**Each Day**: Special visit to the Blessed Mother in chapel: offering 3 sacrifices performed that day.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Novena 1: Knowledge of Self** | | |
| 1 | During this Novena, pay special attention to **Spiritual Reading, Stations of the Cross** and the **gesture of bowing**. I give special attention **to the practice of poverty**. | Prayer while undressing |
| 2 | Prayer while washing |
| 3 | Grace and Décor Mariae |
| 4 | Prayer while dressing |
| 5 | Rising prayers |
| 6 | Prayer while putting on the cincture |
| 7 | Prayer while putting on the veil |
| 8 | Prayer while putting on the tunic |
| 9 | Prayer while putting on the coif |
| **Novena 2: Knowledge of Our Lady** | | |
| 1 | During this Novena pay special attention to the practice of **Silence, Kissing the Scapular, the Memorare** and **keeping hands under the scapular**. Attention to the practice of **charity** and the vow of **chastity.** | Prayer while putting on the mantle |
| 2 | Prayer after making the tarima |
| 3 | Angelus and Regina Caeli |
| 4 | Prayer while putting on the scapular |
| 5 | Rosary and Litany of Our Blessed Mother |
| 6 | Blessing the cell |
| 7 | Singing |
| 8 | Prayer kneeling before getting into the tarima |
| 9 | Magnificat |
| **Novena 3: Knowledge of Jesus** | | |
| 1 | During this Novena, pay special attention to the **Sign of the Cross**, the **Liturgy of the Word** and **reading Scriptures** and the presence of God in **superiors**. Special attention to the **practice of obedience**. | Adoration, Presence of the Blessed Sacrament |
| 2 | Prayer to the Holy Spirit and “Direct…” |
| 3 | “Jesus, Mary, Joseph,” while getting into tarima |
| 4 | Our Father |
| 5 | Morning, Evening and Night Prayer |
| 6 | Most Sacred Heart … I place my trust in thee |
| 7 | Prayer before recreation |
| 8 | Soul of Christ |
| 9 | Examen |
| **Six Days: Understanding of Consecration** | | |
| 1 | During this Novena, pay special attention to the **Eucharistic presence,** the reminder of His Love every time I encounter a **crucifix** and during the **Liturgy of the Eucharist.** | Prayer through intercession of Mother Luisita |
| 2 | Visit |
| 3 | Morning Offering |
| 4 | Praised be Jesus Christ |
| 5 | J.M.+J.T. |
| 6 | Mass |

**Schedule for Preparation**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Motherhood**  **Jan 1st** | **Purification**  **Feb. 2nd** | **Annunciation**  **March 25th** | **Fatima**  **May 13th** | **Visitation**  **May 31st** | **OLMt. Carmel**  **July 16th** | **Assumption**  **August 15th** | **Queenship**  **August 22nd** | **Birthday**  **Sept 8th** | **Sorrows**  **Sept. 15th** | **Fatima**  **October 13th** | **Presentation**  **Nov, 21st** | **Immaculate Conception**  **Dece.8th** | **Guadalupe**  **Dec. 12th** |
| **First Period: Knowledge of Self**  **The Concupisences, the Theological Virtues, and the Evangelical Counsels** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1st | 11/30 | 1/1 | 2/21 | 4/11 | 4/29 | 6/14 | 7/14 | 7/21 | 8/7 | 8/14 | 9/11 | 10/20 | 11/6 | 11/10 |
| 2n | 12/1 | 1/2 | 2/22 | 4/12 | 4/30 | 6/15 | 7/15 | 7/22 | 8/8 | 8/15 | 9/12 | 10/21 | 11/7 | 11/11 |
| 3rd | 12/2 | 1/3 | 2/23 | 4/13 | 5/1 | 6/16 | 7/16 | 7/23 | 8/9 | 8/16 | 9/13 | 10/22 | 11/8 | 11/12 |
| 4th | 12/3 | 1/4 | 2/24 | 4/14 | 5/2 | 6/17 | 7/17 | 7/24 | 8/10 | 8/17 | 9/14 | 10/23 | 11/9 | 11/13 |
| 5th | 12/4 | 1/5 | 2/25 | 4/15 | 5/3 | 6/18 | 7/18 | 7/25 | 8/11 | 8/18 | 9/15 | 10/24 | 11/10 | 11/14 |
| 6th | 12/5 | 1/6 | 2/26 | 4/16 | 5/4 | 6/19 | 7/19 | 7/26 | 8/12 | 8/19 | 9/16 | 10/25 | 11/11 | 11/15 |
| 7th | 12/6 | 1/7 | 2/27 | 4/17 | 5/5 | 6/20 | 7/20 | 7/27 | 8/13 | 8/20 | 9/17 | 10/26 | 11/12 | 11/16 |
| 8th | 12/7 | 1/8 | 2/28 | 4/18 | 5/6 | 6/21 | 7/21 | 7/28 | 8/14 | 8/21 | 9/18 | 10/27 | 11/13 | 11/17 |
| 9th | 12/8 | 1/9 | 3/1 | 4/19 | 5/7 | 6/22 | 7/22 | 7/29 | 8/15 | 8/22 | 9/19 | 10/28 | 11/14 | 11/18 |
| **Second Period: Knowledge of our Mother** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1st | 12/9 | 1/10 | 3/2 | 4/20 | 5/8 | 6/23 | 7/23 | 7/30 | 8/16 | 8/23 | 9/20 | 10/29 | 11/15 | 11/19 |
| 2n | 12/10 | 1/11 | 3/3 | 4/21 | 5/9 | 6/24 | 7/24 | 7/31 | 8/17 | 8/24 | 9/21 | 10/30 | 11/16 | 11/20 |
| 3rd | 12/11 | 1/12 | 3/4 | 4/22 | 5/10 | 6/25 | 7/25 | 8/1 | 8/18 | 8/25 | 9/22 | 10/31 | 11/17 | 11/21 |
| 4th | 12/12 | 1/13 | 3/5 | 4/23 | 5/11 | 6/26 | 7/26 | 8/2 | 8/19 | 8/26 | 9/23 | 11/1 | 11/18 | 11/22 |
| 5th | 12/13 | 1/14 | 3/6 | 4/24 | 5/12 | 6/27 | 7/27 | 8/3 | 8/20 | 8/27 | 9/24 | 11/2 | 11/19 | 11/23 |
| 6th | 12/14 | 1/15 | 3/7 | 4/25 | 5/13 | 6/28 | 7/28 | 8/4 | 8/21 | 8/28 | 9/25 | 11/3 | 11/20 | 11/24 |
| 7th | 12/15 | 1/16 | 3/8 | 4/26 | 5/14 | 6/29 | 7/29 | 8/5 | 8/22 | 8/29 | 9/26 | 11/4 | 11/21 | 11/25 |
| 8th | 12/16 | 1/17 | 3/9 | 4/27 | 5/15 | 6/30 | 7/30 | 8/6 | 8/23 | 8/30 | 9/27 | 11/5 | 11/22 | 11/26 |
| 9th | 12/17 | 1/18 | 3/10 | 4/28 | 5/16 | 7/1 | 7/31 | 8/7 | 8/24 | 8/31 | 9/28 | 11/6 | 11/23 | 11/27 |
| **Third Period: Knowledge of the Heart of Christ** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1st | 12/18 | 1/19 | 3/11 | 4/29 | 5/17 | 7/2 | 8/1 | 8/8 | 8/25 | 9/1 | 9/29 | 11/7 | 11/24 | 11/28 |
| 2n | 12/19 | 1/20 | 3/12 | 4/30 | 5/18 | 7/3 | 8/2 | 8/9 | 8/26 | 9/2 | 9/30 | 11/8 | 11/25 | 11/29 |
| 3rd | 12/20 | 1/21 | 3/13 | 5/1 | 5/19 | 7/4 | 8/3 | 8/10 | 8/27 | 9/3 | 10/1 | 11/9 | 11/26 | 11/30 |
| 4th | 12/21 | 1/22 | 3/14 | 5/2 | 5/20 | 7/5 | 8/4 | 8/11 | 8/28 | 9/4 | 10/2 | 11/10 | 11/27 | 12/1 |
| 5th | 12/22 | 1/23 | 3/15 | 5/3 | 5/21 | 7/6 | 8/5 | 8/12 | 8/29 | 9/5 | 10/3 | 11/11 | 11/28 | 12/2 |
| 6th | 12/23 | 1/24 | 3/16 | 5/4 | 5/22 | 7/7 | 8/6 | 8/13 | 8/30 | 9/6 | 10/4 | 11/12 | 11/29 | 12/3 |
| 7th | 12/24 | 1/25 | 3/17 | 5/5 | 5/23 | 7/8 | 8/7 | 8/14 | 8/31 | 9/7 | 10/5 | 11/13 | 11/30 | 12/4 |
| 8th | 12/25 | 1/26 | 3/18 | 5/6 | 5/24 | 7/9 | 8/8 | 8/15 | 9/1 | 9/8 | 10/6 | 11/14 | 12/1 | 12/5 |
| 9th | 12/26 | 1/27 | 3/19 | 5/7 | 5/25 | 7/10 | 8/9 | 8/16 | 9/2 | 9/9 | 10/7 | 11/15 | 12/2 | 12/6 |
| **Fourth Period: Consecration** | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1st | 12/27 | 1/28 | 3/20 | 5/8 | 5/26 | 7/11 | 8/10 | 8/17 | 9/3 | 9/10 | 10/8 | 11/16 | 12/3 | 12/7 |
| 2n | 12/28 | 1/29 | 3/21 | 5/9 | 5/27 | 7/12 | 8/11 | 8/18 | 9/4 | 9/11 | 10/9 | 11/17 | 12/4 | 12/8 |
| 3rd | 12/29 | 1/30 | 3/22 | 5/10 | 5/28 | 7/13 | 8/12 | 8/19 | 9/5 | 9/12 | 10/10 | 11/18 | 12/5 | 12/9 |
| 4th | 12/30 | 1/31 | 3/23 | 5/11 | 5/29 | 7/14 | 8/13 | 8/20 | 9/6 | 9/13 | 10/11 | 11/19 | 12/6 | 12/10 |
| 5th | 12/31 | 2/1 | 3/24 | 5/12 | 5/30 | 7/15 | 8/14 | 8/21 | 9/7 | 9/14 | 10/12 | 11/20 | 12/7 | 12/11 |
| 6th | 1/1 | 2/2 | 3/25 | 5/13 | 5/31 | 7/16 | 8/15 | 8/22 | 9/8 | 9/15 | 10/13 | 11/21 | 12/8 | 12/12 |

**J.M.+J.T.**

**Consecration to Christ, Spouse and King**

**Through our Mother and Queen of Mount Carmel**

Dear Lord, it has been many years since I made my consecration to You through our Blessed Mother. Since becoming a Carmelite, I have wanted to take this consecration and allow it to become one with the fabric of the Carmelite life which I find to be such a precious gift. I ask Your blessing on this little book that your grace may work in my soul to make me completely Your own through Our Lady and Mother of Mt. Carmel. Under the spiritual mantle of Mother Luisita and our Carmelite Saints, and begging for their intercession, I ask this grace.

**“Mother, may all who look at me, see you.”**

***Ven. Maria Teresa Quevedo, Carmelite Sister of Charity***

**Outline**

**First Novena: Knowledge of Self and Knowledge of God**

\*Concupiscence

First Day: Pride/Humility

Second Day: Avarice/Generosity

Third Day: Sensuality/ Mortification and Self Denial

\*\*Theological virtues:

Fourth Day: Faith

Fifth Day: Hope

Sixth Day: Charity

\*\*\*Evangelical Counsels

Seventh Day: Obedience

Eighth Day: Poverty

Ninth Day: Chastity

**1**

**Second Novena: Knowledge of the Heart of Mary**

(10) First Day: Immaculate Conception

(11) Second Day: Presentation and Gift-Giving

(12) Third Day: Fiat – Active Surrender

(13) Fourth Day: Visitation and Service

(14) Fifth Day: Giving Birth

(15) Sixth Day: Flight and Persecution

(16) Seventh Day: Loss of Christ and Pondering

(17) Eighth Day: Behold your Son: Mary as Mother

(18) Ninth Day: Spouse of the Holy Spirit: Intercessor

**Third Novena: Knowledge of the Heart of Jesus**

(19) First Day: The Hidden Jesus in the womb and in the Eucharist

(20) Second Day: Heart of the Savior

(21) Third Day: Heart of the Child

(22) Fourth Day: Heart of the Son

(23) Fifth Day: Heart of the Teacher

(24) Sixth Day: Heart of the Shepherd

(25) Seventh Day: Heart of the Servant

(26) Eighth Day: Heart of the Lamb

(27) Ninth Day: Heart of the Bridegroom

**Fourth Period: Consecration: Understanding Total Gift**

(28) First Day: Incarnational Love: Mother Luisita’s Offering

(29) Second Day: Indwelling Love: Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity

(30) Third Day: Eucharistic Love: Oblation of St. Therese

(31) Fourth Day: Annihilating Love: Carmelites of Compiegne: Infant God

(32) Fifth Day: Writing the Consecration

(33) Sixth Day: Consecration to our King and Spouse through

Our Mother and Queen of Mt. Carmel

**2**

**First Novena: Knowledge of Self and Knowledge of God: Humility**

**Introduction**

I have a simple, direct commendation to true humility. God tells St. Catherine of Siena “I am He Who Is and you are she who is not.” As I begin my spiritual journey, I must come to know God and to know myself (and to know clearly that the two are not the same!) To know, in the Israelite sense, this simple truth, will stand a person in right order before God. These first nine days are meant to help the soul to open to this Truth and worship our God who IS.

**Concupiscence: The tendency towards evil**

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, (Science of the Cross #181)***

He who does not hold the reins of his whole being tightly in his hand is not at all at the height where he can make his decisions with true freedom: on the contrary he will always be subject to exterior influences.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, (Woman)***

The feminine soul ought to be spacious and open to all humanity; it ought to be peaceful because the tenuous little flames could be extinguished in the tempest; it ought to be warm so as not to freeze the tender seeds; it ought to be luminous so that weeds do not thrive in the cracks and dark corners; it ought to be reserved because the inroad of external things can endanger the interior life; it ought to be empty of self to leave ample room within it for the life of others; finally it ought to be master of self and of its own body, so that its whole personality may be ready to serve at every call.

***St. John of the Cross offers this advice in the Ascent, Book I, Chapter 13, #11”:***

To reach satisfaction in all, desire its possession in nothing.

To come to possess all, desire the possession of nothing.

To arrive at being all, desire to be nothing.

To come to the knowledge of all, desire the knowledge of nothing.

To come to the pleasure you have not

You must go by a way in which you enjoy not.

To come to the knowledge you have hot,

You must go by a way in which you know not.

To come to the possession you have not

You must go by way in which you possess not.

3

To come to be what you are not,

You must go by a way in which you are not.

When you turn toward something

You cease to cast yourself upon the all.

For to go from the all to the All

You must deny yourself of all in all.

And when you come to the possession of the All

You must possess it without wanting anything.

Because if you desire to have something in all

Your treasure in God is not purely your all.

In this nakedness the spirit finds its quietude and rest.

For in coveting nothing, nothing raises it up and nothing weighs it down,

Because it is in the center of its humility.

When it covets something in this very desire, it is wearied.

***Venerable Mother Maria Luisa Josefa, OCD***

“Let’s not be earthly minded. Let’s raise our souls to heaven.”

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Concupiscences** | **Theological virtues** | **Counsels** |  |
| **Pride:** *I am like God and I will not serve* | **Faith:** *I believe and my believing goes beyond my understanding* | **Obedience:** *I give my life to do His Will.* |
| **Avarice:** *I want to possess all.* | **Hope:** *I hope and trust in God for all I need in any way.* | **Poverty**: *I give my possessions – to be poor with the poor Christ.* |
| **Sensuality**: *I want to enjoy all things, physical, emotional, spiritual.* | **Charity:** *I love and place God first, then others.* | **Chastity**: *I give my heart and my soul to be Bride to the true Bridegroom.* |
|  | | |

*Throughout this Novena, I listen with special attention to the Holy Spirit speaking through Spiritual Reading and the Stations of the Cross. I ask our Mother to explain to my heart the meaning and message God wants me to understand.*

*I will pay special attention to the times during the day that I bow to show respect and reverence to God. I will pay special attention to the practice of poverty as Our Mother experienced in the home at Nazareth during the exile in Egypt as well as throughout her life.*

**4**

**First Day: Pride/Humility**

**Mk. 12:38ff**

***St. John of the Cross: the Dark Night, Book I Chapter 2 #1-3***

1. These beginners feel so fervent and diligent in their spiritual exercises and undertakings

that a certain kind of secret pride is generated in them which begets a complacency with themselves and their accomplishment, despite the fact that holy words do of their very nature cause humility. Then they develop a desire somewhat vain – at times very vain- to speak of spiritual things in others’ presence, and sometimes even to instruct rather than be instructed; in their hearts they condemn others who do not seem to have the kind of devotion they would like them to have, and sometimes they give expression to this criticism like the Pharisee who despised the publican while he boasted and praised God for the good deeds he himself accomplished.

1. The devil, desiring the growth of pride and presumption in these beginners, often

increases their fervor and readiness to perform such works, and other ones, too. For he is quite aware of the fact that all these works and virtues are not only worthless for them, but even become vices. Some of these persons become so evil-minded that they do not want anyone except themselves to appear holy; and so by both word and deed they condemn and detract others whenever the occasion arises; seeing the little mote in their brother’s eye, and failing to consider the beam in their own eye, they strain at the other’s gnat and swallow their own camel.

1. And when at times their spiritual directors, their confessors or superiors disapprove

their spirit and method of procedure, they feel that these directors do not understand or perhaps that this failure to approve derives from a lack of holiness, since they want these directors to regard their conduct with esteem and praise. So they quickly search for some other spiritual advisor more to their liking, someone who will congratulate them and be impressed by their deeds, and they flee, as they would death, those who attempt to place them on the safe road by forbidding these things- and sometimes they even become hostile toward such spiritual directors. Frequently, in their presumption, they make resolutions but accomplish very little. Sometimes they want others to recognize their spirit and devotion, and as a result occasionally contrive to make some manifestation of it, such as movements, sighs and other little ceremonies; sometimes with the assistance of the devil, they experience raptures, more often in public than in private, and they are quite pleased and often eager, for others to take notice of these.

6. …Souls, however, who are advancing in perfection act in an entirely different manner and with a different quality of spirit during this period. They receive great benefit from their humility, by which they not only place little importance on their deeds, but also take very little self-satisfaction from them. They think everyone else is far better than themselves and usually possess a holy envy of them and would like to emulate their service of God,. Since they are truly humble, their growing fervor and the increased number of their good deeds and the gratification they receive from them only cause them to become more aware of their debt to God and the inadequacy of their service. Their charity and love make them want to do so much for God that what they actually do accomplish seems as nothing.

5.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, “Science of the Cross”***

In aridity and emptiness of soul becomes humble. Former pride disappears when a man no longer finds anything in himself that might cause him to look down on others.

***Ven. Mother Luisita, OCD***

To my way of thinking, the best and most secure way is to abide by the Constitutions and not try to be doing extraordinary penance out of self-will but with humility be subject to the judgment of the superior.

***As the day ends and I take off the holy habit, I unite myself with our Blessed Mother and ask: “Divest my soul, O sweet Jesus, of all sin and of all affection to sin, of all pride and vanity, of all self-love and self-will and of whatever else is in the least displeasing to Your Divine Majesty.”***

6.

**Second Day: Avarice/Generosity**

**Lk. 14: 26ff Lk. 16: 9ff**

***St. John of the Cross: Ascent Book III, Chapter 19 #1***

Ink, paper and time would be exhausted were we to describe the harm which beleaguers the soul because it turns its affections to temporal goods. A small beginning can lead a person into great evils and destroy notable blessings just as an unextinguished spark can enkindle immense fires capable of burning up the world. All this harm has its origin and root in one main privative harm embodied in this joy: withdrawal from God. Just as every good is due to an approach toward God through the affection of the will, so withdrawal from Him through creature affection breeds every harm and evil in the soul.

***St. John of the Cross, Dark Night, Book I, Chapter 13, #1-6***

In this arid and obscure night the soul undergoes a thorough reform in its imperfections of avarice in which it coveted various spiritual objects and was never content with any of its spiritual exercises because of the gratification derived from them and the covetousness of its appetite.

…in this night the soul is liberated from all the imperfections we mentioned and from many other greater evils and foul abominations not listed into which many have fallen, as we know from experience, because they did not reform their desires for this spiritual sweetness.

…He continues this purgation in such a way that the concupiscence and the appetites are brought into subjection and become sterile from not receiving any satisfaction, just as the courses of the udder dry up when milk is not drawn through them daily…

…a second benefit following upon this one is that the soul bears a habitual remembrance of God, accompanied by a fear and dread of turning back on the spiritual road…Another very great benefit for the soul in this night is that it exercises all the virtues together. In the patience and forbearance practiced in these voids and aridities, and through perseverance in its spiritual exercises without consolation or satisfaction, the soul practices the love of God, since it is no longer motivated by the attractive and savory gratification it finds in its work, but only by God. It also practices the virtue of fortitude.

***St. Therese, Letter #93***

Creatures are too little to fill the immense void that Jesus has dug out in your heart. Don’t give them any place in your soul.

***Ven MotherLuisita, OCD***

Get hold of God alone – with all your might.

***Our Lady is sinless and desires to help me, too, to become pure of body, mind and heart. With our Lady to help me during the day, I ask her to help me to be clean, washed clean from my sins by His mercy: “Wash me yet more from my iniquity, O Lord, and cleanse me from my sins.”***

7

**Third Day: Sensuality/ Mortification and Self-Denial**

**Matt. 5:27ff**

***St. John of the Cross, Ascent, Book 1, Chapter 15 #2***

“My house being now stilled” means that the house of all the appetites, the sensitive part of the soul is now stilled and the desires conquered and lulled to sleep. Until slumber comes to the appetites through the mortification of sensuality, and until this very sensuality is stilled in such a way that the appetites do not war against the spirit, the soul will not walk out to genuine freedom, to the enjoyment of union with its Beloved.

***St. John of the Cross, Dark Night, Book 1, Chapter 13 #11***

When the sensory delight and gratification of things is quenched, neither the devil, nor the world, nor sensuality has arms or power against the spirit.

***St. John of the Cross, Ascent Book III, Chapter 27 #5***

Good works are deeper in quality the purer and more entire the love of God is by which they are performed and the less self-interest there is concerning earthly or heavenly joy, pleasure, comfort and praise. And through purgation and darkness as to this joy, he should in secret desire that only God be pleased and joyful over them and he should have no other interest or satisfaction than the honor and glory of God. Thus all the strength of his will in these moral goods will be recollected in God.

***St. John of the Cross, Ascent, Book I, Chapter 14 #2***

A love of pleasure and attachment to it usually fires the will toward the enjoyment of things that give pleasure. A more intense enkindling of another better love (love of one’s heavenly Bridegroom) is necessary. By finding this satisfaction and strength in this love, a man will have the courage and constancy to deny readily all other appetites. Endeavor to be inclined always

Not to the easiest, but to the most difficult.

Not to the most delightful, but to the harshest;

Not to the most gratifying, but to the less pleasant;

Not to what means rest for you, but to hard work;

Not to the consoling, but to the unconsoling;

Not to the most, but to the least;

Not to the highest and most precious, but to the lowest and most despised;

Not to the wanting something, but to wanting nothing;

Do not go about looking for the best of temporal things, but for the worst,

And desire to enter for Christ into complete nudity, emptiness, and poverty in everything in the world.

***St Therese, Letter #86***

“…in the meantime, let us begin our martyrdom, let Jesus tear from us all that is most dear to us, and let us refuse Him nothing. Before dying by the sword, let us die by pinpricks…”

8

***St. Therese, Letters #76***

How good He is to me, He who will soon by my Fiancé: how divinely lovable He is when not wanting to allow me to attach myself to ANY created thing, He knows well that if He were to give me a shadow of happiness, I would attach myself to it with all my energy, all the strength of my heart and this shadow He is refusing me; He prefers leaving me in darkness to giving me a false light which would not be Himself!...Since I can’t find any creature that contents me, I want to give all to Jesus, and I don’t want to give to the creature even one atom of my love. My Jesus always makes me understand that he alone is perfect joy, when He appears to be absent!

***Ven. Mother Luisita, OCD***

Preserve the purity of your soul at any cost and you’ll be happy in this life and in the life to come.

***I pray grace with special attention. I will attend the prayer and meal with Our Blessed Mother, careful to observe ‘Décor Mariae”. As she was provided for from God’s gracious love, so am I. As she asked God’s blessing on the meal, I do the same. “Merciful God, you have created us. Your love keeps us from day to day. From you kind hand we have received food and drink. Bless us and these Your gifts which we have received from your bounty. Remember also, all mankind over the whole world. Feed the hungry, protect the forsaken , come to the aid of the distressed.”***

***9.***

**\*\*Theological Virtues**

***St. John of the Cross, The Ascent Book II, Chapter 6, #1***

We must discuss the method of leading the three faculties (intellect, memory and will) into this spiritual night, the means to divine union. But we must first explain how the theological virtues (faith, hope and charity related to these faculties as their proper supernatural objects and through which the soul is united with God) cause the same emptiness and darkness in their respective faculties: faith in the intellect, hope in the memory and charity in the will. Then we shall explain how in order to journey to God, the intellect must be perfected in the darkness of faith, the memory in the emptiness of hope, and the will in the nakedness and absence of every affection.

As a result, the necessity of the soul’s journey through this dark night with the support of these three virtues will be manifest. They darken and empty it of all things that its advancement along this spiritual road may be more secure. As we said, the soul is not united with God in this life through understanding, or through enjoyment, or through imagination or through any other sense; but only through faith, hope and charity (according to the intellect, memory and will) can unite the soul with God in this life.

***St. John of the Cross, The Ascent, Book II #7***

We must be guided humanly and visibly and in all by the law of Christ, the man, and that of His Church and of His ministers. This is the method of remedying our spiritual ignorances and weaknesses; here we shall find abundant medicine for them all.

***St. John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle, Stanza 1 #11***

Faith and love are like the blind man’s guides. They will lead you along a path unknown to you, to the place where God is hidden. Faith, the secret we mentioned, is comparable to the feet by which one journeys to God, and love is like one’s guide. In dealing with these mysteries and secrets of faith, the soul will merit through love the discovery of the contents of faith, that is, the Bridegroom Whom she desires to possess in this life through the special grace of divine union with God, as we said, and in the next through the essential glory, by which she will rejoice in Him not in a hidden way, but face to face.

10.

**Fourth Day: Faith**

**Mk. 10: 46ff Mt. 9:22ff**

***St. John of the Cross, The Dark Night, Book II, Chapter 21, #11***

Faith darkens and empties the intellect of all its natural understanding and thereby prepares it for union with the divine wisdom.

***St. John of the Cross, The Dark Night, Book II, Chapter 15, #1***

In darkness and secure…a man is saved in the darkness of this night. In this night the soul subtly escapes from its enemies, who were always opposed to its departure. In its journey in the darkness of night …it departs by a very secret ladder of which no one in the house knows. This ladder, as we will explain, is the living faith by which it departs in so concealed a way in order to carry out its plan successfully, and by which it cannot but escape very securely. The soul is particularly secure in this purgative night because its appetites affections and passions, etc. were put to sleep, mortified and deadened. These are the members of the household that when awake and alive would not consent to this departure.

***St. John of the Cross, The Dark Night, Book II, Chapter 2, #5***

Thus, to reach union, the soul must enter the second night of the spirit. In this night, both the sensory and spiritual parts are despoiled of all these apprehensions and delights, and the soul is made to walk in dark and pure faith, which is the proper and adequate means to divine union, as God says through Hosea, “I will espouse you (unite you) to me through faith. (Hosea 2:20)

***St. John of the Cross, The Ascent, Book II, Chapter 9, #1***

For the likeness between faith and God is so close that no other differences exist than that between believing in God and seeing God.

***St. John of the Cross, The Living Flame, Introduction, #5***

Just as the union in the intellect is faith (knowledge) and the union in the will is charity (love) so the union in the substance of the soul is the fruition of peace, and so on;

***St. Therese, Letter #96***

There is only one thing to do during the night, the one night of life which will come only once, and this is to love, to love Jesus with all the strength of our heart and to save souls for Him so that He may be loved….O make Jesus loved!

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Science of the Cross, #82***

Faith furnishes a certain but obscure knowledge to the understanding. In fact, it shows us God as inaccessible light, as incomprehensible and infinite Being before whom every natural force gives way. And it is just for this motive that faith reduces reason to its intrinsic nothingness; to the realization of its importance and of the grandeur of God.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Science of the Cross, #190***

Living faith is the firm conviction that God exists, an acceptance as true of all that He has revealed, a loving promptness to let oneself be guided by the will of God.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Science of the Cross, #187***

He who with blind faith no longer desires anything except in so far as God will is, has at last reached the highest stage attainable by man supported by the grace of God.

11.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Science of the Cross, #132***

Faith is the way that traverses the night leading to the goal of union with God; in it is accomplished the painful rebirth of the spirit, its transformation from natural being into supernatural being.

….Faith is a means to become spiritual and therefore logically a movement, an ascent toward heights ever more inexpressible and an ascent towards depths ever more unfathomable.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross***

Faith is referred to as midnight darkness, because in order to gain its light, we are obliged to renounce completely the light of natural knowledge.

***Ven. Mother Luisita, OCD***

How beautiful it is – the complete submission to the Divine Will. What great joy one experience in saying ‘The will of God!”.

***Pay special attention to prayers while dressing asking God to give to Mary His own virtues with which to clothe me. “Prepare my soul, O Lord, as I prepare my body to go to choir. Clothe me with the fervor of your Divine Spirit and the precious gift of your grace.”***

*12.*

**Fifth Day: Hope**

**Mk. 11:22ff Lk. 8: 50ff**

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Science of the Cross, # 82***

Hope creates an emptiness in the memory constraining it to occupy itself with something it does not yet possess. It teaches us to hope for everything from God and for nothing from ourselves or from other creatures; to hope for eternal happiness from Him and therefore to renounce every pleasure and possession in this life.

***St. John of the Cross, The Dark Night, Book II, Chapter 21, #11***

Hope empties and withdraws the memory from all creature possessions, for as St. Paul says, “Hope is for that which is not possessed (Rom. 8:24)”. It withdraws the memory from what can be possessed and fixes it on that for which it hopes. Hence, only hope in God prepares the memory perfectly for union with Him.

***St. John of the Cross, The Dark Night, Book II, Chapter 20, #1***

The soul runs without fainting by reason of its hope. The love that has invigorated it makes it fly swiftly. The prophet Isaiah also speaks of this step: The saints who hope in God shall renew their strength. They shall take wings like the eagle and shall fly and not faint. (Is 40:31).

***St. John of the Cross, Dark Night, Book II, Chapter 21, #6-7***

The greenness of living hope in God imparts such courage and valor and so elevates the soul to the things of eternal life that in comparison with these heavenly hopes all earthly things seem as they truly are, dry, withered, dead, and worthless. A person is thus divested of all worldly garments and does not set his heart on anything of what there is or will be, in the world; he lives clothed only in the hope of eternal life. Having his heart so lifted up above all things of the world, he is not only unable to touch or take hold of worldly things, but he cannot even see them. Hope…covers all the senses of a person’s head so that they do not become absorbed in any worldly things, nor is there any way in which an arrow from the world might wound them. Hope allows the soul only a visor that it may look toward heavenly things, and no more. This is the ordinary task of hope in the soul; it raises the eyes to look at God.

***Ven. Mother Luisita, OCD***

Instead of thinking about dying, don’t you think that it would be a better idea to ask our good God to help you die to yourself? Be careful and don’t allow yourself to become discouraged. You can do so very much to obtain eternal life! God our Lord, Who has given you so many proofs of His predilection, is asking for your faithfulness and self-denial. So, *adelante* (forward) my daughter! I want to see you in a very high place up there in heaven, and with a little effort on your part, no doubt that’s just how I’ll be seeing you.”

***The Israelites rose at the sound of the horn which announced the first rays of the sun. They faced the east and praised God for a new day. Be up with the first sound of the bell, kneeling and praying the rising prayers; “Praised be Jesus Christ and His Virgin Mother! Come to prayer, sisters, come to praise the Lord!” “I am yours, for You was I born, Lord. What do You desire of me? By the sign of the Holy Cross, deliver us from our enemies, O Lord, in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.”***

*13*

**Sixth Day: Charity**

**Matt. 22:34ff James 3:20**

***St. John of the Cross, Dark Night, Book II, Chapter 21, #11***

Charity also empties and annihilates the affections and appetites of the will of whatever is not God and centers them on Him alone. Thus charity prepares the will and unites it with God through love.

***St. John of the Cross, Dark Night, Book II, Chapter 19-20***

The steps on the mystical ladder of divine love;

The first step of love makes the soul sick in an advantageous way. This sickness is not unto death but for the glory of God.

The second step causes the soul to search for God unceasingly.

The third step of this loving ladder prompts the soul to the performance of works and gives it fervor that it might not fail.

On the fourth step of this ladder of love a habitual unwearisome suffering is engendered on account of the Beloved. The spirit possesses so much energy on this step that it brings the flesh under control and takes as little account of it as would a tree of one of its leaves. The fourth step so inflames a person and enkindles him with desire for God that it enables him to ascend to the fifth step.

The fifth step of this ladder of love imparts an impatient desire and longing for God. On this step of hunger, the soul so feeds on love- for in accord with its hunger is its satisfaction that it can ascend to the sixth step.

The sixth step makes the soul run swiftly toward God and experience many touches in Him.

The soul’s charity is now highly increased and almost completely purified.

The seventh step of the ladder gives it an ardent boldness. The favor God now gives it imparts an ardent daring…(however) it is illicit for the soul to become daring on this step if it does not perceive the divine favor of the King’s scepter held out toward it (Est. 5:2; 8:4) for it might then fall down the steps it has already climbed. On these steps it must always conserve humility.

The eighth step of love impels the soul to lay hold of the Beloved without letting Him go. The ninth step of love causes the soul to burn gently…The Holy Spirit produces this gentle and delightful ardor by reason of the perfect soul’s union with God.

The tenth and last step of this secret ladder of love assimilates the soul to God completely because of the clear vision of God which a person possesses as soon as he reaches it. After reaching the ninth step in this life, the soul departs from the body.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. Science of the Cross, #198***

Love, in its highest expression, is a fusion of beings in a mutual and voluntary surrender; such is the intimate Trinitarian life of God.

***St. John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle, Stanza 38, #2-3***

The soul desires…to love God as purely and perfectly as He loves her, in order to repay Him by such love. She declares to the Bridegroom in this stanza that there He will show her what was her desire in all her acts, how to love the Spouse as perfectly as He loves her…The soul’s aim is a love equal to God’s…for a lover cannot be satisfied if he fails to feel that he loves as much as he is loved.

14

***St. John of the Cross, The Living Flame, Stanza 3 #82***

Concerning the first, its love, there are three chief qualities of excellence. The first is that the soul here loves God, not through itself, but through Him. This is a remarkable quality for it loves through the Holy Spirit, as the Father and Son love each other…. The second excellence is to love God in God, for in this union the soul is vehemently absorbed in love of God and God, in great vehemence, surrenders Himself to the soul. The third excellence of love is to love him on account of Who He is. The soul does not love Him only because He is generous, good and glorious to it, but with greater force it loves Him because he is all this in Himself essentially.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Science of the Cross, #83***

Charity liberates the will from everything imposing as a duty to love God above all else. This however is possible only when anxious desire for creatures is removed.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, “Finite and Eternal Being”***

Against all the movements of like and dislike the Lord’s precept is set: “thou must love thy neighbor as thyself.” That applies without conditions or reductions. The neighbor is not he whom I like. It is everyone who approaches me, without exception. And again it enjoins, “Thou canst, so thou must!” It is the Lord who demands it, and He demands nothing impossible. Much more, He makes possible, what of course would not be possible.

***Ven. Mother Luisita, Letter #190***

Yes, my daughter, we have to forget about ourselves and make others happy. Whoever does good for others in this life will be a happy person…let’s bless Him for everything because He does everything well.

***Ven. Mother Luisita, Letter 513***

May you all see each other with true sisterly love and be helpful to one another without any discord among you.

***Ven. Mother Luisita, OCD***

If you become uneasy when you see your sisters commit faults, remember that all of us serve as instruments of each other’s sanctification, and you can be sure that no one has bad intentions, and that all of them are acting in good faith. If you could only see their interior motivation you would be convinced of this truth and you wouldn’t even notice what they do or say…Try to see all these things as coming from our Lord for you own good and adore His designs.

***As I kiss and put on the cincture today or adjust it, and as I touch the rosary, I pray with special attention in union with the Blessed Mother, “Unite me interiorly to Yourself, O Lord, and attach me to Your goodness by the bonds of charity that can never be broken.”***

15

**\*\*\*Evangelical Counsels**

***St. John of the Cross, Ascent, Book I, Chapter 13, #3***

Have a habitual desire to imitate Christ in all your deeds by bringing your life into conformity with His.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, “Elevation of the Cross”***

Before you hangs the Savior on the Cross, because He became obedient unto death on the Cross. The Savior hangs naked and destitute before you on the Cross because He has chosen poverty. The Savior hangs before you with a pierced heart. He has spilled His Heart’s Blood to win your heart. If you want to follow Him in holy purity, your heart must be free of every earthly desire.

***Venerable Mother Luisita, OCD***

I hope that our Lord who received your vows will also give you the grace to keep them because the keeping of our vows is our sacred duty.

16

**Seventh Day: Obedience**

**Matt. 19:17 Lk. 2:51ff**

***St. John of the Cross, Ascent Book II Chapter 22 #11***

This is the trait of a humble person: he does not dare deal with God independently, nor can he be completely satisfied without human counsel and direction….It is noteworthy that He did not say: where there is one alone, there I am; rather He said: where there are at least two. Thus God announces that he does not want the soul to believe only by itself the communications it thinks are of divine origin, nor that anyone be assured or confirmed in them without the church or her ministers. For God will not bring clarification and confirmation of the truth to the heart of one who is alone. Such a person would remain weak and cold in regard to truth.

***St. John of the Cross, Precautions #11-12***

Without the command of obedience, you never take upon yourself any work – apart from the obligations of your state – however good and full of charity it may seem, whether for yourself or for anyone else inside or outside the house. By such practice you will win merit and security.

…Always look upon the superior as though upon God, no matter who he happens to be, for he takes God’s place. And note that the devil, humility’s enemy, is a great and crafty meddler in this area. Much profit and gain comes from considering the superior in this light, but serious loss and harm lies in not doing so. Watch, therefore, with singular care that you study neither his character, his mode of behavior, his ability, or any of his other methods of procedure, for you will so harm yourself as to change your obedience from divine to human, being motivated only by the visible traits of the superior, and not by the invisible God, whom you serve through him.

Your obedience is vain and all the more fruitless in the measure that you allow the superior’s unpleasant character to annoy you or his good and pleasing manners to make you happy. For I tell you that by inducing religious to consider these modes of conduct, the devil has ruined a vast number of them in their journey toward perfection. Their acts of obedience are worth little in God’s sight, since they allow these considerations to interfere with obedience. If you do not strive, with respect to your personal feelings, to be unconcerned about whether this one or another be superior, you will by no means be a spiritual person, nor will you keep your vows well.

***St. John of the Cross, Romance #7, Verse #7***

My will is Yours,

The Son replied,

And my glory is

That your will be Mine.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, The Marriage of the Lamb***

The obedient person studies the Rule and Constitutions, not to ferret out how many so called “freedoms” are still permitted, but to recognize more and more how many small sacrifices are available daily and hourly as opportunities to advance in self-denial….To the children of this world such an action as obedience probably appears as useless, senseless and petty. The Savior, who for thirty years filled his daily work with such small sacrifices, will judge differently.

***Ven. Mother Luisita, OCD***

I urge you to be very obedient. Without obedience, you won’t be taking one single step toward heaven. The contrary will happen.

17

***Venerable Mother Luisita, OCD***

Our Lord wants me here at the moment. Let it be all for Him! Give infinite thanks to God our Lord for granting you so many graces…be sure to make use of those graces, lest the fountain of graces dry up because they were rejected. Obey, my daughters, obey.

Die to yourself that Christ may live in you. Don’t do anything without permission. Obey immediately, and watch out that dissipation doesn’t come into your soul. What great harm it does! Toward this end you’ll need mortification of the senses and continual prayer, but with tranquility through short aspirations that you can repeat often. This will be of great help to your soul.

***While dressing and putting on the veil, and throughout the day as well, I pray and recall the words: “This veil teaches me that I ought to die to the world and to myself in order to live entirely for You.” Blessed Mother, help me to possess my will in such fullness and freedom that as you did, I can surrender it all to Him.***

18

**Eighth Day: Poverty**

**Lk. 9:1ff Matt. 6:19ff Matt. 19: 21ff**

***St. John of the Cross, Ascent, Book I, Chapter 13, #4***

In order to be successful (in imitating Christ) renounce and remain empty of any sensory satisfaction that is not purely for the honor and glory of God.

***St. John of the Cross, Minor Works, Letter #11***

To have the right idea of glory and love it, you should consider all the riches of this world and its delights as mud and vanity and weariness, as they truly are, and do not esteem anything, however signal and precious, except being in God’s grace.

***St. Therese, Letter #109***

Give your whole heart to Jesus. He is thirsty for it. He is hungry for it. Your heart, that is what He longs for, even to the point that to have it for Himself, He consents to lodge under a dirty and hidden nook! Ah, how not love a Friend who reduces Himself to such extreme indigence and how does one dare speak of one’s poverty when Jesus makes Himself like His fiancée…He was rich and He made Himself poor in order to unite His poverty to the poverty of Marie of the Blessed Sacrament. What a mystery of love!

***St. John of the Cross, Minor Works, Precautions #11***

Renounce possessions and you will flee from the devil and from evils unknown to you, of which God will one day demand an account. If you do not observe this precaution in little things as well as big, you will be unable to avoid the devil’s deceiving you, to a small or great degree, no matter how right you seem to be. Even if your negligence amounts to no more than not being governed by obedience in all things, you culpably err, since God wants obedience more than sacrifice. The actions of a religious are not his own, but belong to obedience, and if your withdraw them from obedience, you will have to count them as lost.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, The Marriage of the Lamb***

The vow of holy poverty is intended to make us as carefree as the sparrow and the lilies so that our spirits and hearts may be free for God.

***Ven. Mother Luisita, OCD***

We shall rest entirely in His hands understanding that He’s always watching us, that we’ll lack nothing and that He’ll grant us anything we need, if it is for our good.

Our Blessed Mother and St. Joseph didn’t complain about the ugliness of Bethlehem’s portal. There they were with the Divine Infant and it was His will that they had no comforts and this was enough for them to be happy.

All we have to do is to accept gladly the privations and rigors that poverty brings us. I know that God our Lord will only allow whatever is more beneficial for me to happen.

There should always be something which we need so that we can ask our Lord to supply it. May He be blessed!

19

Leave to our good Lord His part and He will dispose of everything to our greatest advantage. Let’s be submissive with true joy and fulfill His most holy will. Wither in abundance or in poverty, He will take care that we don’t die hungry and he will give us the things that are necessary because He loves us and is most powerful.

***As Mary was clothed with the very virtue of God, I clothe myself with the Faith with which God gifted me at baptism. Pray with special attention and in union with our Mother, the prayer while putting on the tunic, “Clothe me, O God, with the holy religious habit in order that I may appear before You in such a manner as my holy habit requires.”***

20

**Ninth Day: Chastity**

**Matt: 5: 27 Matt. 6:1ff Matt. 19:12**

***St. John of the Cross, The Living Flame, Stanza 2, #1***

The hand, the cautery, and the touch are substantially the same. The soul applies these terms to the Persons of the Trinity because of the effect each of the persons produces. The cautery is the Holy Spirit; the hand is the Father; and the touch is the Son. The soul here magnifies the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, stressing the three admirable favors and blessings they produce in it, having changed its death to life, transforming it in the Trinity.

The first is the delightful wound. This it attributes to the Holy Spirit, and hence calls Him a sweet cautery.

The second is the taste of eternal life. This it attributes to the Son, and thus calls Him a delicate touch.

The third is transformation, a gift by which all debts are fully paid. This it attributes to the Father, and hence calls it a gentle hand.

***St. John of the Cross, The Living Flame, Stanza 2, #1***

The espousal made on the cross is not the one we now speak of, for that espousal is accomplished immediately when God gives the first grace, which is bestowed on each one at baptism. The espousal of which we speak bears reference to perfection and is not achieved save gradually, and by stages. For though it is all one espousal, there is a difference in that one is attained at the soul’s pace and thus little by little, and the other is at God’s pace and thus immediately.

***St. Therese, Letter 110***

But the little hermit must tell you the itinerary of her trip and here it is. Before she left, her Fiance seemed to ask her in what country she desired to travel, what route she desired to follow, etc., etc.,… The little fiancé answered that she had but one desire, that of being taken to the summit of the mountain of Love. To reach it many routes were offered to her and there were so many perfect ones that she saw she was incapable of choosing. Then she said to her divine guide: “You know where I want to go. You know for whom I want to climb the mountain, for whom I want to reach the goal. You know the one whom I love and the one whom I want to please solely; it is for Him alone that I am undertaking this journey. Lead me, then by the paths which he loves to travel, I shall be at the height of my joy provided that He is pleased. Then Jesus took me by the hand , and He made me enter a subterranean passage, where it is neither cold not hot, where the sun does not shine, and in which the rain or the wind does not visit, a subterranean passage where I see nothing but a half-veiled light, the light which was diffused by the lowered eyes of my Fiance’s Face! My Fiancé says nothing to me, and I say nothing to Him either except that I love Him more than myself, and I feel at the bottom of my heart that it is true, for I am more His than my own! …I don’t see that we are advancing towards the summit of the mountain since our journey is being made underground, but it seems to me that we are approaching it without knowing how. The route on which I am has no consolation for me and nevertheless it brings me all consolations since Jesus is the one who chose it, and I want to console Him alone, alone!

***21***

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Science of the Cross #175***

The higher the soul rises toward God, the lower it sinks into itself; union takes place in the interior of the soul, in its more profound depth.

***St. John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle, Stanza 36, #3***

First, the soul desires to receive the joy and savor of love…Second, she desires to become like the Beloved…Third, she desires to look closely at and know the things and secrets of the Beloved Himself.

***Ven. Mother Luisita, OCD***

…My daughter, may Divine love consume your soul! After all, that’s the reason why we are in the world. All the rest is but a puff of smoke.

***With special devotion, while putting on the coif, say “O my Lord, grant me the grace to prefer death rather than soil my soul by sin. Purify it in Your Precious Blood and give me perfect contrition for my sins.***

**22**

**Second Novena: Knowledge of Mary**

**Introduction**

To know and understand Jesus, the King, we first need to know and understand Mary, chosen by the Father and prepared by the Holy Spirit as His crib, His chalice, His Mother. Why did God choose her from all women on earth? How did He prepare her? Guide her? Strengthen her? Bless her? How is she like us? How like Him? She is the holiest of all creation. What does that look like? What is this perfect balance between being done to and doing, between active and passive transformation? Did our Mother travel the same journey we do?

***OCD***

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, A Chosen Vessel of Divine Wisdom***

I need Carmel…with its perfection and way of perfection, Carmel with its purity, its apostolate, its martyrdom; Carmel with its special love for the sacred humanity of Our Lord and its veneration of the Blessed Virgin without being restricted to one of her states or mysteries.

***Ven. Mother Luisita, OCD***

Love our Blessed Mother very much. Make her your confidant. Talk to her about whatever is worrying you.

*Throughout this novena, I pay special attention to the times I show filial love for our Blessed Mother by* ***kissing the scapular****. I kiss it as I would kiss her hands, her apron…my mother!* ***I keep my hands under the scapular*** *as a reminder that God is my strength and that though I give Him all my energy and work, it is my person that is the greatest gift, the gift He looks for and treasures most.*

*I pray the* ***Memorare*** *with special attention, knowing that our Mother ‘can’t say “no” because she is God’s Mother and won’t say “no” because she is my mother.’ (St. Bernard)*

*As Mary pondered and was silent, she listened to Him. She was always open to the Holy Spirit, and she was made fruitful. I will pay special attention to the* ***practice of silence*** *and the* ***prayer to the Holy Spirit*** *that, like our Mother, I may come to hear His Heart. I pay special attention to the* ***practice of chastity****, putting God first, as did our Mother, in everything at every time and in every circumstance.*

*23*

**First Day: Immaculate Conception**

**Tradition Matt. 5:48 Is. 7:14**

We often think of the passive purification as the end stage of the spiritual journey – but this is the ultimate beginning of Mary’s life. God begins by preparing her, applying to her the merits of the Son she will bear and preserving her from sin. This preparation does not in any way make her less free to choose sin.

Mary’s Immaculate Conception is not a celebration of anything Mary did, but of God’s merciful love, God’s Eucharistic love, and of who God created her to BE. It is a celebration of who Mary IS. ***OCD***

***St. John of the Cross, Ascent, Book III, Chapter 2, #10***

God alone moves these souls to do those works that are in harmony with His will and ordinances…Such was the prayer and work of Our Lady, the most glorious virgin. Raised from the very beginning to this high state, she never had the form of any creature impressed in her soul, nor was she moved by any, for she was always moved by the Holy Spirit.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, “Woman”***

If we wish to observe a picture of the spouse and mother in its most genuine development, we must contemplate Mary Immaculate. At the center of her life is her Son. She awaits his birth in blessed serenity, she protects his childhood, follows Him on His way closely or at a distance, as He wishes, holds His dead body in her arms, carries out His will after His departure. But all this she accomplishes not as something her own; she is the handmaid of the Lord and she does what God has requested. Let us consider the Mother of God as spouse: a silent, immense confidence which in its turn expects an immense confidence; tacit obedience, faithful participation, open to sorrow, and all that in full adherence to the ordinance of God who gave her a man as earthly defense and visible head.

The image of the Mother of God shows us clearly which attitudes of the soul of the woman correspond to her natural vocation. In relation to man: obedience, confidence and participation in his life which favors his objective duties and the development of his personality; in relation to the babe: faithful protection, care, and development of the talents bestowed on him by God and for both one and the other, complete gift of self and promptness in withdrawing into silence when she is not needed…

Only by the power of grace can nature be freed from its wounds, raised to its true purity and be surrendered ready to receive the divine life. And this divine life is that inner driving force from which flows works of charity. Whoever wishes to preserve it everlastingly in himself must nourish it continually from those sources from which it flows without ceasing; the sacraments, above all the sacrament of love.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Life and Letters)***

Authentic discernment is supernatural and is found only where the Holy Spirit reigns; where there is a soul who, in total dedication and without entanglement in its thrust, strains its ear for the faint voice of its sweet Guest and watches for His sign

24

***Ven. Mother Luisita, OCD***

God, our Lord has His eyes fixed upon you all and He loves you very much.

May the Divine Infant be the sole owner of your entire being, my dearest daughter.

May your ordinary duties be done to perfection.

***Our Blessed Mother was conceived without sin. With her prayers and guidance, protection and love, we are meant to arrive in heaven without sin. While putting on the mantle, pray with attention: “O spotless Lamb of God, clothe my soul with the purity and whiteness of those who follow You. “***

25

**Second Day: Presentation and Gift Giving**

**(Tradition) Luke 2: 22ff**

Tradition tells us that at three, Mary was taken to the Temple and offered – to live there, learn and serve. She went willingly, giving the gift of herself. She already possessed the use of reason. She had no accomplishments. She gave her best and gave her all and gave it willingly and with joy. She knows its smallness compared to the greatness of God’s gift to her. Mary’s trust is an active gift that has also been received. ***OCD***

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Hidden Life and Epiphany***

So this is how we want to bring our gifts to the Lord. We lay them in the hands of the Mother of God. Nothing can give her most pure heart greater joy than an ever deeper surrender to the Divine Heart. Furthermore, she will certainly have no more urgent petition for the Child in the manger than the one for holy priests and richly blessed priestly ministry. And this is the petition…our Holy Mother has enjoined on us so compellingly as an essential constituent of our vocation to Carmel.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, “Woman”***

Religious profession is the absolute offering of one’s whole being and one’s whole life to the service of God; it exacts the commitment to use the means that make one capable for the fulfillment of the duties of one’s vocation; renunciation of all possessions, renunciation of every human and vital bond and union, renunciation of one’s own will.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, “Prayer of the Church”***

The total gift of our heart to God and the gift that he gives us in exchange, complete and eternal union, is the highest state that is accessible to us, the supreme degree of prayer…For the Blessed souls who have entered the profound union of divine life, rest and activity, contemplation and action, silence and speaking, receiving the gift of God in love and returning love by waves of thanksgiving and praise, are the same thing…

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, ‘Letter #18’***

The most intimate essence of love is the giving. God, who is love, gives Himself to creatures whom He Himself has created through love…He who gives Himself to God attains in union of love with Him the greatest fullness of his own being which, at the same time, is knowledge, gift of the heart and free act…To be able to give ourselves to God with love, we have to recognize Him as He who loves.

***Ven. Mother Luisita, OCD***

Love Him with all your soul and show Him your love by the exact fulfillment of your obligations, doing everything out of love for Him.

Are you growing in virtue by practicing self-denial and presenting these efforts through obedience as very small flowers to little Emmanuel (the child, Jesus) as St. Therese did?

***Our Lady entered into the give and take of a love relationship with God at a very tender age. Her way was the way of St. Therese of doing all things with great love. I ask for this grace as I pray the prayer after making the tarima: “Most merciful Queen of Heaven and generous Mediatrix of all graces, I want to please you in every way. I consecrate my whole being to you – my thoughts, words and actions of my entire life and particularly those of this day. I resolve, helped by the graces of Your Divine Son, to avoid sin and to perform all my duties in the most perfect way possible. My most merciful Mother and heaven’s Queen, help me and guide me in everything I do and never cease to intercede for me.”***

26

**Third Day: Fiat**

**Luke 1: 26FF**

Mary always searched to know and do the plan of God. Now that she knew what it was, there was no hesitation – no second thought- no reservation. Her trust and gift had always been completely given with her all at each moment. Now it was so complete, that the Word took flesh inside of her and all of time centered on that moment.

First comes Mary’s “Yes”. Mary is overshadowed: This happens again at Pentecost and at each of these times she is impregnated to bring forth Christ. Here at the annunciation she is impregnated with the Child who is true God and true Man and at Pentecost, with His Body the Church. His life in the Church and in each baptized person begins. It is a pregnancy that still goes on as she labors over each one…and as she labors over me. ***OCD***

***St. John of the Cross, Romance #8, The Incarnation (continued)***

Then He called

The archangel Gabriel

And sent him to

The Virgin Mary,

At whose consent

The mystery was wrought,

In whom the Trinity

Clothed the Word with flesh.

And though Three work this,

It is wrought in the One:

And the Word lived incarnate

In the womb of Mary.

And He who had only a Father

Now had a Mother, too,

But she was not like others

Who conceive by man.

From her own flesh

He received His flesh,

So He is called

Son of God and of man.

***St. John of the Cross, the Living Flame, Stanza 3, #12***

…The angel Gabriel called the conception of the Son of God, that favor granted to the Virgin Mary, an overshadowing of the Holy Spirit.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Letters #19***

The divine life that develops in the soul cannot be other than Trinitarian life. The soul that gives itself to the paternal will of God, so to speak, newly generates the Son. The soul is made one with the Son and would like to disappear in Him so that the Father would see none other than the Son. And its life is made one with the Holy Spirit thus becoming an effusion of divine love.

27

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Mystery of Christmas***

The Kingdom of God on earth began when the Blessed Virgin pronounced her “fiat” and she was its first servant. And all those who, before and after the birth of the Christ Child, adhere to Him in word and action – St. Joseph, St. Elizabeth with her son and all the others gathered around the crib, will enter the kingdom of God.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, “Woman”***

She is the handmaid of the Lord and she does what God has requested.

…Woman’s entrance into the various professional fields can be a real blessing for all social life, whether private or public, provided she preserves the specific feminine ethos. And in this case too, we could turn our gaze to the Mother of God, Mary; at the wedding feast of Cana, her silent and searching glance observed everything and noticed something was lacking. And before anyone had perceived it, before there was any chance of embarrassment, she had already given her aid. She found ways and means, gave the necessary direction, and all in silence without attracting any attention.

***Ven. Mother Luisita, OCD***

May you become a great saint.

***Each time the words of the Angelus (or Regina Caeli) are prayed, listen to the pondering heart of our Mother and let her words resound in my own heart: “Behold, the handmaid of the Lord. Let it be done to me according to Your Word.”***

28

**Fourth Day: Visitation and Service**

**Lk 1: 39**

Mary’s heart was always ready to serve – eager to do so. She was empty of self and so ‘full of grace’ that her energies were focused on doing, in God’s service, what ever was needed. Without even considering her own preferences, if indeed she even had any. For her preferences were simple: she was so single hearted, that she simply preferred God’s will. And her service was not on one level, either.   
What might be a simple deed was God’s action in and through her because she was filled with Him and so each deed was truly performed ‘through Him, with Him and in Him’.

Mary went ‘in haste’ to serve- She went with her treasure hidden – She went in joy- She went to give her youth and energy, her feminine genius, her filial support, her presence and to proclaim and magnify at the great love and presence of God. ***OCD***

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Life and Letters, 110***

Love understood as service is a disposition by which one lends aid to every creature to lead it to perfection…This model has found its most perfect realization in the chaste virgin who is the mother of all men.

***The Scapular of Carmel by the Most Rev. E. K. Lynch, O Carm***

(The Scapular was a kind of apron, put on to show readiness to do His work.)

Living as we do in an age very different from that of the Middle Ages, we find it hard to visualize the dependence of the vassal upon his lord. While feudalism held sway, it was a matter of life and death to belong to a lord. Before the rise of towns, commerce and industry, land was the only means of livelihood; and since it belonged to the lord, one had to have the right to till it in order to live. The vassal’s act of homage gave him the right as well as that of protection, which was as important then as it is now…Knowing how much faith and actual living were one in the Middle Ages, one can see how feudal ideas influenced religious ideas and practices and how the habit, of which the scapular is the principal part, took on a new meaning. Being a man of God, the friar was keenly aware that God is our one and only Master, but, after the manner of the time, he presented himself before His Divine Master as the vassal presented himself before his lord, “To pay his homage” and to receive the investiture from his hands. The religious ceremony of receiving the habit, although different in meaning, was the same as that of feudal investiture. Just as the vassal placed his hands in or between his lord’s and pronounced his oath of fealty or homage, so did the friar present himself before a superior, who took the place of God, to make his vows. The scapular, hanging from the shoulders, was an outward sign that the friar was “God’s man”, that he belonged entirely to Him and that he would pay Him the homage of his whole life….As the monk rose in the morning to begin a new day, the putting on of the scapular reminded him that he had taken the sweet burden of divine service upon himself and that the day ahead was to be all for God.

***Ven. Mother Luisita, OCD***

Love Him with all your soul and show Him your love by the exact fulfillment of your obligations, doing everything out of love for Him.

***While dressing and throughout the day, be conscious that the scapular is an apron, a symbol of service. It is also a sign of belonging to Our Mother. Kiss the scapular and say, “O my God, grant me the grace to carry with joy and love Your sweet yoke and burden all the days of my life.”***

29

**Fifth Day: Giving Birth**

**Matt. 1:18ff Lk. 2:1ff**

From all eternity, the Word was spoken. At the Annunciation he takes on human flesh and in the Incarnation He is heard in the crying of an infant. OCD

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Life and Letters, 109***

Mary has generated us according to the life of grace, having given her whole being, body and soul to be the Mother of God. From this is born a most intimate union between her and us: she loves us, she knows us and is completely available to make us what we ought to be.

***The Scapular of Carmel by the Most Rev. E. K. Lynch, O Carm, p. 9***

We can easily imagine our Blessed Mother making the swaddling clothes in preparation for the birth of her Son, and when she set out for Bethlehem, she made sure to bring them with her that she might wrap Him up and lay Him in the manger. Later, during the quiet hours of Nazareth, she prepared the seamless garment He wore to Calvary.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, “Woman”***

At the center of her life is her Son. She awaits his birth in blessed serenity; she protects His childhood…

***St. John of the Cross, Romances #9***

When the time had come

For Him to be born

He went forth like the bridegroom

From His bridal chamber,

Embracing His bride,

Holding her in His arms,

Whom the gracious Mother

Laid in a manger

Among some animals

That were there are that time.

Men sang songs

And angels melodies

Celebrating the marriage

Of two such as these.

But God there in the manger

Cried and moaned;

And these tears were jewels

The bride brought to the wedding.

The Mother gazed in sheer wonder

On such an exchange:

In God, man’s weeping,

And in man, gladness,

To the one and the other

Things usually so strange.

30

***Ven. Mother Luisita, OCD***

As you well know, a mother never forgets her children. She always wants to see them and to look after their needs and that’s how I feel toward all of you.

Take good care of your little sisters. Have a mother’s heart in your relationship with them.

Place upon each of the children wings of love and fear of God.

May God help you to implant the beautiful image of Jesus in those virginal little hearts, never to be erased. There is so much we can do for poor children, especially now during this time of turmoil. In everything you do, give evidence of your love and respect for your state in life. Remember that you are the daughter of a very great Mother.

*As I pray the* ***Litany of Our Blessed Mother****, I realize Mary’s nearness and the fittingness of each of the invocations. I meditate with her on the mysteries of the* ***rosary*** *and listen to her thoughts, the movements of her heart in each one.*

***31***

**Sixth Day: Flight and Persecution**

**Matt. 2:13ff**

She has just barely brought Him forth. He is still just a baby and already the sword pierces her heart. Herod wants Him dead.

The devil wants Him dead and is dogging His life from the start, launching plots, corrupting followers, trying to trap Him and convict Him out of His own mouth, to twist His Truth. OCD

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross,*** ‘***Prayer of the Church’, #22***

The Blessed Virgin, who kept in her heart every word that God revealed to her, is the model of those attentive souls in whom the prayer of Jesus the High Priest comes to life again; and those souls who, after her example give themselves to the contemplation of Christ’s life and passion, come to be especially chosen by the Lord to be the instrument of His greatest works in the Church.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, ‘Elevation of the Cross’***

If we try to contemplate in silence the road traveled by the Mother of God from the Purification to Good Friday, she herself will help us to find the ways of silence.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Letter 133***

The darker it becomes around us, the more we ought to open our hearts to the light that comes from on high.

***Blessed John Soreth, Exhortation on the Carmelite Rule***

…Salvation is from the Lord and we are to hope for salvation from our only Savior. The remembrance of, or longing for, his lasting salvation is the headpiece of our minds, which makes us safe against any blows the evil one can deal us.

But it is better to be armed for attack than for mere defense. This is why the Rule adds: ‘The sword of the spirit, the word of God, must abound in your mouths and hearts; let whatever you do have the Lord’s word for accompaniment.’ The pieces of armor we have been considering, the breast plate of holiness, the shield of faith and the helmet of salvation, will keep you safe enough from ever giving in to the devil or any of his minions; but there is another weapon which will enable you to subdue him completely with his whole horde and his works. This is the sword of the spirit, that spiritual blade the word of God. There are four reasons why the word of God is called the sword of the spirit; first, it is made by the Holy Spirit, ‘for it is not you who speak but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.’ Second, it slays our spiritual foes as Isaiah says: ‘With the breath of his lips, he shall slay the wicked.’ Third, it divides the spirit from the flesh as we find in the Letter to the Hebrews: ‘The word of God is living and active, piercing to the division of soul and spirit.’ Fourth, it wounds and penetrates our innermost spiritual parts which is why it is compared to sharp arrows in the Psalms, ‘A warrior’s sharp arrows.’

… ‘The word of God must abound in your mouths in preaching, and in your hearts’ in meditation.’ Just as our Order’s patroness, the Blessed Virgin Mary ‘kept all these words in her heart,’ so must they abound in your hearts by meditation and in your mouths by instruction….and let all you do, whatever it may be, ‘have the Lord’s word for accompaniment.’

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Letters 146***

One cannot desire freedom from the cross when one is especially chosen for the cross.

***Ven. Mother Luisista, OCD***

Leave everything to His divine Heart in order to endure what is happening with calmness and peace.

32

***Ven. Mother Luisista, OCD***

Now is the time to sow the seeds we’ll reap in heaven, offering God our Lord our sorrows and doing His holy will with serenity and joy.

O my daughter, let us love the cross! Let’s embrace it and see it as the proof of the love of a crucified God.

Abandon yourself to His Divine Hands and offer Him your sorrows and joys in peace and gladness.

Wherever we are, we experience both joy and sorrows. The truth is that we see Calvary everywhere. Blessed be God! It would be very unfortunate for us if we did not have the cross, for then we would completely forget about our good God.

***As the darkness and night approach, let me stand with our Mother in the dark hours of her life. Let me see how she accepted darkness and night as graciously as she rejoiced in day. I bless the room and myself with special attention to the full dimension of Christ Whose presence I may not* feel *but* do know*.***

33

**Seventh Day: Los of Christ and Pondering**

**Luke 2:41ff**

***St. John of the Cross, Dark Night, Book II, Chapter 6. #4-5***

God purges the sensory and spiritual substance of the soul bringing it into emptiness and poverty and abandonment…leaving it in dryness and darkness…the soul not only suffers the void and suspension of natural supports – which is a terrible anguish (like hanging midair, unable to breathe) but it is also purged by this contemplation. As fire consumes the tarnish and rust of metal, this contemplation annihilates, empties, and consumes all the affections and imperfect habits of the soul contracted throughout its life…The soul suffers…a natural and spiritual emptiness and an oppressive undoing and an inner torment.

***St. John of the Cross, Dark Night, Book II, Chapter 24, #4***

Whoever refuses to go out at night in search for the Beloved and to divest and mortify his will,…will not succeed in finding Him; The soul will find Him when it departs in darkness and with longings of love.

***St. John of the Cross, Dark Night, Chapter 25, #4***

Love alone, which at this period burns by soliciting the heart for the Beloved, is what guides and moves it and makes it soar to God in an unknown way along the road of solitude.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. ‘ Woman’***

The image of the Mother of God shows us clearly which attitudes of the soul of the woman correspond to her natural vocation. In relation to man: obedience, confidence and participation in his life which favors his objective duties and the development of his personality; in relation to the babe: faithful protection, care and development of the talents bestowed on him by God; and for both one and the other; complete gift of self and promptness in withdrawing into silence when she is not needed.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, ‘Science of the Cross’***

When under the action of detachment and spiritual darkness, faith plants firm roots in the soul, hope and charity likewise flow into it; a charity that logically does not manifest itself by giving a sensation of sweetness, but rather by producing in the soul a strength, a more decisive courage, a vigor hitherto unknown.

***Blessed Titus Brandsma, ‘the Mysticism of the Passion’***

Mary, who kept all God’s words in her heart, in the fullness of grace granted her, understood the great value of suffering. While the apostles fled, she went out to meet the Savior on the way to Calvary and stood beneath the cross, in order to share his grief and shame to the end. And she carried him to the grave, firmly trusting that he would rise.

***Ven. Mother Luisita, OCD***

Let us bless God our Lord in everything – both in the tribulations and in joys. Let us bless His Divine Majesty in the midst of our suffering. Let us adore His high designs and offer up your sorrows to Him. This is what pleases Him the most.

***Whenever I sing today, let me remember the Song of Songs and God’s courting love. Our Blessed Mother kept His courting love always in her heart. Let my heart and voice sing His praises!***

34

**Eighth Day: Behold Your Son/ Mary as Mother**

**Jn. 19:25ff**

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, “Woman”***

At the center of her life is her Son. She awaits his birth in blessed serenity, she protects His childhood, follows Him on His way closely or at a distance, as He wishes; holds His dead body in her arms, carries out His will after His departure.

Let us consider the Mother of God as spouse: a silent, immense confidence, which in its turn expects an immense confidence; tacit obedience; faithful participation, open to sorrow, and all that in full adherence to the ordinance of God who gave her a man as earthly defense and visible head.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Jexta Crucem Tecum Stare!***

Today, I stood with you beneath the Cross,

And felt more clearly than I ever did

That you became our Mother only there.

Even an earthly mother faithfully-

Seeks to fulfill the last will of her son.

But you became the handmaid of the Lord;

The life and being of God made Man

Was perfectly inscribed in your own life.

So you could take your own into your heart,

And within the lifeblood of your bitter pains,

You purchased life anew for every soul

You know us all, our wounds, our imperfections;

But you know also the celestial radiance

Which your Son’s love

Would shed on us in Heaven.

Thus carefully you guide our faltering footsteps,

No price too high for you to lead us to our goal.

But to those whom you have chosen for companions,

To stand with you around the eternal throne,

They here must stand with you beneath the Cross,

And with the lifeblood of their bitter pains

Must purchase heavenly glory for those souls

Whom God’s own Son entrusted to their care.

***The Scapular of Carmel, The Most Rev. El K. Lunch, O Carm, p. 16-17***

Mary loves us with the same love she has for her First-born, and the double-edged sword that pierced His Heart opened wide her heart that it might be the refuge to sinners to the end of time and the gate to heaven for those who hope in her. Her love embraces every child of Adam and there is no power that will snatch a soul from her protecting love. She was made to be the Mother of mercy, and her mission on earth and in heaven is not to judge but to show mercy and to open her pierced heart wider and wider to the poor banished children of Eve who fly to her for help. The Eternal Father made her “full of grace” that her Love might bestow it where justice would deny it. As St. Bernard says: ‘She is impetuous in mercy, she is resistless in mercy. The duration of her mercy is unto the end of the sinner’s life. The broadness of her mercy is unto heaven. The depth of her mercy is unto the lowest abyss of sin and sorrow. She is always merciful. She is our Mother of mercy.”

A sinner can be saved only through the holy Virgin who, by her merciful prayers, obtains salvation for so many who, according to strict justice, would be lost.”

35

***Ven. Mother Luisita, OCD***

I’m telling you to pray very much – a humble prayer filled with trust, asking our Lord to grant you that grace which you so greatly desire through the intercession of the Blessed Mother. Try to remain recollected. Humble yourself and meditate upon both your present situation and upon what you are asking for – that specific grace which you are desiring and hoping to receive as favor from God. Meditate upon the love God our Lord has for you…Be sure to meditate very close to the tabernacle, peacefully and without being apprehensive about this or that because anxiety is bad. It springs from pride.

***As I kneel beside the tarima and prepare for sleep, I pray to our Mother, “Most Merciful Queen of heaven, most trustworthy Mother of the forsaken, who find in you their shelter, I beseech you with all the ardor that is mine, that you compassionately help me this night so that having been renewed by a sleep free from disturbances of body and soul, I will awaken tomorrow with fervor and zeal to continue to praise your Most Holy Son and you, my Mother.***

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**Ninth Day: Mother in Glory – Spouse of the Holy Spirit – Intercessor**

**Jn. 2:1ff**

***St. John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle, Stanza 2, #8***

The soul does no more than disclose her need and suffering to the Beloved. The discreet lover does not care to ask for what she lacks and desires, but only indicates this need that the Beloved may do what He pleases. When the Blessed Virgin spoke to her Beloved Son at the wedding feast in Cana in Gallilee, she did not ask directly for the wine, but merely remarked: “They have not wine.” There are three reasons for this; first, the Lord knows what is suitable for us better than we do; second , the Beloved has more compassion when He beholds the need and resignation of a soul that loves Him; third, the soul is better safeguarded against self-love and possessiveness by indicating its lack, rather than asking for what in its opinion is wanting.

***St. John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle, Stanza 2, #4***

Every soul should know that even though God does not answer its prayers immediately, He will not on that account fail to answer it at the opportune time if it does not become discouraged and give up its prayer.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Life and Letters, 101***

The need for participation and for motherly assistance is manifested everywhere in this single word: motherhood. We can sum up what we have indicated as a personal value of woman. Only that should not be a question of a motherhood limited by the narrow ambit of family or of personal friends, but on the model of the Mother of mercy, extending itself to al those who are weary and fearful, and sinking its roots into the universal love of God.

***St. John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle, Stanza 20-21, #14***

Yet, were we to desire to speak of the glorious illumination He sometimes gives to the soul in the habitual embrace which is a certain spiritual turning toward her in which he bestows the vision and enjoyment of this whole abyss of riches and delight He has placed within her, our words would fail to explain anything about it. As the sun shining brightly upon the sea lights up great depths and caverns and reveals pearls and rich veins of gold and other materials, etc., so the Bridegroom, the divine sun, in turning to the bride so reveals her riches that even the angels marvel and utter those words of the canticle: Who is she that comes forth like the morning rising, beautiful as the moon, resplendent as the sun, terrible as the armies set in array,

***The Scapular of Carmel, Most E.K. Lynch, O. Carm.***

The life of the Blessed Mother was a perfect replica of that of her Son. Her words to the Archangel give us the key to her entire life. She was always and everywhere the handmaid of the Lord and she lived to do his will. She kept every word that was spoken to her in her heart and made her life the incarnation of the divine will as she knew it. When she told the waiters at the wedding feast to do what her Son would tell them, she revealed the secret of her own life and taught all of us the true meaning of the consecrated life.

***St. John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle, Stanza 20-21, #15***

Nothing can reach or molest her now that she has withdrawn from all things and entered into her God where she enjoys all peace, tastes all sweetness and delights in all delight…

37

***Ven Mother Luisita, OCD***

God loves you very much, my daughter. Correspond to that love. Make acts of humility, especially interiorly. Be truly simple and try to detach yourself from everything that is not God. You’ll be able to obtain all of this through the intercession of our Blessed Mother. Don’t doubt it.

***Blessed Mother’s praise rose up to the Father continually from her heart that was “full of grace”. Each time I pray the Magnificat; after Holy Communion, during Evening Prayer, I unite my heart with hers and praise God for the mysterious ways He works, always as Love, in my life and in the lives of others.***

*38*

**Third Novena: Knowledge of the Heart of Jesus**

**Introduction**

***St. John of the Cross, The Ascent, Book I, Chapter 13, #3***

First, have a habitual desire to imitate Christ in all your deeds by bringing your life into conformity with His. You must then study His life in order to know how to imitate Him and behave in all events as He would.

***St. John of the Cross, Romance 7: The Incarnation***

Now that the time had come

When it would be good to ransom the bride

Serving under the hard yoke

Of that law

Which Moses had given her,

The Father, with tender love,

Spoke in this way:

Now, You see, Son, that Your bride

Was made in your image,

And so far as she is like You

She will suit You well;

Yet, she is different, in her flesh

Which Your simple being does not have.

In perfect love,

This law holds:

That the lover become

Like the one he loves:

For the greater their likeness,

The greater their delight.

Surely your bride’s delight

Would greatly increase

Were she to see You like her,

In her own flesh.

My will is Yours,

The Son replied,

And my glory is

That Your will be Mine.

This is fitting, Father,

What You, the Most High, say;

For in this way

Your goodness will be the more seen,

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Your great power will be seen

And Your justice and wisdom.

I will go and tell the world,

Spreading the word

Of your Beauty and sweetness

And of Your sovereignty.

I will go seek My bride

And take upon Myself

Her weariness and labors

In which she suffers so;

And that she may have life

I will die for her,

And lifting her out of that deep,

I will restore her to You.

***Ven. Mother Luisita, OCD***

How beautiful it is to be in the hands of God, searching His Divine gaze in readiness to do whatever He wishes.

***Throughout these nine days, I will pay special attention to times during the day that I make the Sign of the Cross. When St. Bernadette was asked to show how the Blessed Mother made the Sign of the Cross, she became silent, lost in the experience of seeing Our Mother do this. I will pay special attention to making this sign as Our Mother did. I will also listen attentively to God speaking to me through the Liturgy of the Word and the scriptures, and like our Mother, ponder His Word and let it nourish and guide me. Our Blessed Mother always listened with body, mind and soul to the Word. Throughout this Novena, I listen with the heart of Mary, to the Liturgy of the Word with special attention and love, asking the Holy Spirit to bring Christ to life in me, my thoughts, words and actions.***

***Each time I encounter my superiors, I will stand or show respect with which Our Lady encountered her Son and acknowledge the special place my superiors hold as intermediaries of Christ’s Divine Will and Presence. I will seek to deepen my awareness of the Word present in and through my superiors. I pay special attention to the practice of obedience.***

*40*

**First Day: the Hidden Heart: Jesus in the Womb and in the Eucharist**

**John 6 Luke 1: 41**

Because the stable was so small

And the moment so brief

He gave us the Blessed Sacrament

So that we might

Not only feast our eyes on him

Or hold him for a few minutes,

But that He might actually come within us

And make His home in us.

The Eucharistic Heart of God

Is made Incarnate

Not just once, or even once a year,

But daily, hourly, and remains with us.

Such is His desire to be

Our Emmanuel.

***OCD***

***St. Therese, Letter # 92***

O, my darling, think then that Jesus is there in the Tabernacle expressly for you…for you alone. He is burning with the desire to enter our heart…don’t listen to the devil; mock him, and go without fear to receive Jesus in peace and love!

***St. Therese, Letter #108***

Dear Celine, let us make a little tabernacle in our heart where Jesus may take refuge, and then He will be consoled, and He will forget what we cannot forget: (the ingratitude of souls that abandon Him in a deserted tabernacle!) (***Open to me, my sister, my beloved for my face is covered with dew, my locks with the drops of night.*** ***Song of Songs***) That is what Jesus says to our soul when He is abandoned and forgotten.

***Bl. Elizabeth of the Trinity, “Light, Love, Life”, p. 52***

In the evening I made a good half hour of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament until the Divine Office at 8:00. Who could describe the sweetness of this heart-to-heart encounter in which one feels no longer on earth and no longer sees nor hears anything but God! God who speaks to the soul; God who communicates to it such sweet things; God who asks it to suffer! In short, Jesus who desires a little love…

***Letter of Bl. Elizabeth of the Trinity to Germain de Gemeaux, Sept 14, 1902***

St. Teresa says that the soul is like a crystal in which the Divinity is reflected. I so love this comparison, and when I see the sun invade our cloisters with its rays, I think that God invades the soul that seeks only Him in the same way!

Listen to what Saint John of the Cross says: “O soul, most beautiful of creatures, who desire so ardently to know the place where your Beloved dwells in order to seek Him and unite yourself to Him; you yourself are the retreat where He takes refuge, the dwelling where He hides Himself.”

That is the whole life of Carmel: to live in Him; then, all sacrifices all immolations become divine, for through everything the soul sees Him whom it loves and everything leads it to Him; it is a continual heart-to-heart exchange! You see that you can already be a Carmelite in your heart. Love silence and prayer, for this is the essence of the life of Carmel. Ask the Queen of Carmel to teach you to adore Jesus in profound recollection.

***41***

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, “Woman”***

Whoever visits our Eucharistic God and consults Him in all his necessities, whoever lets himself be purified by the divine power emanating from the sacrifice of the altar and offers himself to the   
Savior with this sacrifice, whoever receives Him in Holy Communion into the depths of his soul, will be ceaselessly drawn, and that ever more deeply into the current of divine life, he will grow in the mystical Body of Christ, and his heart will be conformed to the model of the Divine Heart.

***Venerable Mother Luisita, OCD, Letter #12***

Form a beautiful and rich tabernacle to Our Lord within your heart and then do not let Him go. In that way you will always have Him with you.   
Enter within yourself, and meeting Him tell Him your experiences.

***Venerable Mother Luisita, OCD, Letter #195***

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be your dwelling,…; Let’s place ourselves in the hands of God so that He will do whatever He pleases with us, and let’s wish nothing else except what He wishes.

***Venerable Mother Luisita, OCD, Letter # 319***

Try to be better everyday. Don’t forget to study your religion and make visits to the Blessed Sacrament before your classes.

***Venerable Mother Luisita, OCD, Letter #318***

Don’t feel alone because you’re not. Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament wants to be your Confidant, your Friend, your Consoler. He wants to fill your soul with His love. Perhaps that’s why He is making you feel the emptiness of creatures. How good our God is and by how many difficult paths He leads souls! Don’t doubt it. You’ve been very dear to Him and it’s only natural that He will be jealous with those souls He loves so much. He wants you all for Himself.

***Our Mother is always in adoration before the Heart of her Son. Each time I pass the chapel, I unite my heart with hers in adoration of our Lord present in the Most Blessed Sacrament and make a spiritual communion.***

42

**Second Day: Heart of the Savior**

**Matt. 10:6ff Jn. 4:32**

***St. John of the Cross, Romance 7 #7-10***

My will is Yours

The son replied,

And My glory is

That Your will be Mine.

This is fitting, Father,

What you, the Most High, say

For in this way

Your goodness will be the more seen,

Your great power will be seen

And your justice and wisdom.

I will go and tell the world,

Spreading the word

Of Your beauty and sweetness

And of Your sovereignty.

I will go seek My bride

And take upon Myself

Her weariness and labors

In which she suffers so;

***St. John of the Cross, Romance, Romance 9***

When the time had come

For Him to be born

He went forth like the bridegroom

From his bridal chamber,

Embracing His bride

Holding her in His arms,

Whom the gracious Mother

Laid in a manger

Among some animals

That were there at that time.

Men sang songs

And angels melodies

Celebrating the marriage

Of two such as these.

But God there in the manger

Cried and moaned;

And these tears were jewels

The bride brought to the wedding,

The mother gazed in sheer wonder

On such an exchange: 43

In God, man’s weeping

And in man, gladness.

To the one and the other

Things usually so strange.

***Scapular of Carmel by Most Rev. E.K.Lynch, O.Carm***

When one thinks of a consecrated life, the glorious example of Christ and of His Blessed Mother come to mind. Christ‘s whole life was spent for the glory of His Father. He came not to do His own will but that of Him who sent Him. Even when His human nature recoiled in horror from the bitter chalice in the garden, his prayer was: “not my will but Thine be done.” When the evening of his life came, He turned to His Father in heaven and confessed that He had sought only His glory upon earth. The life that began in the crib and ended on the cross was one totally consecrated to the Heavenly Father.

***Ven. Mother Luisita, OCD, Letter #124***

God, our Lord has entrusted you with the mission of saving souls. Bless Him for that and apply yourself to prayer so that you will be able to carry out that mission.

***Ven. Mother Luisita, OCD, Letter #22***

Our good Lord gives you so many proofs if His love for you, my daughter, and how I wish that you would correspond to that love! You have to be very grateful and not deny Him anything that He asks of you. Be very generous and love Him with all your soul, and even more now that He is persecuted so very much. Try to console Him with innumerable acts of love, praying at the same time, for our holy Mother the Church, for the conversion of sinners and make acts of faith for those who have none.

***Her life was always overshadowed and therefore made fruitful by the Holy Spirit. (St. Augustine tells us the Holy Spirit is the ‘kiss’ of the Father and the Son.) I join with Mary in praying the prayer to the Holy Spirit and “Direct, we beseech Thee, O Lord, all our actions by Your holy inspiration, and carry them on by Your gracious assistance, that every prayer and work of ours may always begin from You and through You be happily ended. Seat of Wisdom, pray for us,” I open the door of my will for Jesus, Our Savior, to save me AND to save others through me.***

*44*

**Third Day: Heart of the Child**

**Luke 2:49ff**

The heart of the Child Jesus, trusting: He knows no guile, no evil in His heart.

He is vulnerable-having made Himself so, choosing to be so.

He is dependent: needing, waiting, believing he will receive what is good, trusting beyond appearances that what God permits is indeed what is best.

He is alive and interested in the world around Him which is His Father’s gift and he sees His Father’s love in everything. And in discovering this love, He finds Himself, the Word, in and through whom ALL come to be.

He learns from Mary, the Immaculate, to receive all God sends and give all He asks.

He is the Lamb being prepared for total gift of self by giving that total gift each day…always…all.

***OCD***

***From a Poem given to St. Therese of Lisieux, author unknown***

You are suffering, Jesus, my little brother,

And to dry Your tears, You have no toy,

I come to offer myself to You; You will want, I hope,

To play with this poor object.

***St. Therese, Letter #201***

The night of Christmas was, it is true, decisive for my vocation, but to name it more clearly I must call it: the night of my conversion. On that blessed night, about which it is written that it sheds light even on the delights of God Himself, Jesus, who was fit to make Himself a child out of love for me, saw fit to have me come forth from the swaddling clothes and imperfections of childhood. He transformed me in such a way that I no longer recognized myself.

***Ven. Mother Luisita, OCDE Letter #659***

May the Divine Infant be the sole owner of your entire being, my dearest daughter.

***The heart of the Child Jesus, the heart of the home in Nazareth, is in my heart, too! I unite myself with our Mother, the Mother of that Heart, in asking that this night and especially the last sleep of death bring me safely to a new day and ultimately THE New Day. I recall His Presence and pray the prayer getting into bed: “Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I give you my heart and soul. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, assist me in my last agony. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, may I breathe forth my soul in peace with you, Amen.***

*45*

**Fourth Day: Heart of the Son**

**Matt. 11:25ff Matt. 6:26ff**

He who provides for the universe contents Himself

with providing for His Mother and Himself with enough left over to give to the poor.

Working with His hands as a master carpenter-

Trusting daily in the Father’s Providence. ***OCD***

***St. John of the Cross, Romance 3***

My Son, I wish to give You

A bride who will love You.

Because of You she will deserve

To share our company,

And eat bread at our table,

The same bread I eat,

That she may know the good

I have in such a Son;

And rejoice with Me

In Your grace and fullness.

I am very grateful, Father,

The Son answered;

I will show My brightness

To the bride You give Me

So that by it she may see

How great My Father is,

And how I have received

My being from Your being.

I will hold her in My arms

And she will burn with Your love,

And with eternal delight,

She will exalt your goodness.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, ‘Woman’***

Life is love: love overflowing, that has no limits and that gives itself freely; love that yields mercifully to every need; love that heals the sick and rouses to life what was dead; love that protects, defends, nourishes, teaches, and forms; love that is afflicted with the afflicted and glad with those in joy; that is ready at the service of each one in order to fulfill the plan willed by the Father, in a word; the love of the Divine Heart.

***Ven. Mother Luisita, OCD***

Get rid of those tears of sadness and be happy in the Lord. Serve Him with joy as a daughter to her father.

Now you can freely and truthfully say, “Our Father who are in Heaven.’ You no longer have anything on this earth that can hinder you. Your affections, goals and hopes should be focused only in heaven…Let’s bless our good God Who has prepared a place where, as St. Augustine says, “United together, we’ll love each other and enjoy ourselves.”

***Each time I pray the Our Father, let me unite myself with our Mother.***

**Fifth Day: Heart of the Teacher and Healer**

**Matt. 4:23ff Matt. 5 Matt. 14:22 Mk. 1:40ff**

He worked daily, as master carpenter

With young boys apprenticed to Him; and He, their teacher.  *OCD*

***St. John of the Cross, Romance 4, v. 8-12***

And that He would lift them

Up from their lowliness

So that no one

Could mock it any more;

For He would make Himself

Wholly like them,

And he would come to them

And dwell with them;

And God would be man

And man would be God

And He would talk with them

And eat and drink with them;

And He Himself would be

With them continually

Until the consummation

Of this world.

***Blessed John Soreth, Exhortation on the Carmelite Rule***

So let the love of Christ kindle your enthusiasm; let his knowledge be your teacher and his constancy your strength. May your enthusiasm be fervent, balanced in judgment and invincible, and neither lukewarm nor lacking in discretion. Love the Lord your God with all the affection of which your heart is capable; love him with all the attentiveness and balance of judgment of your soul and reason; love him with such strength that you will not be afraid to die for love of Him.

***Venerable Mother Luisita, OCD Letters #135***

May God help you to implant the beautiful image of Jesus in those virginal little hearts, never to be erased. There is so much we can do for poor children, especially now during this time of turmoil.

***Venerable Mother Luisita, OCD Letters #194***

Take very good care of the girls, the little ones. Observe them, reprimand them and advise them, for it’s my hope that they’ll become exemplary.

***Holy Mother Church teaches me in many ways, always with the voice of Jesus, the Teacher. As I pray the prayer of the Church, Morning, Evening and Night Prayer, I unite myself with the Church, and especially with the heart of our Mother, Mary, in each prayer.***

*47*

**Sixth Day: Heart of the Shepherd**

**Matt. 19:13ff John 10:1ff**

***St. John of the Cross, Poetry. More Stanzas Applied to Spiritual Things***

A lone young shepherd lived in pain

Withdrawn from pleasure and contentment,

His thoughts fixed on a shepherd-girl

His heart an open wound with love.

He weeps but not from the wound of love,

There is no pain in such a wound

However deeply it opens the heart;

He weeps in knowing he’s been forgotten.

That one thought: his shining one

Has forgotten him, is such great pain

That he gives himself up to brutal handling in a foreign land,

His heart an open wound with love.

The shepherd says: I pity the one

Who draws himself back from my love,

And does not seek the joy of my presence,

Though my heart is an open wound with love for him.

And after a long time he climbed a tree,

And spread his shining arms,

And hung by them, and died,

His heart an open wound with love.

***St. John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle, Stanza 22, #1***

Great was the desire of the Bridegroom to free and ransom His bride completely from the hands of sensuality and the devil. Like the good shepherd rejoicing and holding on his shoulders the lost sheep for which he had searched along many winding paths,…now too, that the soul is liberated, this loving Shepherd and Bridegroom rejoices. And it is wonderful, to see His pleasure in carrying the rescued, perfected soul on His shoulders, held there by His hands in this desired union. Not only does He Himself rejoice, but He also makes the angels and saintly souls share in his gladness….

***Venerable Mother Luisita, OCD, Letters #124***

God our Lord has entrusted you with the mission of saving souls. Bless Him for that and apply yourself to prayer so that you will be able to carry out that mission.

***A sheep is vulnerable and dependent on the shepherd for everything. As I entrust myself into the Heart of Our Good shepherd, I unite myself with Mary, who tended Him as a child and yet was always tended by Him: “Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place my trust in Thee!” Before the Blessed Sacrament, I make this little novena of trust with my whole heart.***

*48*

**Seventh Day: Heart of the Servant**

**John 13**

***St. John of the Cross, The Ascent, Book II, Chapter 7, #8-11***

I should like to persuade spiritual persons that the road leading to God does not entail a multiplicity of considerations, methods, manners and experiences,…But demands one thing necessary: true self-denial, exterior and interior, through surrender of self both to suffering for Christ and to annihilation in all things…A man makes progress only through imitation of Christ, Who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one goes to the Father but through Him…I should not consider any spirituality worthwhile that would walk in sweetness and ease and run from the imitation of Christ…

First during His life, He died spiritually to the sensitive part…and at His death, He died naturally. He proclaimed during his life that He had no place whereon to lay His head. And at His death He had less…At the moment of His death He was certainly annihilated in His soul, without any consolation or relief, since the Father left him that way in innermost aridity in the lower part…This was the most extreme abandonment, sensitively, that he had suffered in His life. And by it He accomplished the most marvelous work of His whole life, surpassing all the words and deeds and miracles that He had ever performed on earth or in heaven. That is, He brought about the reconciliation and union of the human race with God through grace. The Lord achieved this, as I say, at the moment in which He was most annihilated in all things: in his reputation before men, since in beholding Him die, they mocked Him instead of esteeming Him; in his human nature, by dying, and in spiritual help and consolation from His   
Father, for He was forsaken by His Father at that time so as to pay the debt fully and bring man to union with “God….When he is brought to nothing, the highest degree of humility, the spiritual union between his soul and God will be effected. This union is the most noble and sublime state attainable in this life.

***Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity, Mother’s Testimony, 76-77***

It was on the eve of the First Friday of the month. Faithful to her rendezvous at Gethsemane, Elizabeth had just spent part of the night in prayer when her poor mother, unable to sleep, came to kneel beside her bed, freely mingling her tears with those of her daughter who did not try to hide her broken heart. “Then, why are you leaving me?” the mother said. ‘Ah! My dear mama, can I resist the voice of God, who is calling me? Holding out His arms to me, He tells me that He is unknown, outraged, neglected. Must I, too, abandon Him? I must leave…”

***Venerable Mother Luisita, OCD, Letters #312***

Leave our good Lord His part and He will dispose of everything to our greatest advantage. Let’s be submissive with true joy and fulfill His most holy will. Either in abundance or in poverty, He will take care that we don’t die hungry and he will give us the things that are necessary because He loves us and is most powerful.

***I pray the Prayer before recreation with special attention: “Lord my God, I am going to unite with your servants to take a little recreation. May this act be according to your good pleasure and contribute to your glory. Grant us the grace to find in it new strength to serve you better, henceforth, This is also what I ask of you, O Mary, august Queen of heaven and mother of mine, Amen. Praised be Jesus Christ and His Virgin Mother! To recreation, Sisters, come to praise the Lord.”***

*49*

**Eighth Day: Heart of the Lamb**

**John 1:29ff John 6:53ff**

***St. Therese, Letter #87***

Jesus is on fire with love for us…look at His adorable Face!...Look at His eyes, lifeless and lowered! Look at His wounds…Look at Jesus in His Face…There you will see how He loves us.

***St. John of the Cross, Ascent, Book II, Chapter 7, #11***

This union is the most noble and sublime state attainable in this life. The journey, then, does not consist in recreations, experiences, and spiritual feelings, but in the living sensory and spiritual, exterior and interior death of the cross.

***Letters of St. Therese, Volume 1, Page 570***

A picture received from Mother Marie de Gonzague stimulated Therese’s piety in this same direction. This was a picture of the blood-stained Face of Jesus. We can still read these lines from the printed text: “Speak, my Jesus! Speak…what must I do to console you?” And Jesus answers: “What I want from you, faithful soul, is LOVE…Humble love that reduces self to nothing…generous love that forgets self.”

***St. Teresa of Jesus, The Way of Perfection, Chapter 26m #5-6-7***

If you are experiencing trials or are sad, behold Him on the way to the garden: what great affliction He bore in His soul: for having become suffering itself, He tells us about it and complains of it. Or behold Him bound to the column, filled with pain, with all His flesh torn in pieces for the great love he bears you; so much suffering, persecuted by some, spit on by others, denied by His friends, abandoned by them, with no one to defend Him, frozen from the cold…Or behold Him burdened with the cross, for they didn’t even let Him take a breath. He will look at you with those eyes so beautiful and compassionate, filled with tears. He will forget His sorrows so as to console you in yours merely because you yourselves go to Him to be consoled, and you turn your head to look at Him.

…Let us walk together, Lord. Wherever you go, I will go; whatever you suffer, I will suffer. Consider carefully the fatigue with which He walks and how much greater His trials are than those trials you suffer, however great you may want to paint them and no matter how much you grieve over them.

***Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity, February 15, 1903, Letter #156***

You ask me how I can endure the cold. I suffered much more from winter at home than I do in Carmel where I have no heat at all. ….God gives the grace; besides, it is so helpful when I feel these little things to look at the master who also endured all that because He has “exceedingly loved” us, as St. Paul says; then I thirst to repay Him love for love!

I will tell you what I do when I feel a little tired: I look at the Crucified One and when I see how He gave Himself for me, it seems that I can do no less for Him than to spend myself, wear myself out, in order to repay Him a little of what He has given me! In the morning at holy Mass, let us share in His spirit of sacrifice…Then after that, let us always stay in Him during the day…

***Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity, August 7, 1902, Letter #133***

A Carmelite is a soul who has gazed on the Crucified One; who has seen Him offering Himself as a Victim to His Father for souls and, recollecting herself in this great vision of the charity of Christ, has understood the passionate love of His soul and has wanted to give herself as He did.

***St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross, Elevation of the Cross***

Before you hangs the Savior on the Cross, because He became obedient unto death on the cross. The Savior hangs before you with a pierced heart. He has spilled His Heart’s Blood to win your heart. If you want to follow Him in holy purity, your heart must be free of every earthly desire.

**50**

***Venerable Mother Luisita, OCD, Letters, #210***

All the works of God have the sign of contradiction, difficulty and great sorrow and humiliation. If none of these is present, don’t be so sure of the work and be afraid of its execution. Therefore, with this in mind, you should be at peace and happy to see that it has His stamp. Be positive that it will be done when God our Lord wants it so…

***The Heart of the Lamb was broken, pierced and opened for me on the cross. As I pray the “Soul of Christ”, I stand with the Blessed Mother before the crucifix and unite my heart with hers.***

**51**

**Ninth Day: Heart of the Bridegroom**

**Rev. 22:17 John 10:10**

***St. Teresa of Jesus, Way of Perfection, Chapter 26, #3-4***

He is not waiting for anything else, as He says to the bride, than we look at Him. In the measure you desire Him, you will find Him. He so esteems our turning to look at Him that no diligence will be lacking on His part…

They say that for a woman to be a good wife toward her husband, she must be sad when he is sad, and joyful when he is joyful, even though she may not be so. The Lord, without deception, truly acts in such a way with us. He is the one who submits…

***St. John of the Cross, Spiritual Canticle, Stanza 22, #1***

Great was the desire of the Bridegroom to free and ransom His bride completely from the hands of sensuality and the devil.

***St. John of the Cross, Romance #4***

He would take her

Tenderly in His arms

And there give her His love;

And when they were thus one,

He would lift her to the Father

Where God’s very joy

Would be her joy.

For as the Father and the Son

And He who proceeds from them

Live in one another,

So it would be with the bride

For, taken wholly into God

She will live the life of God.

***St. Therese, Letters #115***

But the poor little fiancee of Jesus feels that she loves Jesus for Himself alone, and she wants to look at her Beloved’s face only to catch there the tears which flow from His eyes which have delighted her by their hidden charms! She wishes to dry these tears in order to make her dress from them on the day of her wedding, a dress which will be hidden too, but will be understood by her Beloved.

***St. Therese, Letters, #116***

Tomorrow she will be the bride of Jesus; tomorrow, she will be the bride of Him whose Face was hidden and whom no one recognized!

***Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity, Good Friday, March 31, 1899, D. 124***

I have given (my heart) to the King of kings. I hear the voice of my Beloved in the depths of my heart: “If you follow Me you will have suffering, and the Cross. But also what joys, what sweetness I will make you taste in these tribulations. Do you feel enough love for your Jesus? I want your heart. I love it. I have chosen it for Me. Keep your heart for Me!” “Yes, my Love, my Life, Beloved Spouse whom I adore, yes, be assured I am ready to follow You along this way of sacrifices. Oh, You want to show me all the thorns that I will find. Good Jesus, we will pass through them together; following You and with You, I will be strong.

**52**

***Venerable Mother Luisita, OCD, Letters #70***

Oh, how much our good God loves you! He has kept your soul for Himself alone. Be grateful to Him, do not, absolutely do not deny Him anything that He might ask of you, and understand that God never allows Himself to be outdone in generosity.

***Venerable Mother Luisita, OCD, Letters #76***

Try to be happy, to eat and sleep well so that you will be in good shape in every sense and you’ll be finding out how happy you will be. Please your Divine Spouse and leave the world alone.

***At noon and during Night Prayer, I look carefully at the day and examine my heart for Love, for it will be the only thing on which I am judged. I ask our Mother go to guide me gently to be open to the Holy   
Spirit as I pray Examen.***

*53*

**Fourth Period: Consecration: Understanding Total Gift**

**Introduction**

***The Scapular of Carmel, Most Rev. E.K. Lynch, O.Carm.***

One might ask: what does consecration mean? For our present purpose it simply means making a thing sacred by surrendering it to God…Consecration, however, should mean more than a formula that is soon forgotten…Consecration is total surrender, a complete giving up of oneself…consecration is more than outward conformity to certain practices of devotion; it involves the whole of our live, more especially the mind and the heart. When one thinks of a consecrated life, the glorious example of Christ and of his Blessed Mother come to mind. Christ’s whole life was spent for the glory of His Father. He came not to do His will but that of Him who sent Him…the life of the Blessed Mother was a perfect replica of that of her Son…

The saintly monk of our own time, Dom Marmion, was deeply devoted to Mary and after Holy Communion, while Christ was present in his soul, he would re-consecrate himself to her simply by saying: “Mother, behold thy son.” It is when Christ lives in us and abides with us that we are the sons of His mother. It is the living image of Christ that makes the consecrated life. And there is no better place to find it than in the life of His Mother.

***Venerable Mother Luisita, OCD, Letters #375***

I’d like you not to forget the fruit of your retreat. Everyday try to think about the resolutions you made even if it’s very briefly, examining yourself to see if you’re keeping them. Don’t forget to consecrate yourself every morning and night to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Mary and St. Joseph, and have a great devotion to your Guardian Angel.

***Throughout these next six days, I will pay special attention to the times each day that I look at or receive Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament or see or kiss Him on the crucifix. I will unite myself with Mary and remember to keep my eyes and heart fixed on Him. I will also try to enter more fully into the Liturgy of the Eucharist.***

54

**First Day: Incarnational Love: Mother Luisita’s Offering**

My Offering – December 24, 1928

When the deep silence of the night commemorated the birth of the Godchild Who became man for love of us, placing as my witnesses and intercessors the Blessed Virgin Mary as the Immaculate Conception, St. Teresa of Jesus, St. Therese, St. John of the Cross, my Guardian angel and St. Margaret Mary, and being only about a yard and a half from where the Blessed Sacrament was, I said:

Lord, do me the charity of accepting me as Your own: I do not have any of the virtues required for you to accept me, but look at your own merits and my desires. Here I am Lord. I offer myself to You without any reservations or conditions. I want to deny you nothing. Deign to accept me so that once and for all I am in right relationship with You. I am here. I am yours. Do with me as You will. Give me Your love and make me suffer whatever you like, and in whatever manner you want. I do not want to be anything. I want to be the target of your justice, where Your chastising arm would rest.

If You are pleased with my life, here it is Lord, any way You want it. Without breaking the fulfillment of my vows, I offer myself and all of my life to You for sinners in atonement for the sins that are committed everyday and for priests.

My Jesus, give me the necessary strength to suffer whatever You want to give me, or rather, cut off, burn, destroy, annihilate whatever you want. Even though my desire is that my life will be consumed soon, and how I wish that I could hasten its coming, yet I resign myself to Your holy will.

My Lord, I promise you to gladly accept any interior sorrow, sickness, contempt, calumny, false testimony, and my life, whatever way you are pleased to have me. And if my sufferings have any merit, I offer them for priests and in a very special way for my sisters.

***Ven. Mother Luisita, OCD, Letters #292***

Don’t forget to place yourself in the hands of God every day. Commend yourself to Him. Offer Him each little thing that you do and trust only in Him…God our Lord will take care of everything so that what happens will be the best for all concerned. May He be blessed for everything.

***As I pray the prayer to the Sacred Heart through the intercession of Mother Luisita, I unite myself with our Lady and with our Mother Luisita in offering myself as fully as I am able****.*

*55*

**Second Day: Indwelling Love: Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity**

O my God, Trinity whom I adore; help me to forget myself entirely that I may be established in You as still and as peaceful as if my soul were already in eternity. May nothing trouble my peace or make me leave You, O my Unchanging One, but may each minute carry me further into the depths of Your mystery. Give peace to my soul; make it Your heaven, Your beloved dwelling and Your resting place. May I never leave You there alone but be wholly present, my faith wholly vigilant, wholly adoring and wholly surrendered to Your creative action.

O my beloved Christ, crucified by love, I wish to be a bride for Your heart; I wish to cover You with glory; I wish to love You…even until death! But I feel my weakness and I ask You to ‘clothe me with Yourself,” to identify my soul with all the movements of Your Soul, to overwhelm me, to possess me, to substitute Yourself for me that my life may be but a radiance of Your life. Come into me as Adorer, Restorer, as Savior.

O Eternal Word, Word of my God, I want to spend my life in listening to You, to become wholly teachable that I may learn all from You. Then, through all nights, all voids, all helplessness, I want to gaze on You always and remain in Your great light. O my beloved Star, so fascinate me that I may not withdraw from Your radiance.

O consuming Fire, Spirit of Love, “come upon me,” and create in my soul a kind of incarnation of the Word: that I may be another humanity for Him in which He can renew His whole mystery. And You, O Father, bend lovingly over Your poor little creature; “cover her with Your shadow, seeing in her only the “Beloved in whom You are well pleased.”

O my Three, my All, my Beatitude, infinite Solitude, immensity in which I lose myself, I surrender myself to You as Your prey. Bury Yourself in me that I may bury myself in You until I depart to contemplate in Your light the abyss of Your greatness.

***Venerable Mother Luisita, OCD***

Lord, do me the charity of accepting me as your own.

***As I make the visit today, I pray especially with our Mother in gratitude for my vocation and for the grace of carrying out in my every action the consecration God is working in me.***

*56*

**Third Day: Eucharistic Love: Act of Oblation to Merciful Love of St. Therese of the Child Jesus**

O my God! Most Blessed Trinity, I desire to love You and make You loved, to work for the glory of Holy church by saving souls on earth and liberating those suffering in purgatory. I desire to accomplish Your will perfectly and to reach the degree of glory You have prepared for me in Your Kingdom. I desire, in a word, to be a saint but I feel my helplessness and I beg You, O my God, to be Yourself my Sanctity.

Since You love me so much as to give me Your only Son as my Savior and my Spouse, the infinite treasures of His merits are mine. I offer them to You with gladness, begging You to look upon me only in the Face of Jesus and in His heart burning with Love.

I offer You, too, all the merits of the saints (in heaven and on earth), their acts of Love, and those of the holy angels. Finally, AI offer you, O Blessed Trinity, the love and merits of the Blessed Virgin, my dear Mother. It is to her I abandon my offering, begging her to present it to You, her divine Son. My beloved   
Spouse, told us in the days of His mortal life: “Whatsoever you ask the Father in my name, He will give it to you!” I am certain, then, that You will grant my desires. I know, O my God, that the more You want to give, the more You make us desire. I feel in my heart immense desires and it is with confidence I ask You to come and take possession of my soul. Ah! I cannot receive Holy Communion as often as I desire, but Lord, are You not all powerful? Remain in me as in a tabernacle and never separate yourself from Your little victim.

I want to console You for the ingratitude of the wicked, and I beg of You to take away my freedom to displease You. If through weakness I sometimes fall, may Your Divine Glance cleanse my soul immediately, consuming all my imperfections like the fire that transforms everything into itself. I thank you, O my God! For all the graces You have granted me, especially the grace of making me pass through the crucible of suffering. It is with joy I shall contemplate You on the Last Day, carrying the scepter of Your Cross. Since you deigned to give me a share in this very precious Cross, I hope in heaven to resemble You and to see shining in my glorified body the sacred stigmata of Your Passion.

After earth’s exile, I hope to go and enjoy You in the Fatherland, but I do not want to lay up merits for heaven. I want to work for Your Love alone with the one purpose of pleasing You, consoling Your Sacred Heart, and saving souls who will love You eternally.

In the evening of this life, I shall appear before You with empty hands, for I do not ask You, Lord, to count my words. All our justice is stained in Your eyes. I wish then, to be clothed in Your own Justice and to receive from Your Love the eternal possession of Yourself. I want no other throne, no other Crown but You, my Beloved! Time is nothing in Your eyes and a single day is like a thousand years. You can, then, in one instant prepare me to appear before You.

In order to live in one single act of perfect Love, I offer myself as a victim of holocaust to Your Merciful Love, asking You to consume me incessantly, allowing the waves of infinite tenderness shut up within You to overflow into my soul, and thus I may become a martyr of Your Love, O my God!

***Venerable Mother Luisita***

Yes, my daughter, indeed you are going to give yourself to Christ. May all be for His greater honor and glory.

***As I pray the Morning Offering, I make the intention to refuse God nothing and to embrace each opportunity to give Him all.***

*57*

**Fourth Day: Annihilating Love: Carmelites of Compiegne**

**Infant God**

O Infant God, naught else an fill my longing. Yea, nothing else can satisfy my heart!

It’s settled, then. Henceforth I’m Thy belonging, And of Thy love, I’ve now become a part.

My criminal soul, heal of its sin so shameful, Wound Thou my heart, with pain or love’s delight.

Let wounds divine, wounds for my soul most gainful, Martyr my heart to suffer day and night!

O Love Divine, I now with all my being Here at Thy crèche abandon all my soul.

I thus yield up my reasoning and my seeing, From this time forth, my faith in Thee is bold!

Thy Heart alone, Thy Heart shall be my master! Thoughts and desires I sacrifice as weak.

Within Thy hear, I would now be clasped faster, The martyrdom of love alone I seek.

Oh! Fix my hope, oh, fix it all on dying!

Truly I die from not dying for thee.

And hasten, Lord, the end of all my sighing;

Freed from these chains to Thee alone I’ll flee!

Let Thy blade cut, completing all my offerings,

For nothing but Thy will for me is sweet.

My one desire is that Thy hand be hovering

O’re me, Thy bride, the sacrifice complete!

Thy shepherd’s crook, let it rule as the master

O’re this Thy flock, entrusted to my care.

Here at Thy crèche, I yield to Thee, O Pastor,

Mother and flock, abandoning all I dare!

O loving Queen, Mother of might most holy,

O deign to place us all within thy breast!

For in thy power, thy children all, though lowly,

Do set their hope, trusting in thy behest.

***Venerable Mother Luisita, OCD, Letter #277***

…you should prepare yourself by prayer for the very painful and great sorrow and difficulties you’ll have to bear in the work you are dong. The responsibility that you have is distinctive as well as a form of martyrdom. It seems that crosses fall from every angle and indeed this is a long procedure. It’s not a matter of dying. Rather, it’s a matter of living with contradiction and difficulties. Sometimes heaven itself will turn into bronze, but let nothing disturb you and nothing frighten you.

***Venerable Mother Luisita, OCD, Christmas Offering, December 24th, 1928***

My Jesus, give me the necessary strength to suffer whatever you want to give me – or rather, cut off, burn, destroy, annihilate whatever you want. Even though my desire is that my life will be consumed soon, and how I wish that I could hasten its coming, yet, I resign myself to Your holy will.

***Each time the greeting ‘Praised be Jesus Christ” is used today, I place myself with Mary as she looked for the first time at the face of God nestled in her arms. Blessed Mother, teach me to see Him in each and every person the Father’s providence brings into my life.***

58

**Fifth   
Day: Writing the Consecration**

Today, before the Blessed Sacrament, I write my consecration. Tomorrow, at the time of Holy Communion, I will ask the Blessed Mother to approach the Blessed Sacrament with me and to be present as He comes to me. After receiving Our Lord, in the presence of the witnesses mentioned below, and asking their intercession for strength in daily living out this consecration, I commit myself into His Heart through our Mother, with the words I have written.

(Write it out below or elsewhere and sign and date it.)

***Venerable Mother Luisita, OCD,***

Do not refuse Our Lord anything.

***In writing, I consciously and with thought and love, inscribe the J.M.+ J.T. The work I do in writing and in speaking as well as any other work, is done in union with the Holy Family and our holy mother, St. Teresa.***

*59*

**Sixth Day: Consecration to our King and Spouse through Our Mother and Queen of Mt. Carmel**

Today, I will enter my heart and there, with the Blessed Mother, receive him. Then with Our Blessed Mother, Mother Luisita, St. Teresa of Jesus and St. Therese of the Holy Face, St. John of the Cross, Blessed Elizabeth of the Trinity and all of our Carmelite family, give myself to Him through our Lady, Queen of Mt. Carmel.

***Venerable Mother Luisita, OCD***

I offer myself to You without any reservation or conditions.

***Today’s Mass is my opportunity to enter into the gate of heaven and participate more fully in the sacrifice of pure love being offered by Our Lord in obedience to the heavenly Father. I attend and participate in the Mass with my whole heart and soul and my full attention. I do this with Our Mother present and helping me to offer all as I make my consecration.***