



NOVENA OF THE IMMACULATE

MARY, THE NEAREST FACE

29 November- 7 December 2025

Province of Italy

Introduction: The chosen theme, "Mary, the Close Face," was inspired by the central theme of the Festival of the Mission held in Turin in October. Mary, the image of a close face, represents a unique model of humanity and closeness to God and humanity. Her face is not only a symbol of purity or motherhood, but also embodies proximity, care, and acceptance towards those in need. Speaking of "Mary, the Close Face" means reflecting on the ability to be present to others, to listen and offer comfort unconditionally, embodying values of compassion and solidarity that transcend the centuries. In this sense, Mary becomes an example of how the divine can draw near in everyday life, reminding us that true holiness is manifested in concrete care for others. Her life teaches us that true greatness is measured in the ability to listen, welcome, and accompany others with attention and concrete love. Mary thus becomes an example of how presence and compassion can make the divine tangible in daily life.

Hymn to the Holy Spirit

1st day - MARY, THE FACE OF LISTENING

Mary is called "the face of listening" because her life is marked by her ability to welcome and cherish the Word. When the angel Gabriel brings her the message, Mary does not respond impulsively but listens attentively, asks ("How will this be?"), and then entrusts herself ("Let it be done to me according to your word"). Her listening is not passive but active and fruitful: life is born from listening, because by welcoming the Word, Mary gives birth to the Word. The evangelist Luke emphasizes this dimension several times: This "listening heart" is the place where Mary unites faith and silence, acceptance and discernment. A listening becomes a journey, even in moments of darkness, as beneath the cross, where she continues to believe and listen to the mystery.

Sign: The Word among the words.... Bring newspapers and magazines to the altar, placing the Word of God at the center.

Hymn

Word of God – Lk. 2:19

For us today: To be like Mary, "face of listening":

- Do we know how to stop, be silent, make space for the voice of God and of others?
- Do we welcome the Word not only with our ears, but also with our hearts?
- Do we transform what we hear into concrete gestures of love and service?

Silence and sharing

Prayer: Mary, woman of listening, open our ears; grant that we may hear the Word of your Son Jesus amidst the thousand words of this world; grant that we may listen to the reality in which we live, to every person we encounter, especially those who are poor, needy, and struggling. Mary, woman of decision, enlighten our minds and hearts, so that we may obey the Word of your Son Jesus without hesitation; grant us the courage to make a decision, not to let ourselves be led by others to direct our lives. Amen

Hymn

2nd day - MARY, THE FACE OF THE HUMBLE RESPONSE

It is a title rich in meaning, inviting us to reflect on the figure of Mary, mother of Jesus, as a model of listening, acceptance, and humility. Mary is the woman of listening. Not a distracted or passive listening, but a listening that welcomes, preserves, and makes the Word flourish. In the silence of Nazareth, Mary allows herself to be reached by the voice of God, who calls her to an unthinkable mission. Her "Here I am" comes from a heart that has learned to listen, to interpret events with faith, and to trust completely. Mary's humble listening is not weakness but strength. It is the strength of one who does not impose, but welcomes; of one who speaks not to dominate, but to serve. It is in this silent and attentive heart that the Word becomes flesh.

Sign: Each one repeats her ***HERE I AM LORD***".

Hymn

Word of God - Lk. 1: 26-38

For us today: In a world that talks too much and listens too little, Mary teaches us the wisdom of silence, the patience of waiting, the joy of a simple and total yes.

- Do we know how to listen like Mary, to open ourselves to the voice of God and to the voices of our brothers, especially those who have no voice?
- His face is the face of humility that becomes service, of love that is born from listening. Do we know how to listen to one another, and are we capable of humbly placing ourselves at the service of the community, of the most vulnerable, of the Church?

Silence and sharing

Prayer: Mary, Holy Virgin, you who listened to the angel with an open heart, teach me to accept humbly God's will. Help me to bow my heart before His plan, to say "yes" even when I do not understand, to trust in His ways and His answers. Mary, face of mercy and love, guide me to live each day with simple and sincere faith, to accept trials and joys with the same serene heart, and to reflect your example of humility in every action.

Hymn

3rd day - MARY, THE FACE OF CONSOLATION

In the silence of the Gospels, Mary often appears as a discreet yet constant presence. She is not the protagonist who speaks a great deal: she is the Mother who listens, who keeps things in her heart, who remains at the foot of the cross. It is precisely in this silent faithfulness that the Church recognizes in her the Mother of Consolation, the one who accompanies, understands, and uplifts. Consolation, from the biblical perspective, is not simple emotional relief, but participation in God's hope. Mary consoles not by taking away pain, but by entering into it, passing through it, illuminating it with her faith. At the foot of the cross, where every human certainty crumbles, she becomes the mother of all who suffer. She offers not words, but her presence: a presence that says, "God is still here, even in the darkness." For Mary, being a Consoling Mother means becoming a transparency of divine mercy. In her, God's love takes on the tender and human face of a mother who dries tears and rekindles trust. Her consolation is that of the Holy Spirit – whom the Fathers called the Consoler – because Mary lives totally united with Him. Whoever entrusts himself to her experiences that her consolation is not an escape from pain but a rebirth in hope.

Sign: To bring a jar of oil to the altar, as a sign of consolation.

Hymn

Word of God – Jn. 19: 25-27

For us today: In our wounded times, Mary continues to bend over those who are lost, those who feel alone, those who cannot find meaning. She invites us to do as she does:

- Do we know how to console not with facile phrases, but with the *ability to be there* for others? Do we know how to transform pain into a meeting place, trials into the womb of new life?
- Do we learn from Mary that true strength lies not in dominating, but in loving; that true consolation lies not in fleeing tears, but in sharing them?

Silence and sharing

Prayer: Mary, Mother full of grace, you who are comfort to those who suffer, a face of sweet consolation, look upon our pain and our tears. Sustain us in times of sadness, bring the light of hope to our hearts, and teach us to always trust in the Father's mercy. O loving Mother, help us find peace in your presence, courage in your intercession, and joy in your maternal consolation. Amen

Hymn

4th day - MARY, THE FACE THAT LEADS US TO JESUS

In the silence of the Gospel, Mary appears as a discreet yet decisive presence. She does not speak much, she does not seek to draw attention to herself, but her every gesture, every word, every look points to Jesus. In her, we see the tenderness of God who becomes a mother, the pure trust of those who abandon themselves to the mystery, the light that illuminates the path of those who seek the face of the Lord.

Mary is the human face of obedience and pure faith: she welcomed the Word without fully understanding it, but she kept it in her heart, allowing the Word made flesh to flourish within her. Looking to Mary means learning to trust even when you do not see everything, to say "yes" even when the path is dark.

Her face does not hold us back, but directs us. Like a mother who accompanies her son to the threshold, Mary accompanies us to the heart of Christ. She is the one who teaches us the path of faith at Cana: "Do whatever he tells you." That sentence sums up her entire mission: leading people to the living Word that saves.

Contemplating Mary, we discover that holiness does not consist in doing extraordinary things, but in allowing God to shine through in the face of one's life. Mary is the transparency of God: her gaze does not restrain, but reflects; her love does not possess, but indicates; her faith does not close, but opens.

Sign: Bring two footprints to the altar and place them on a path.

Hymn

Word of God – Jn. 2: 1-11

For us today: For this reason, Mary's face is the first step toward the encounter with Christ. Whoever lets her gaze upon them feels invited to go further, to the face of the Son, where Love has taken flesh and awaits us.

- Looking at Mary or praying to her help how can a person feel closer to Jesus in everyday life?
- How can Mary's help support someone when they try to understand who Jesus really is and what his love means for them?

Silence and sharing

Prayer: Mary, you who said "yes" to the Father's will, guide us always to your Son Jesus. Help us to know Him, love Him, and follow Him with a sincere heart. Protect us in times of difficulty, enlighten our steps, and teach us to live according to His teachings. Mary, loving Mother, always lead our hearts to Jesus. Amen.

Hymn

5th day - MARY, THE FACE THAT CONTEMPLATES THE CREATION

Mary is the human face that opens in wonder before God's work. In her, creation finds its purest voice, that of the creature who recognizes the Creator's presence and goodness in the world.

Contemplating creation, Mary does not possess it, but welcomes it as a gift. Her eyes rest on the sky, the earth, the flowers of Nazareth, the light that enters through her window, and in everything, she sees a reflection of the Father. In her motherhood, creation is elevated: the Son of God becomes flesh in her womb, and matter itself becomes a place of salvation.

Mary contemplates and safeguards: as in the Magnificat, her gaze embraces the universe with gratitude and praises the Lord who "has done great things." In her, the contemplation of creation becomes prayer, respect, wonder, and responsibility.

Word of God – Lk. 1:46-55

Sign: To take to the Altar the soil, flowers, seeds, water.

Hymn

To us today:

- Like Mary, do we recognize God in everything around us?
- Creation is not only material, but also a sign of God's love. How can we be guardians of creation, respecting and protecting it?

Silence and sharing

Prayer: Mary, Mother of the open heart, you who look at the world with eyes of light, teach me to see the beauty in the little things, the miracle hidden in every flower, in every star, in every breath. Maternal face that contemplates creation, help me to recognize your presence in the calm waters of rivers, in the wind that caresses the treetops, in the sun that illuminates our days. May my heart know how to praise the Creator through care and respect for all of life, and may wonder become prayer in every gesture, every word, every thought. Amen.

Hymn

6th day - MARY, THE FACE OF PEACE

Mary is often presented as a symbol of peace in the Christian tradition: her face is an image of welcome, gentleness, and inner calm. It is not a superficial peace, but a profound peace, born of trust in God and the ability to approach every situation with humility and hope. Looking to Mary as the face of peace means learning to bring serenity to relationships, to overcome conflict with love, and to choose forgiveness when the temptation to react with anger seems strongest. Mary's face also reminds us that peace is not merely the absence of conflict, but the presence of harmony: harmony with ourselves, with others, and with God. Her spiritual motherhood invites each of us to become an instrument of peace in the world, starting with small daily actions: a kind gesture, a word of comfort, attentive listening. In this sense, Mary becomes not only a model of peace, but a concrete guide: her face encourages us to reflect on how our lives can reflect authentic and lasting peace. In the Gospel of Luke, Mary visits Elizabeth, and the child in her womb whispers a blessing of joy and peace, and Elizabeth recognizes her as "blessed among women." Here, Mary is seen as a bearer of joy and spiritual peace.

Sign: Bring to the altar the names of some countries still at war today, and light a candle in the center as a symbol of hope and light in situations "without peace."

Hymn

Word of God – Lk. 1:39-45

For us today: Being faces of peace also means demonstrating positive values: honesty, justice, respect for nature and others. In a world often marked by conflict, every gesture of kindness, listening, and understanding becomes a seed of peace that can grow and spread to those around us.

- Listen attentively to those around us, without immediately judging.
- Speak kindly, choosing words that build rather than destroy.
- Forgive those who have hurt us, freeing ourselves from resentment.
- Act with solidarity, helping those in need, even with small, concrete gestures.

- Cultivate inner peace, learning to manage anger, anxiety, and frustration in a healthy way.

Silence and sharing

Prayer: O Mary, Queen of Peace, turn your maternal gaze upon all of us, your sons and daughters: look upon our restless and troubled world, upon the suffering families, the torn communities, the divided peoples. You who carried in your womb the Prince of Peace, obtain for us from God the gifts of harmony and unity. Help us to be artisans of peace, to sow forgiveness where there is hatred, closeness where there is loneliness, hope where there is darkness. We take refuge in your mantle with trust: accept our supplications and make us instruments of your charity. Pray for us, Mother of Mercy, that we may live as brothers and sisters in a world renewed by the peace of Christ. Amen.

Hymn

7th day - MARY, THE FACE OF CARE

The figure of Mary embodies a form of care that goes beyond simple practical gestures: The care that welcomes, listens, and supports. Looking at Mary, one perceives the delicacy of a gaze that can read the pain and joy of others, without judgment, but with profound empathy. Mary's motherhood is not limited to the biological act of giving life; it becomes the archetype of interior and spiritual care. She watches patiently, accompanies discreetly, and supports courageously. She is the face of someone who knows how to be close in moments of vulnerability, without seeking to impose immediate solutions, but offering presence and consolation. Mary, as the face of care, also invites us to reflect on the social and communal dimension of care: caring for others means responsibility, dedication, and selfless love. Her figure inspires those who care for the sick, the weak, and the fragile, demonstrating that authentic care comes from listening from the heart rather than from technique or efficiency. Finally, Mary represents the hope that care is never an isolated act, but a bond that unites those who give and those who receive, transforming human relationships into spaces of growth, compassion, and reconciliation. In this sense, Mary's face reminds us that care is, primarily, a gesture of love that makes life flourish even in the most difficult circumstances.

Sign: to bring to the altar the signs of today's fragilities, those in need of care (migrants, the sick, the elderly, young people living alone...).

Hymn

Word of God – Jn. 19:26-27

For us today:

- Today, the face of care is a relational gesture: being present, attentive, and available without judgment.
- Giving meaning to every act of care as an expression of love and responsibility.
- Cultivating gratitude and attention to life.
- Mary reminds us that authentic care is concrete, silent, and constant: the love that manifests itself in daily gestures, in mutual support, and in trusting prayer.

Silence and sharing

Prayer: Mary, Mother of care and love, you who watch over every wound and welcome every fragility, turn your maternal gaze upon us, upon those who are alone, upon those who suffer, upon those who feel abandoned. You, who held the Son of the Father in your arms, accompany us on the day of trial, be a refuge for those who find no peace, consolation for those who feel oppressed, hope for those who await healing. Intercede with Him, so that every person experiencing pain may experience the caress of His love, the support of your sweet presence, and the help that comes from the merciful heart of the Lord. We trust in you as children entrusted to your hands, so that life, even in weakness, may blossom in joy, healing, and peace. Amen.

Hymn

8th day - MARY, THE FACE OF THE GUIDANCE AND GUARDIANSHIP OF THE CHURCH

Mary is often seen in Catholic tradition as a model of guidance and protection for the Church. This role is based on several key points:

- Spiritual guide: Mary accompanies the faithful with her example of faith, obedience, and listening to the Word of God. The Church considers her a guide because she points the way to Christ.

- Guardian of the faith: As the mother of Jesus, Mary is a symbol of protection and care for the Church, preserving the purity of faith and the sacramental life of believers.
- Intercession and support: In prayer, the faithful turn to Mary as the one who intercedes for them before God, supporting the Church in the difficulties of the world.
- Model of unity: Mary is present at all the central moments of the history of salvation and the life of the Church, representing the unity of faith, hope, and charity.
- Presence in the contemporary world: Today the Church faces complex challenges: conflicts, social injustices, the dispersion of spiritual values.

Sign: Each person writes on a piece of paper the name of the Church where they worked or work and places it in front of the altar.

Hymn

Word of God – Acts. 1:12-14

For us today: Are we capable of being courageous witnesses of faith, capable of loving, understanding, and accompanying others? Her guidance is not authoritarian, but maternal and discreet, oriented toward the common good. Are we capable of accompanying others in faith as maternal and discreet guides?

Silence and sharing

Prayer: O Mary, Mother of the Church, you who with your yes accepted God's plan, teach us to walk in faith, hope, and charity. You are the face of guidance: illuminate our steps, especially when the path is uncertain; support the pastors of the Church with your wisdom and courage; help each of us to follow Jesus with a docile and generous heart. You are the face of guardianship: protect our community from the snares of evil, guard our families, our young people, and our vocations; may the Church, under your maternal mantle, always remain a sign of hope and unity in the world. Mary, Mother of the Church, pray for us, guide us, protect us, lead our Church to Christ, your Son. Amen.

Hymn

9th day - MARY THE FACE OF THE IMMACULATE

"Maria, "Mary, the Immaculate face " recalls the idea of the Virgin Mary as a symbol of purity and holiness, free from original sin, in accordance with the Catholic doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. The "face" here is not merely physical, but represents the reflection of her inner perfection, of the grace and love of God manifested in her. Often, in artistic representations, Mary is depicted with sweet, serene, and luminous features, a symbol of her purity and spiritual motherhood. Mary, as the Immaculate, is for believers a model of purity, obedience, and trust in God. Her face, in Christian symbolism, represents not only physical features, but also the visible expression of an inner grace. To look upon Mary as the "face of the Immaculate" means to contemplate the possibility of a life illuminated by the presence of God, a life in which the heart becomes clear and capable of welcoming divine love.

Sign: display the painting of the Immaculate.

Hymn

Word of God – Gen. 3:9-15.20

For us today: Mary's face invites us to look within ourselves with sincerity: how can we make our hearts purer and more open to love? Do I live her same attitudes: having faith, being obedient, being a sign of hope for others?

Silence and sharing

Prayer: O Mary, Mother of God and our Mother, you are Immaculate from the first instant of your conception. Full of grace and divine love, look kindly upon those who turn to you. Help me to live according to the Father's will, to preserve purity of heart and mind, to walk in faith, hope, and charity. Intercede for me with your Son Jesus that I may obtain the graces necessary for my life and grow ever more in holiness. O Immaculate Mary, refuge of sinners, star of our journeys, accompany me and protect me always. Amen.

Final Hymn