble bond to all the redeeming work He would carry out. Mary was called from all eternity to be the Mother of God, together with the Incarnation of the Word, by the design of Providence.

Through that “yes,” Mary was called to unite herself to Christ’s work of redemption. Mary, therefore, becomes a servant and, in becoming servant, is made the perfect model of the Church, the pattern of all virtues. Mary shows us which door we must pass through for you and me to reach eternity.

She, all-pure and radiant, fixes her gaze on each one of us. She sets her eyes on each one of us. She knows your name, she knows your needs, she knows your heart, and as a mother she cares. Like a good mother, she goes to the Father and says, “Look after this child, look at the state he’s in.” And this must be for us—though it may sound a bit tender—the model of trust we are called to find today in our Mother the Virgin.

“Rejoice, full of grace, the Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women.” We pray this in every Hail Mary. Rejoice today because with her “yes” the Virgin stands at your side. With her “yes” the Virgin allows her heart to be pierced, and she will allow it to be pierced a thousand times so that you may attain salvation. With her “yes” the Virgin unites herself to Christ’s redeeming sacrifice on the Cross—without fear, in trust, anchored in the Holy Spirit. This wholly unique grace makes Mary so beautiful that there is no stain of sin in her.

The Immaculate Virgin will always be the ideal we must imitate. She is the model of holiness in all ordinary life, in the everyday, without drawing attention, knowing how to remain hidden. Mary is holy in what she has to do. Mary pursues holiness in her daily life, in her duties, in the needs of others, without seeking anything beyond what God gives her in each moment.

How many millions of Christians have died and shed their blood for love of Christ with Mary’s name on their lips! Today is a day to lift our eyes to the Virgin Mary, to contemplate her gaze, and to place her name on our lips. Place her name upon whatever dominant sin weighs on you. Place her name, invoke her name, before every dominant vice afflicting you.

“Because you are my mother. Mary, help me. Mary, show yourself as Mother. Mary, assist me. Mary, intercede before the Father that I may obtain this particular grace.” And this must become a great cry rising from our wounded humanity to the Mother of God.

A cry, dear listener, that draws down God’s mercy. Mary’s “yes” brings a temporal mission to completion but begins an eternal mission: to intercede before Father, Son, and Holy Spirit so that you and I may receive that mercy, that goodness, that tenderness, that compassion of God. Without doubt, it is the Holy Spirit who, in every age, has taught that it is easier to reach the Lord’s heart through Mary than by other paths.

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That is why today we must ask the Holy Spirit: “Grant me to discover the goodness in my Mother the Virgin’s heart, so that I may come to know the very sentiments of Christ’s Heart.” We need to change our way of living. If only in your life you would invoke Mary, keep her present in your prayers, pray the Rosary—something will change, and something will already have been gained in this novena.

The gaze of Mary, says Pope Benedict XVI, is God’s own gaze turned toward each of us. She looks at us with the very love of the Father and blesses us. She acts as our advocate, and if we invoke her as “our advocate,” we will discover God’s mercy. Even if everyone else were to speak badly of us, she, the Mother, would speak well, because her Immaculate Heart beats in harmony with God’s mercy.

What joy it is to know we are not alone! What a marvel to know we have a Mother in heaven who watches over us, intercedes for us, wants us and loves us! This must soften our heart. The Catechism of the Catholic Church says, in fact, that for her to give the free assent of her faith to the announcement of her vocation, it was necessary that she be wholly led by God’s grace. It was necessary that the Lord preserve her from all evil and from all sin so that you and I might attain salvation.

And in the formula defining the Dogma of the Immaculate Conception, the Pope in *Ineffabilis Deus* says: “The Blessed Virgin Mary, in the first instant of her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, Savior of the human race, was preserved free from all stain of original sin.”

Today is a day when, as we look to the Virgin, we must give thanks to God: thanks for His immeasurable generosity, thanks for His boundless goodness, thanks because He has thought of us through the Virgin—through preserving her from all sin—so that the redemption achieved by His Son might be brought to completion and we might attain salvation.

If we stop to think about it in a simple, practical way, how wonderful God is, who knowing that you and I would mess things up again and again, willed and arranged that His Mother be pure and virgin so that we could be saved. This is God’s generosity. From the moment of creation He wanted that none of the souls should be lost. And Jesus prays thus in John 17: “Father, I guarded those whom you gave me, and none of them was lost.” Mary’s “yes” makes it easier, accelerates, and truly enables Christ’s mission to be fulfilled.

Why are you afraid of holiness? Why are you afraid to be a saint and change your life, if Mary is the one who will help you? She has committed herself to this for all eternity. Why not change your life? Why not return to the Father’s house? Why not kneel and ask forgiveness from this God who loves you madly? Why not kneel and ask for the grace to love those you find hardest to love? Why not change my life once and for all, trying to be holy?

The world today pushes us towards perfectionism and the suffering of wanting to be flawless—but we cannot be. Only the Virgin and Christ our Lord, in their humanity, are preserved from sin. You and I must strive for holiness by trying to love God above all things, in all the circumstances

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He allows in our daily life. And Mary, although she had no need to do so, teaches us how, letting her own heart be pierced.

What immense goodness if, when you feel your heart pierced by loneliness, suffering, pain, abandonment, persecution, you discover yourself, like the Virgin Mary, pierced by the sword that reveals Christ's love in your life! What a marvel if we unite our own sufferings with the sufferings of Mary the Virgin, with the sentiments of Christ Jesus, and thus allow the redeeming work to be brought to completion in the world!

This is the resplendent, utterly unique holiness with which she was enriched from the first instant of her conception. It comes entirely from Christ. She is redeemed in the most sublime way, in view of the merits of her Son. She has been cared for as the Lord wishes to care for you and me today.

I encourage you, dear listener, today to offer yourself in order to console the Virgin. Do not offer her things, do not give her what you have left over—offer her yourself. Now we will pray the Act of Consecration to the Immaculate, which is included in the appendix of this novena, of the document that accompanies this audio. I encourage you to give your heart entirely to the Virgin, granting her a pre-eminent place in your life as Mother and Queen of your soul, so that she, with the purity of her Heart, may obtain purity for yours.

Each day in the novena, after the section “To please Mary,” there was a section “To present to Mary.” On this very special day I encourage you to present to the Virgin the Malta Camp that will take place in Javier in 2026, in August, here in Navarre. Ask her for all those who are working so that this endeavor may come to fruition. Place in Mary's hands all the members and volunteers of the Sovereign Order of Malta, that she may reign in their hearts.

And together we now make this Act of Consecration to the Immaculate, which I will now make on your behalf, so that afterwards, with your own words and lips, you can make it yourself in your silence—at the end of Mass today, when you go, or at the end of the day when it finishes—but do not fail to entrust your heart to the Virgin, so that it may belong wholly to Christ through her and, above all, so that Christ may be King in your heart, with Mary as Queen and Lady of your soul:

Today, O Immaculate Queen of heaven and earth, refuge of sinners and our most loving Mother, to whom God has entrusted the order of mercy, I, an unworthy sinner, prostrate myself before you, begging you to accept me entirely as your thing and your possession.

To you, O Mother, I offer all the difficulties of my soul and body, my life, my death, and my eternity. Dispose of me, as you will, without any reserve, to fulfill what has been said of you: “She shall crush your head,” and also, “You alone have destroyed all heresies in the whole world.”

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Make me, in your most pure and merciful hands, a useful instrument for introducing and increasing your glory in as many tepid and indifferent souls as possible, and thus, as far as may be, extend the blessed Kingdom of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Where you enter, O Immaculate, you obtain the grace of conversion and sanctification, for every grace flowing from the Heart of Jesus to us passes through your hands. Help me to praise you, O Holy Virgin, and give me strength against your enemies.

Amen.

This act of consecration, composed by Saint Maximilian Kolbe, helps us to give our whole heart to Our Mother the Virgin. Sweetest Heart of Mary, prepare for us a safe way. Immaculate Heart of Mary, be the salvation of my soul.

Let us pray.

O God, who by the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary prepared a worthy dwelling for your Son, we ask that, as you preserved her from every stain by virtue of the foreseen death of that same Son, so through her intercession you may grant that we too may come into your presence pure and free from all guilt.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Dear listener, I am Father José Ángel Zubiaur.

It has been a pleasure to accompany you in these days, truly hand in hand with the Virgin, walking with Mary to meet Christ. What a wonderful joy it is to unveil, however clumsily but lovingly, the profound tenderness of the Heart of Our Mother the Virgin. May Mary our Mother take us by the hand, may she accompany and guide us on our journey toward eternity, toward the Kingdom that has no end, to be seated beside the One who gave His life for us.

May Mary's name truly be on our lips, may she reign in our hearts, and by taking her as our example may we know how to spread throughout the world the light Christ came to bring and which, in a few days, we will celebrate at Christmas. With deep fatherly affection, and as a brother, I give you the blessing that comes from Our Lord, uniting ourselves to Our Lady's joys so that one day we may attain the blessedness of heaven.

The Lord be with you. And may the blessing of Almighty God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, descend upon you, keep you, and remain with you always.

Amen.

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Hand in hand with Mary, onward to the Kingdom of Heaven.

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