



Mary

YOU ARE
OUR HELP

novena2026

SALESIANI
DON BOSCO
SEDE CENTRALE



Novena in preparation for the Feast of Mary Help of Christians.

Audiovisual work composed of 9 videos.

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Giorno 3 Miriam Fascellaro - Giorno 4 Fabio Pavoncello - Giorno 5 Luana Cannistraci

Giorno 6 Pedro André Pinto Junior, Jasmine Tripoli, Gaia Simoncini, Valentina Baldi

Giorno 7 Francesca Rossi - Giorno 8 Emiliano Tobia

Giorno 9 Antonio Amatruda (papà), Mirella Eva Bernardi, Lorenzo Carbonetti

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Illustrations: Silvia Allocco

Song “Maria aiuto se per noi” text and music: Gilberto Driussi

May 15

Mary
MOTHER
OF
PRESENCE



Mary mother of Presence

4

Canticle of Simeon

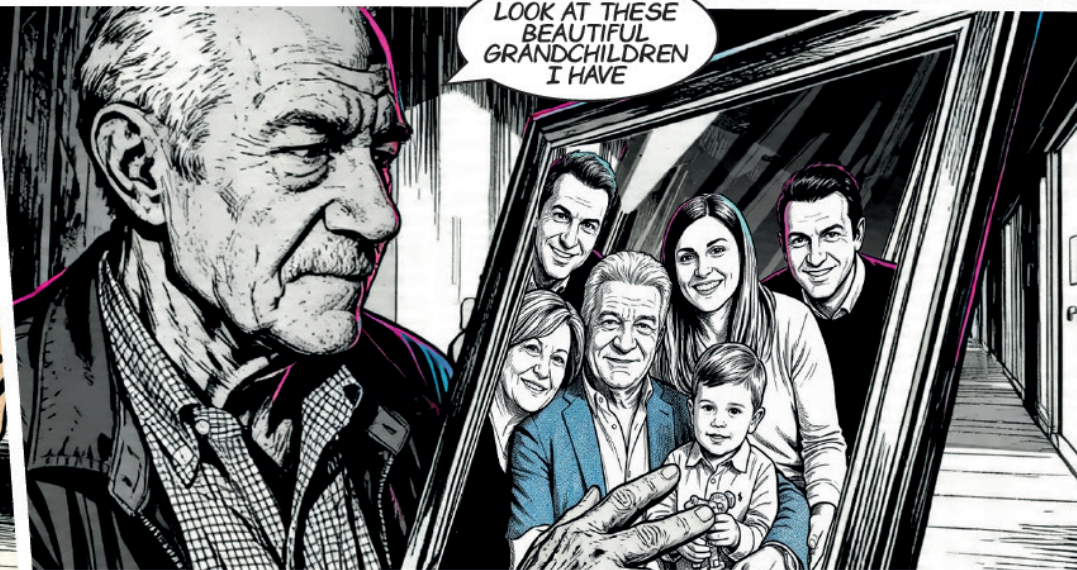
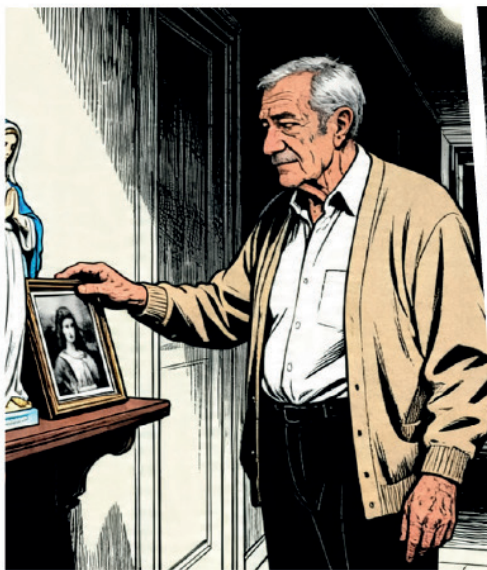
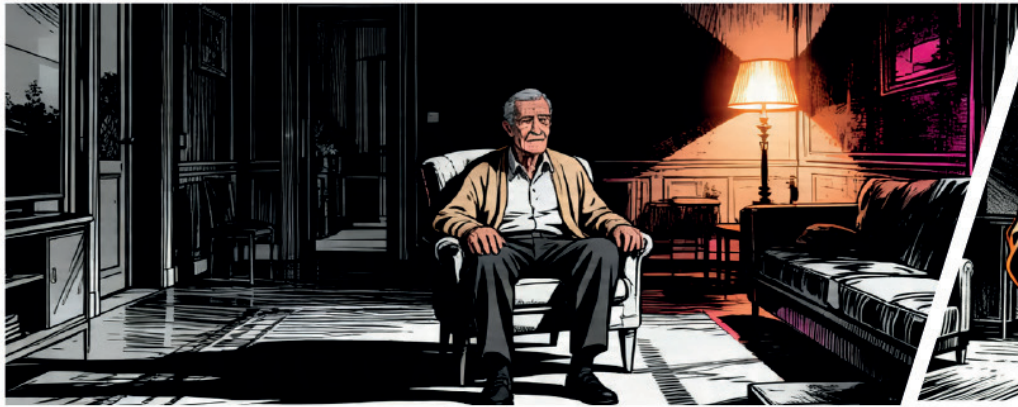
*At last, all-powerful Master
you give leave to your servant to go in peace
according to your promise.*

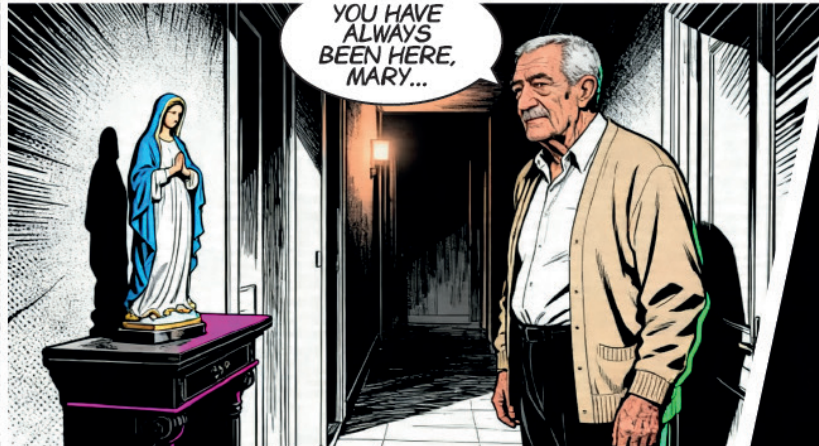
*For my eyes have seen your salvation
which you have prepared for all nations,
the light to enlighten the Gentiles
and give glory to Israel, your people.*



2026
novena

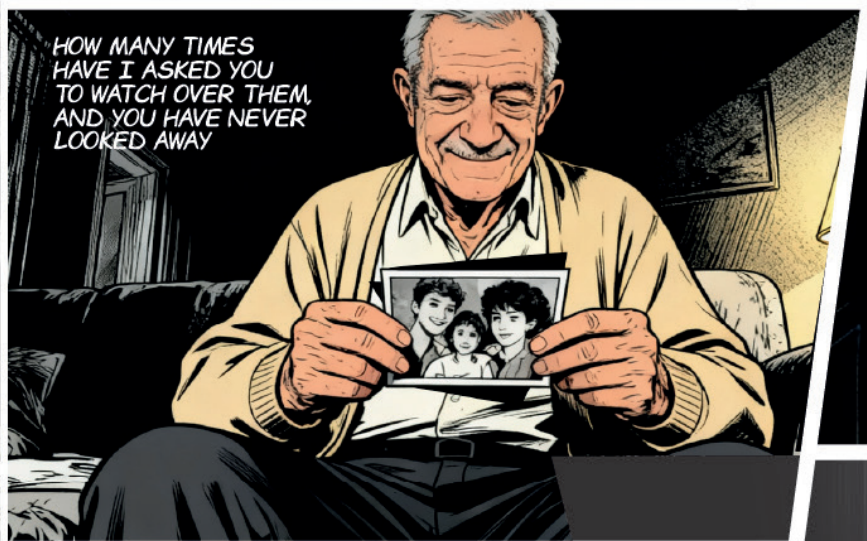
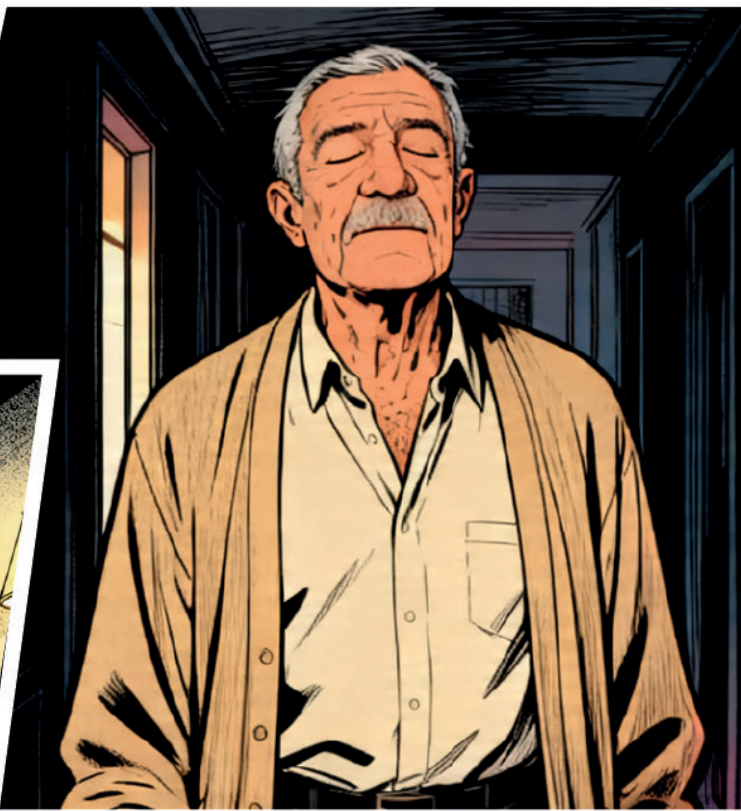
IT IS EVENING: WARM LAMPLIGHT ILLUMINATES THE QUIET LIVING ROOM WHILE THE ELDERLY MAN SLOWLY GETS UP FROM HIS ARMCHAIR





YOU HAVE ALWAYS BEEN HERE, MARY...

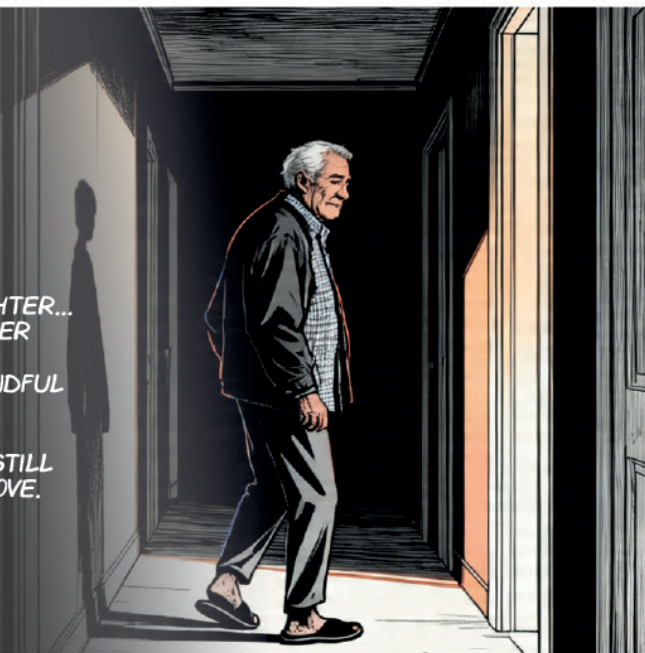
SINCE THE CHILDREN WERE LITTLE ONES, WHEN YOU WERE BY MY SIDE



HOW MANY TIMES HAVE I ASKED YOU TO WATCH OVER THEM, AND YOU HAVE NEVER LOOKED AWAY



NOW THAT I'M ALONE, I FEEL THAT IT'S YOU WHO REMINDS ME OF EVERY FACE, EVERY EMBRACE, EVERY BIT OF LAUGHTER... YOU ARE THE MOTHER WHO TEACHES ME TO REMAIN MINDFUL OF WHAT I HAVE EXPERIENCED, AND OF WHAT I STILL HAVE LEFT TO LOVE.



The Rector Major's words

Mary, mother of attentiveness, mother of presence: in her we learn that true love is not made up of dramatic gestures, but of daily care, unflinching gazes, time well spent. Her whole life is an exercise in listening and caring. And it is precisely in this silence that Mary reads history through God's eyes, without shying away from the toil of passing time and the waiting that seems to drag on.

Mary's presence is never passive: she fills time with discreet yet effective action, encouraging us not to stop, even when thorns appear along the way. Close to her Son in Bethlehem and at the foot of the cross, Mary knows the price of suffering, yet she does not give in to despair; for this reason, she becomes a trustworthy companion on our journey, especially when trials seem too great. Her presence sustains, guides and lifts us up: she does not take away the weight of life, but shares it and makes it bearable.

Consolation springs precisely from this realisation: knowing that we are not alone, that a Mother watches over us, that her 'yes' continues to bring life to our story. Being grateful to Mary means humbly recalling how many times her intercession has accompanied us, often silently, yet tangibly; it means transforming the memory of her help into renewed trust, into more fervent prayer, into a more generous openness towards others. Thus emerges a sense of gratitude that becomes a way of life: it leads us from lament to praise, from withdrawal to surrender, from fear to hope. And so, step by step, we discover that Mary's presence is a gift that in turn teaches us to become an attentive and caring presence alongside those who experience hardship, waiting and loneliness.

Have faith: Mary will be by your side all your life.

And we, are we able to perceive this presence and give thanks for the journey we have made together?

Prayer of someone who is grateful

Mary, Mother of Presence.

You who are attentive to the life of each of your children,
you have loved me too, waiting with loving patience
for me to understand everything.

And today, as my journey draws to a close,
I find your maternal gaze once more,
I sense your caresses in the night,
I listen to your silences so full of counsel.

You showed me the way.

And every time I strayed, you waited for me.

Thank you for the roses and the thorns.

Thank you for always showing me what I could not see.

Thank you for every step you chose to take beside me.

8

When people asked for some special grace Don Bosco used to say:

"If you wish to obtain graces from the Blessed Virgin, make a Novena" (MB IX, 289).

This novena, according to him, had to take place if possible "in church, with lively faith" as an act of fervent homage to the Eucharist. According to Don Bosco, for the novena to be efficacious, the dispositions of the soul should be as follows:

- Do not put your hope in human forces but have faith in God.
- The request should be made to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, fount of grace, kindness and blessing, and with trust in the power of Mary whom God wishes to be honored on earth in this temple.
- Always add the intention "Thy will be done" and the condition "if it is for the good of the soul of the person being prayed for".

Three times: Our Father... Hail Mary... Glory Be... to the Holy Eucharist followed each time by the short prayer: **Blessed and praised every moment be the Most Holy and Divine Sacrament.**

Three times: Hail Holy Queen... followed each time by the short prayer: **Mary Help of Christians, pray for us.**

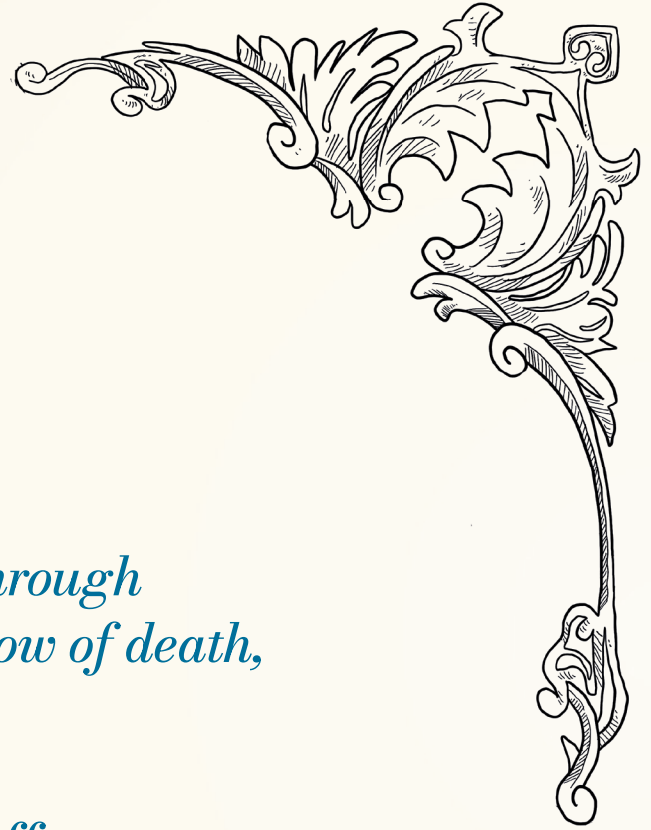
Remember, O most loving Virgin Mary, that it is a thing unheard of, that anyone ever had recourse to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession, and was left forsaken. Filled therefore with confidence in your goodness, I fly to you, O Mother, Virgin of Virgins. To you I come, before you I stand, a sorrowful sinner. Despise not my poor words, O Mother of the Word of God, but graciously hear and grant my prayer. Amen.

May 16



Mary
MOTHER
OF
SOLITUDE

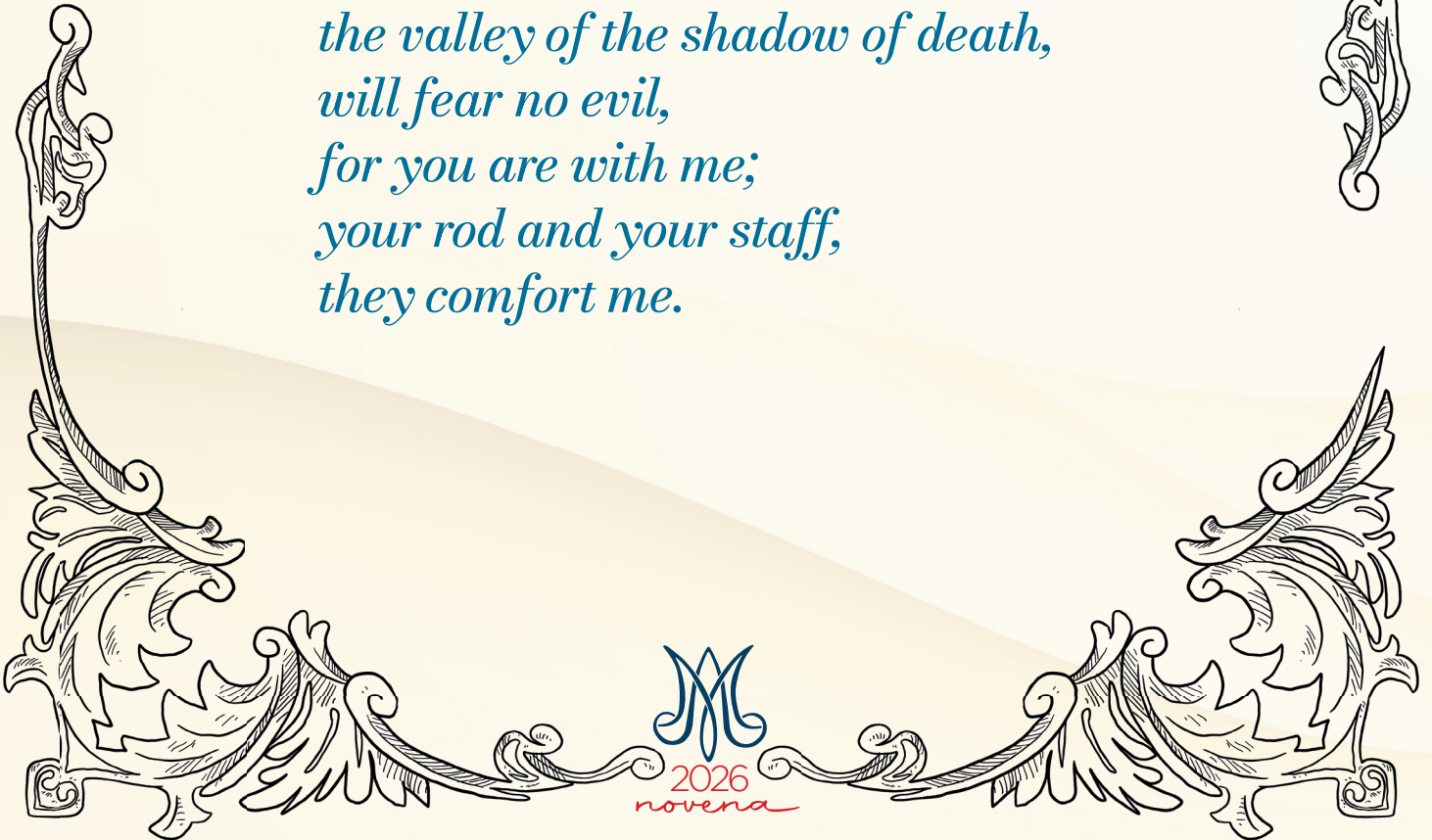
Mary mother of Solitude



10

Psalm 23

*Even though I walk through
the valley of the shadow of death,
will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.*



2026
novena

THE CORRIDOR REMAINS STILL; THE MAN'S BREATHING SLOWS AS HE CONTINUES TO GAZE AT THE SMALL PICTURE ON THE WALL, AS IF IN CONFIDENCE.



MARY... I DON'T KNOW HOW TO GET INTO THIS ROOM, INTO HIS HEART... IT FEELS AS THOUGH I'M KNOCKING AND GETTING NO ANSWER!





YOU WHO KNEW
THE SILENCE OF
YOUR SON WHEN
HE WAS NOT
UNDERSTOOD,
HELP ME NOT
TO FLEE
FROM THIS
LONELINESS
OF A FATHER
WHO CANNOT
FIND
THE WORDS.



YOU ARE STILL A MOTHER EVEN WHEN WE DON'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO SAY... STAY BY HIS SIDE, BY MY SIDE, IN THIS EMPTY CORRIDOR.



DON'T LEAVE ME ALONE IN THIS TASK, MOTHER...
TEACH ME TO PERSEVERE, EVEN WHEN IT HURTS.

The Rector Major's words

Mary, mother of solitude, is the woman who does not flee from silence but dwells in it with faith, allowing everything to find a place in her heart. The Gospel tells us that 'Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart', and in this attitude we recognise her ability to stand before the mysteries of life without expecting to understand them immediately, but cherishing them until God himself reveals their meaning.

In that heart which listens and cherishes, Mary becomes the mother of all humanity: an attentive mother who notices the details, reads hearts and points the way. We see her beside Jesus in Bethlehem, Nazareth, at Cana, and finally at the foot of the cross, when pain seems to have the final say. Right there, in the hardest moment, Jesus entrusts her to the beloved disciple and, through him, to the Church and the whole world: 'Woman, behold your son... Behold your mother.' From then on, no loneliness is ever absolute: every tear, every night, every trial is permeated by this motherhood that draws near.

In every loneliness, Mary's caress is alive, as she first listens, then acts. Hers is a practical, concrete presence: as at the Visitation, she sets out on her journey, 'standing by' without fanfare, but steadfastly. In our closed rooms, in hospital wards, empty homes, in the anxieties of young people and in the struggles of parents, Mary remains discreet and faithful, reminding us that we are never left alone. And those who truly allow themselves to be accompanied by her learn in turn to draw close to those who are alone: to offer genuine listening, to support without intruding, to cherish in their hearts the wounds of others, so that hope may blossom anew within them. In this way, solitude, touched by Mary's love, becomes a place where God can still speak, heal, and begin anew.

Have faith: Mary will fill that silence with the word that saves.

But are we capable of hearing her words?

Prayer of someone who is on their own

Mary, Mother of Solitude.

You who endured the hardships of motherhood in silence,
stay by my side when I do not know what to do.

Sit on the ground, with your back to the door, with me, and wait.

Don't leave me on my own. Don't leave us on our own.

For in my son's loneliness, I too am losing myself.

In his restlessness, I too am suffering.

In his inadequacy, I too am sinking.

Be my guide, be my outstretched hand.

Let him find in my embrace the love,
the strength, the esteem and trust in life

which he so sorely lacks today.

We cannot save ourselves without you.

14

When people asked for some special grace Don Bosco used to say:

"If you wish to obtain graces from the Blessed Virgin, make a Novena" (MB IX, 289).

This novena, according to him, had to take place if possible "in church, with lively faith" as an act of fervent homage to the Eucharist. According to Don Bosco, for the novena to be efficacious, the dispositions of the soul should be as follows:

- Do not put your hope in human forces but have faith in God.
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Three times: Hail Holy Queen... followed each time by the short prayer: **Mary Help of Christians, pray for us.**

Remember, O most loving Virgin Mary, that it is a thing unheard of, that anyone ever had recourse to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession, and was left forsaken. Filled therefore with confidence in your goodness, I fly to you, O Mother, Virgin of Virgins. To you I come, before you I stand, a sorrowful sinner. Despise not my poor words, O Mother of the Word of God, but graciously hear and grant my prayer. Amen.

May 17



Mary
MOTHER
OF
WAYWARD CHILDREN

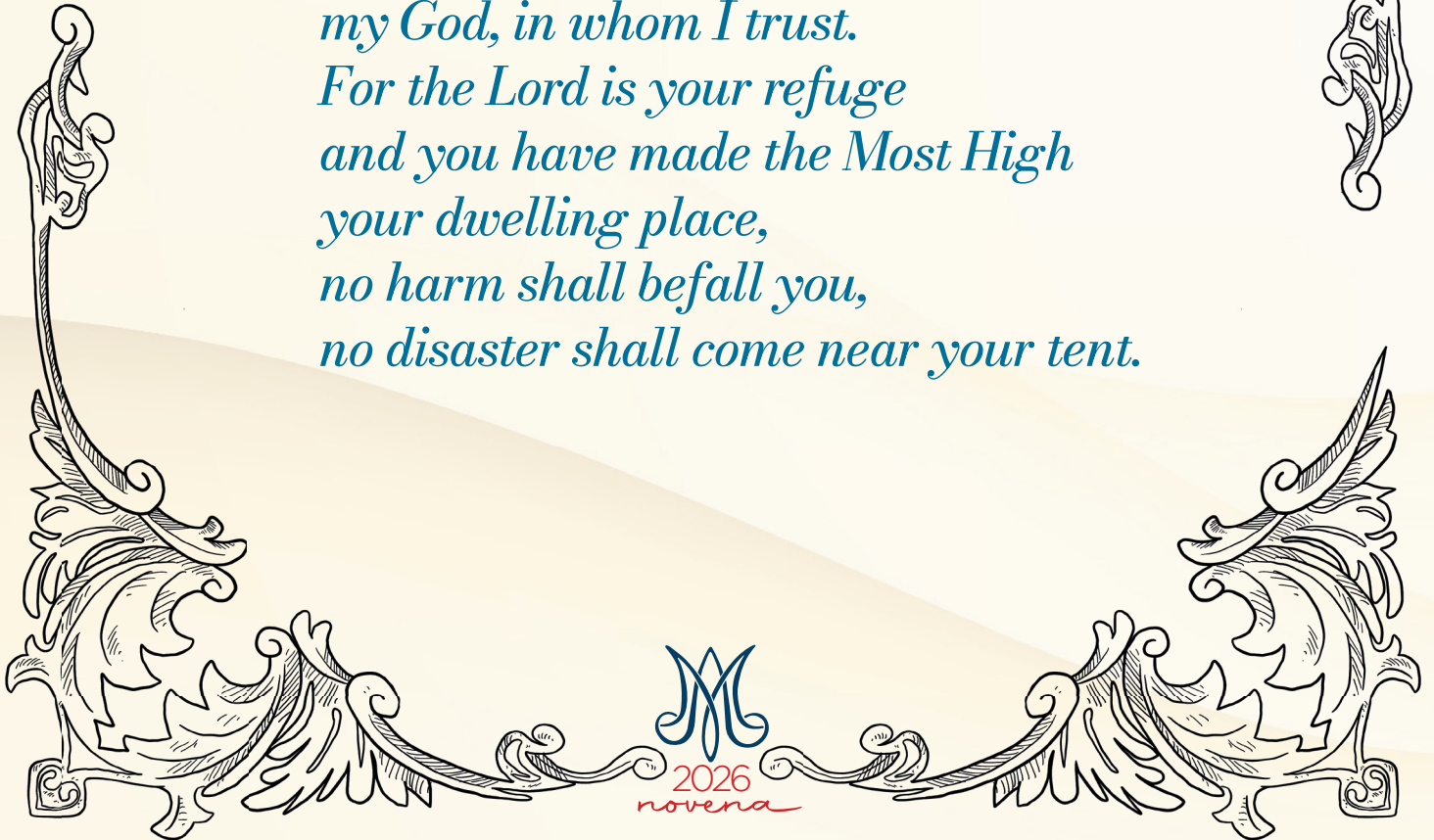
Mary mother of wayward children



16

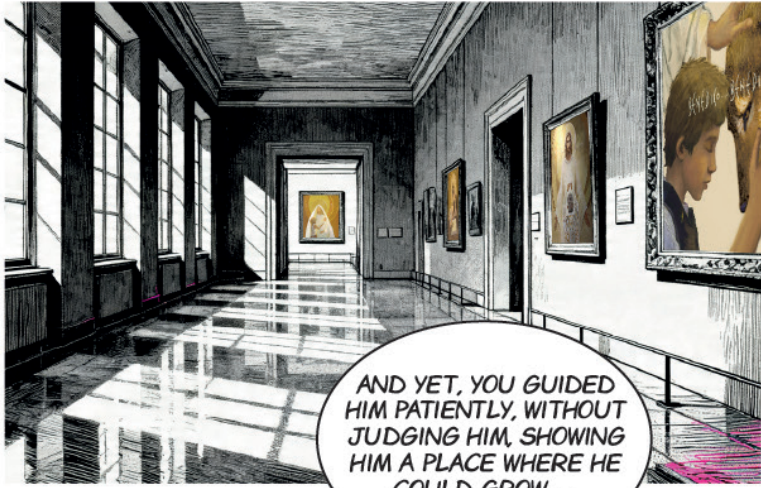
Psalm 91

*My refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust.
For the Lord is your refuge
and you have made the Most High
your dwelling place,
no harm shall befall you,
no disaster shall come near your tent.*



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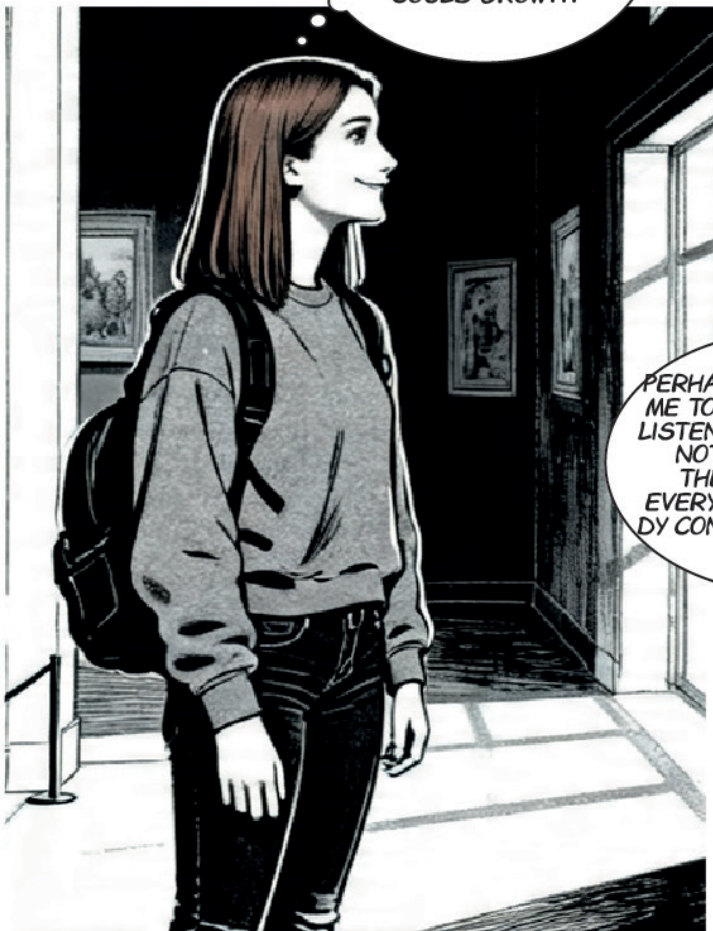
IT IS DAYTIME AT THE DON BOSCO MUSEUM IN ROME; NATURAL LIGHT STREAMS IN THROUGH THE TALL WINDOWS AND REFLECTS OFF THE POLISHED FLOORS, CREATING A QUIET, INTIMATE ATMOSPHERE.



AND YET, YOU GUIDED HIM PATIENTLY, WITHOUT JUDGING HIM, SHOWING HIM A PLACE WHERE HE COULD GROW...



"HOW MANY YOUNG PEOPLE LIKE YOUR JOHN I'VE MET... ADRIFF, ANGRY, LOST AFTER PRISON... AND SOMETIMES I FEEL I'M NOT UP TO THE TASK.



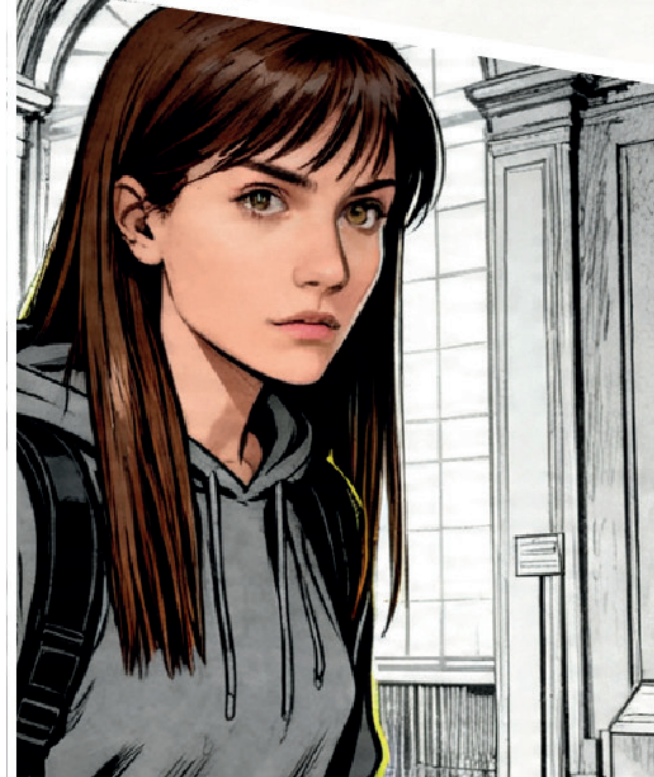
PERHAPS YOU'RE ASKING ME TO DO THE SAME: TO LISTEN, TO SUPPORT, AND NOT TO GIVE UP ON THESE LIVES THAT EVERYONE ELSE ALREADY CONSIDERS A FAILURE





WOW!!! MICHAEL
HAS FINALLY BEEN
RELEASED!!!

I AM NOT ALONE IN THIS TASK...
YOU ARE HERE, AS THE MOTHER OF WAYWARD
CHILDREN, STANDING BY ME AND BY THEM.



I ENTRUST THESE YOUNG PEOPLE TO YOU, MARY...
HELP ME TO SEE THEM THROUGH YOUR EYES.

The Rector Major's words

Mary, mother of wayward children, knows the toil of those who educate and do not give up, of those who love and continue to believe even when they see failures, inconsistencies and runaways. To stand by, guide, protect and teach is never easy; Don Bosco reminds us that “education is a matter of the heart, and God alone is its master”. This means, first and foremost, opening our hearts to Mary, entrusting our children to her, their confusion, our fears as educators, and allowing her to teach us the art of loving without growing weary.

Mary is the mother of wayward children because she is not scandalised by their mistakes, but walks with them through it all. She knows how to recognise mistakes without crushing people under them; she acknowledges responsibility, but at the same time sees, like Don Bosco, that “even in the most unfortunate children there are seeds of goodness”. Her gaze does not dwell on their failures: it looks beyond, glimpsing a promise, a possibility of resurrection. For this reason, she never despairs: she accompanies, waits, encourages, intercedes. In Mary's heart, every story, even the most tragic, can become a story of salvation.

Her educational strength does not come primarily from words, but from her witness. Mary shows through her life what she asks for: trust in God. She is a reassuring presence, a gentle steadfastness that points the way to goodness. Beside her, wayward children discover that they are not defined by their mistakes, but by the love with which they are looked upon. And those who educate, by looking to her, learn a profoundly evangelical and Salesian method: to prevent evil by believing in the good, to accompany with reason, religion and loving kindness, to transform every fall into an opportunity for growth. Thus Mary, mother of wayward children, becomes a school of trust in humanity and the Gospel in action, educating more through the light of her example than through the force of reproach.

Have faith: Mary will go and seek out every one of her children who has gone astray.

But are we capable of allowing ourselves to be guided so that we may discern the path to what is good?

Prayer of someone who guides and is guided

Mary, mother of wayward children.

You stood by all the disciples.

You accepted them for who they were: human and fallible.

You guided them, corrected them, and walked alongside them.

Continue to support all young people who are lost and will be lost.

For we, your children, often lose our way

and do not always find the way back.

Stay by my side, my mother,

so that I may educate them with love.

Stay by their side, my mother,

so that they may feel loved by me.

20

When people asked for some special grace Don Bosco used to say:

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May 18



Mary
MOTHER
OF
HOPE

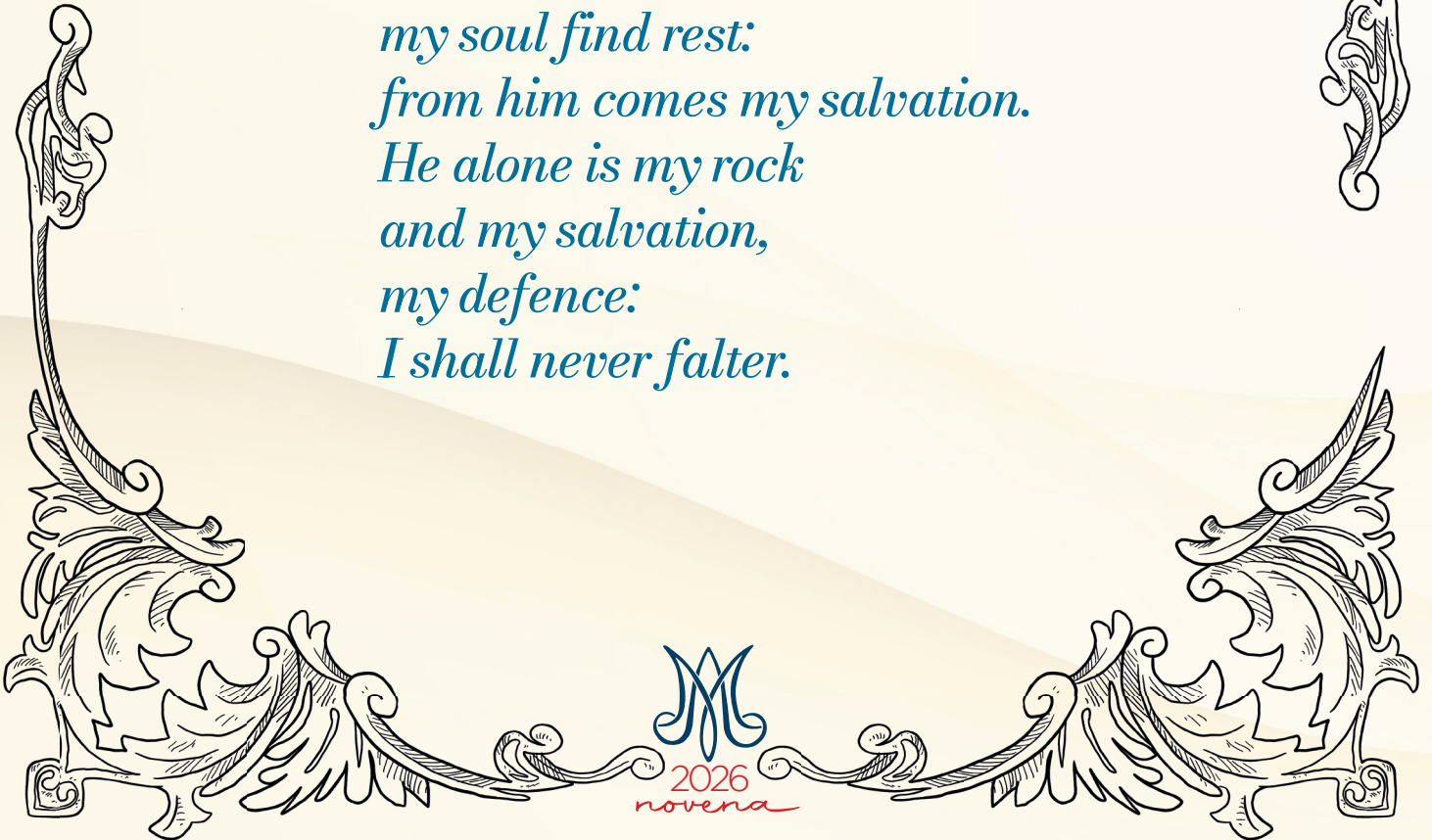
Mary mother of Hope



22

Psalm 62

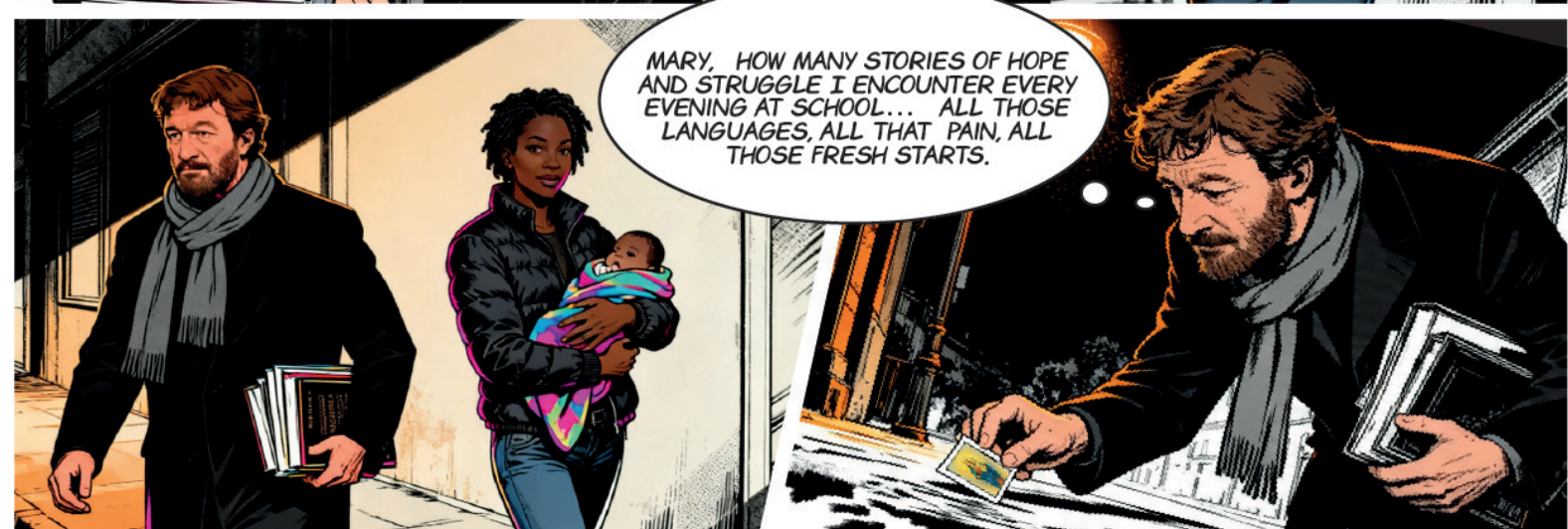
*In God alone does
my soul find rest:
from him comes my salvation.
He alone is my rock
and my salvation,
my defence:
I shall never falter.*



2026
novena



HAVE A LOVELY EVENING! MAKE SURE YOU WRAP UP WARM - IT'S



MARY, HOW MANY STORIES OF HOPE AND STRUGGLE I ENCOUNTER EVERY EVENING AT SCHOOL... ALL THOSE LANGUAGES, ALL THAT PAIN, ALL THOSE FRESH STARTS.



YOU ARE THE MOTHER OF
DIALOGUE, OF THE SIMPLE
WORD THAT WELCOMES
WITHOUT JUDGING...



LET ME BE ABLE TO
TRULY LISTEN TO MY
ADULT STUDENTS, TO
SEE BEYOND THEIR
SILENCES AND THEIR



GIVE THEM HOPE FOR A DIFFERENT FUTURE... AND GIVE
ME THE PATIENCE TO WALK ALONGSIDE THEM THROUGH
THEIR STRUGGLES, WITHOUT GROWING WEARY.



The Rector Major's words

Mary, mother of hope and dialogue, teaches us that nothing is truly lost as long as the heart remains open to God. At Cana, when 'the wine ran out', she was the first to recognise the need, to bring it to Jesus' attention and to say to the servants: 'Do whatever he tells you.' In that simple gesture, Mary opens a way: she glimpses a new possibility; where the wine ends, the miracle begins.

So it is in our lives: when our resources seem to have run dry, Mary leaves no room for despair, but invites us to trust, to listen to the Word, and to place what remains of the meagre water of our days back into Christ's hands.

Mary is the mother of dialogue because she does not put up walls, but builds bridges. At Cana, she becomes the gentle voice of those who cannot speak and a confident invitation to the One who alone can intervene. This is always her way: listening to reality, listening to God, and bringing them together. In our times, marked by conflict, polarisation and hurtful words, Mary teaches us patient dialogue, built on listening, respect and trust in the possibility of change. She does not fuel clashes, but opens paths, windows of encounter and gateways to reconciliation.

This is why the Church regards her as the Mother of Hope and invokes her as the woman of peace. Even in the darkest nights, Mary remains steadfast in her trust in the mystery of God and encourages us to look ahead, towards the horizon. In an age such as ours, Mary speaks of peace to the human heart through the power of her Magnificat and the light of her example, choosing the little ones, the least, and the poor. To entrust ourselves to Mary, then, means to cease despairing, to allow ourselves to be guided along the paths of forgiveness, justice and fraternity, and to become, in turn, living signs of hope, dialogue and peace within families, communities and the world.

Have faith: Mary will bring the new wine of hope back to your table.

And are we capable of trusting and obeying with confidence?

Prayer of someone who has lost hope

Mary, Mother of Hope.

You never gave up, not even in the face of the evidence.

You saw humanity crucify your Son
and yet you loved it all the same.

Now that you see so many of your children being killed at the hands of a few,
torn apart by bombs, stray bullets, knives wielded by hatred...
do not leave us; remain beneath the cross of all war refugees.

Pray with them and for them.

Take them under your mantle.

And instil in all of us the hope of new wine,
the only hope that allows us to truly help them
through gestures of dialogue, through words of welcome.

Beneath this cross, we too must kneel.

26

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May 19



Mary
MOTHER
OF UNCERTAINTY

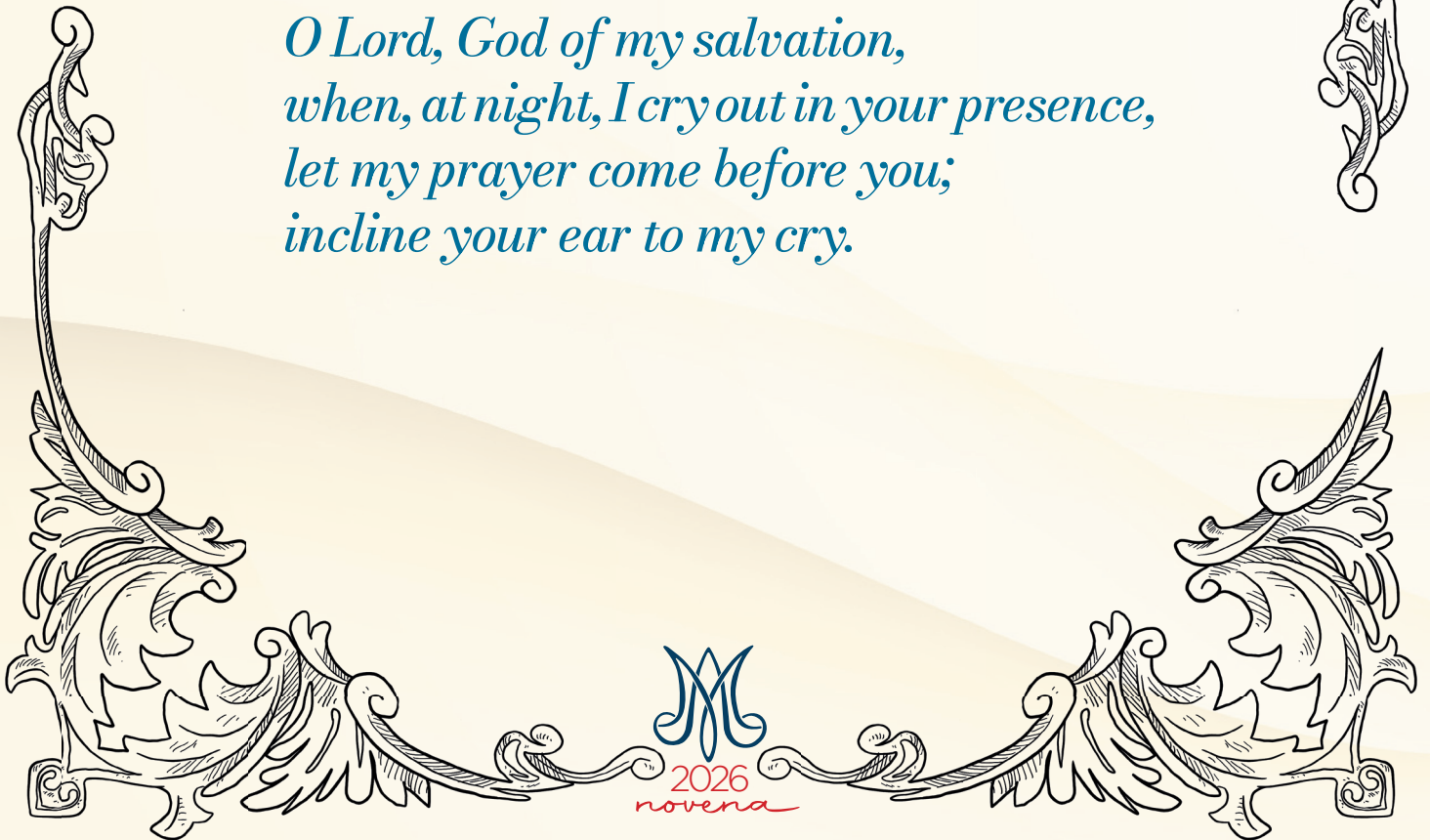
Mary mother of Uncertainty



28

Psalm 88

*O Lord, God of my salvation,
when, at night, I cry out in your presence,
let my prayer come before you;
incline your ear to my cry.*



2026
novena

IT IS DAY-TIME IN THE CHAOS OF TERMINI STATION,
A CONSTANT STREAM OF PEOPLE, LUGGAGE TROLLEYS ROLLING
ACROSS THE FLOOR, VOICES FROM THE LOUDSPEAKERS
ANNOUNCING DEPARTURES AND ARRIVALS:
A WOMAN IN HER FIFTIES WALKS WITH A DETERMINED STRIDE



HER FACE
IS MARKED
BY FATIGUE
AND WORRY



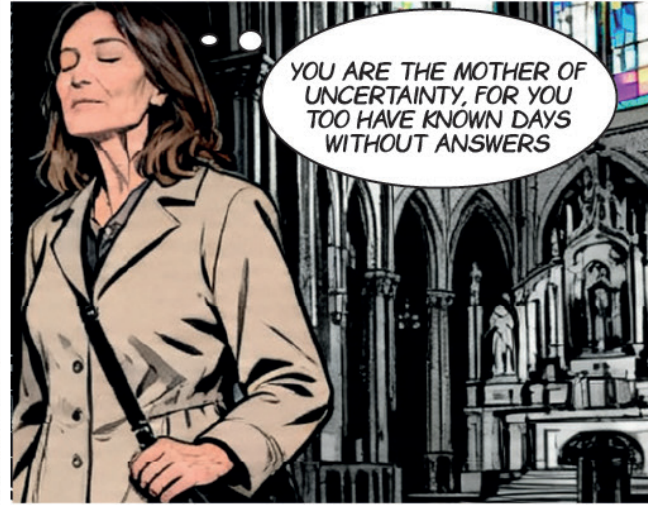
AS SHE ENTERS THE CHURCH, THE LIGHT CHANGES:
THE BUZZ OF THE CITY FADES AWAY, GIVING WAY TO A HUSHED
SILENCE, ILLUMINATED BY CANDLES AND SLIVERS OF LIGHT
FILTERING THROUGH THE STAINED-GLASS WINDOWS



MARY... I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO ANYMORE. HE'S LOST HIS JOB, HE CAN'T SLEEP, HE'S WITHDRAWN INTO HIMSELF... I PRETEND TO BE STRONG, BUT MY LEGS ARE SHAKING.



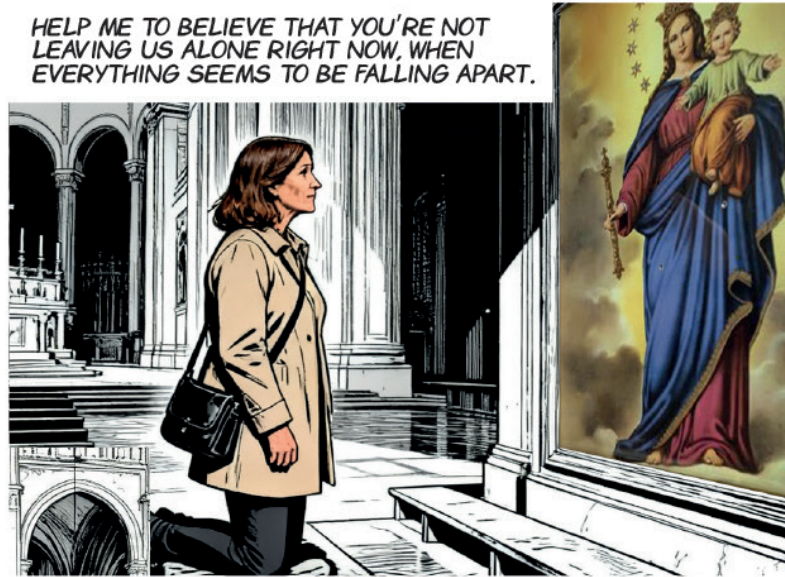
YOU ARE THE MOTHER OF UNCERTAINTY, FOR YOU TOO HAVE KNOWN DAYS WITHOUT ANSWERS



I ENTRUST OUR FUTURE TO YOU, THE FIGURES THAT DON'T ADD UP, THE FEAR OF NOT MAKING IT.



HELP ME TO BELIEVE THAT YOU'RE NOT LEAVING US ALONE RIGHT NOW, WHEN EVERYTHING SEEMS TO BE FALLING APART.



HOLD MY HAND, MARY, UNTIL WE FIND OUR WAY AGAIN.



The Rector Major's words

Mary, mother of uncertainty, knows well the trembling of the heart when life takes paths we had not foreseen. The evangelist Luke recounts that, faced with the angel's announcement, Mary 'was greatly troubled' and wondered what that greeting meant. She does not understand everything; she does not hold the whole plan in her hands, and yet, in that zone of shadow, she utters her 'here I am': it is precisely there that uncertainty becomes a place of trust. We too, like her, often find ourselves saying: 'How is this possible?' without having immediate answers.

Mary carries in her heart the same questions that dwell in our hearts. She knows what it means not to be understood, to fear the judgement of others, to wonder whether the other person – like Joseph – will be able to enter into the mystery we are experiencing. She knows what it means to be unable to change events, as when, at the foot of the cross, she sees her Son dying and remains 'standing by the cross of Jesus.' She cannot intervene, she cannot stop the pain, but she can remain: and it is this steadfast and faithful standing that makes her a bulwark in the hour of trial. When all hope seems lost and everything would suggest fleeing, Mary remains, and in her remaining she keeps a passageway open to salvation.

This is why we can call her the mother of uncertainty: not because she loves doubt, but because she accompanies us within doubt without leaving us alone. She teaches us that waiting is the place where the Word of God ripens slowly, like a seed hidden in the earth. At the hour when we do not know what to do, Mary reminds us that we can remain faithful even when we cannot see the outcome, that we can continue to say 'Thy will be done' even amidst our tears. Entrusting ourselves to her means letting her hand hold ours in the darkness, so that uncertainty is transformed, little by little, into trusting surrender and into a hope that does not disappoint.

Have faith: Mary will hold your hand when you falter.

Are we able to hold Mary's hand tightly?

Prayer of someone who feels their life hangs in the balance

Mary, Mother of Uncertainty.

You saw your life turned upside down from one day to the next.

But we here below do not have your strength.

Help us to embrace change with the conviction
that God will open a way for us.

Share with us the weight of life that crushes us.

Take us by the hand and guide us forward on our journey.

For though one can rise from the bottom of the ravine,
when one feels old, weary and inadequate, the climb back up is daunting.

Lost in this limbo, we need a mother to turn to,
a mother to take refuge in.

32

When people asked for some special grace Don Bosco used to say:

"If you wish to obtain graces from the Blessed Virgin, make a Novena" (MB IX, 289).

This novena, according to him, had to take place if possible "in church, with lively faith" as an act of fervent homage to the Eucharist. According to Don Bosco, for the novena to be efficacious, the dispositions of the soul should be as follows:

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May 20



Mary
MOTHER OF
THE GENTLY
SPOKEN WORD



Mary mother of the word in the ear

34

Psalm 25

*Make me to know your ways, O Lord;
teach me your paths.*

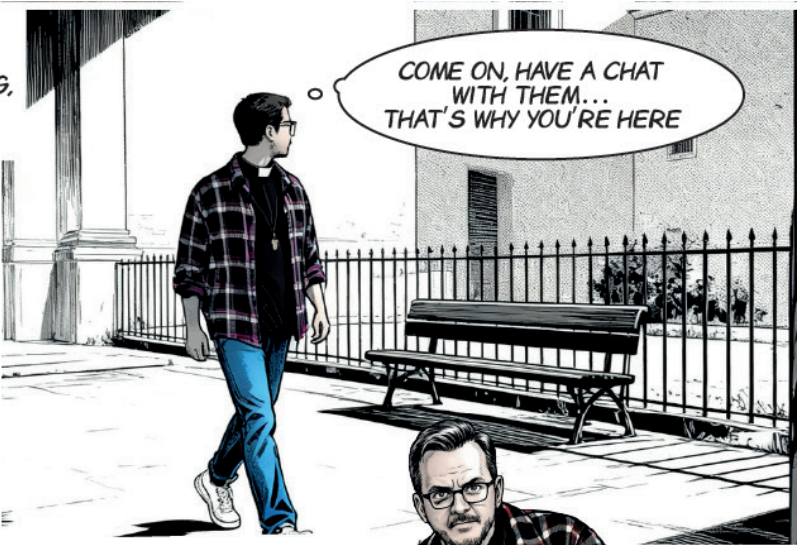
*Lead me in your truth, and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all day long.*



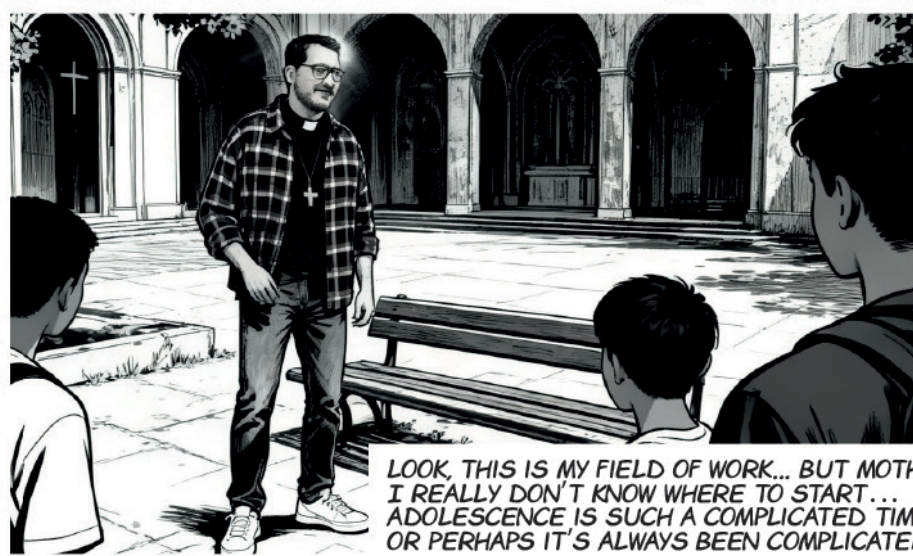
2026
novena



IN THE ORATORY COURTYARD, ON A BRIGHT MORNING, THE YOUNG SALESIAN IN JEANS AND A CLERICAL COLLAR WALKS SLOWLY AMONGST GROUPS OF TEENAGERS WHO ARE AUGHING, PLAYING FOOTBALL AND CHASING EACH OTHER, WHILST THE SOUND OF BOUNCING BALLS AND VOICES FILLS THE AIR.



LOOK, IT'S THE INFLUENCER PRIEST... ALWAYS IN JEANS, HE THINKS HE'S ONE OF US... BUT HE JUST DOESN'T GET IT.



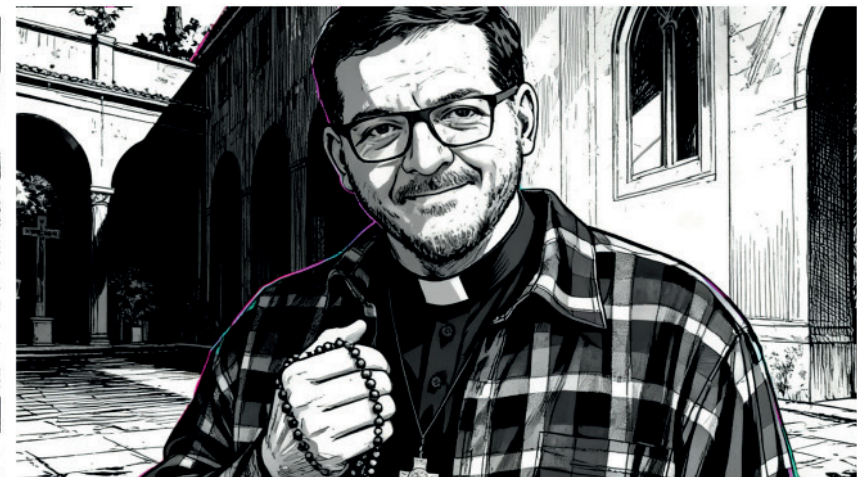
LOOK, THIS IS MY FIELD OF WORK... BUT MOTHER, I REALLY DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START... ADOLESCENCE IS SUCH A COMPLICATED TIME THESE DAYS! OR PERHAPS IT'S ALWAYS BEEN COMPLICATED...



I'D LIKE TO PROTECT THEM; I'D LIKE TO SPARE THEM FROM BAD EXPERIENCES. BUT IS THAT THE RIGHT THING TO DO? PERHAPS NOT; PERHAPS THAT'S NOT THE WAY TO GO ABOUT IT



MY JOB IS TO MAKE THEM FEEL LOVED... BY ME, BY YOU, BY GOD... BUT HOW DO YOU MAKE A TEENAGER FEEL LOVED?



The Rector Major's words

Mary, the mother of the word in the ear, teaches us the most difficult and most necessary art in accompanying young people: making the other person feel truly welcomed and sincerely loved. Don Bosco gave us a precious guideline: 'Strive to be loved before you are feared.' It is a matter of committing oneself to winning trust by showing humanity, closeness and authenticity. Mary is a master at this: her discreet yet powerful presence breaks down defences, because she enters people's lives with respect and tenderness, like a mother.

The 'word in the ear' is the word that arises from a genuine gaze. Before speaking, in fact, Mary looks. She looks at Elizabeth and senses her joy and her weariness; she looks at the bride and groom at Cana and realises that the wine has run out even before anyone says so. Hers is a gaze that listens, that reads between the lines. It is the same with young people: only when they feel looked at in this way can they sense that the word whispered to them is for their own good. Then the advice, the reminder, the guidance does not weigh on them like an order, but is received as a gesture of love.

Mary is able to make herself loved because she is wholly devoted to others. In Nazareth, at Cana, in the Upper Room, she is a presence that supports, encourages, and prays with the disciples and for the disciples. Christian tradition invokes her as the Mother of Mercy and the Mother of Tenderness, recognising in her a closeness that does not humiliate but lifts up, that does not accuse but accompanies. At her side, every young person can feel safe: welcomed with their story, listened to in their questions, gently yet firmly challenged to become what they are called to be. And those who educate, looking to Mary, learn that the first proclamation is conveyed through one's manner: a kind presence, an embrace in one's gaze, a word whispered in the ear that springs from the heart and therefore reaches the heart.

Have faith: Mary will guide your heart and enable it to speak to every ear.

Are we able to speak with a Mother's heart?

Prayer of someone who wants to accompany others

Mary, Mother of the word in the ear.

You who guided Don Bosco, helping him to devote his life to young people, guide me too in this field which I sometimes do not understand.

Give me the key to open the heart of the person before me.

Make me attentive to the point where good can be found.

So that I may bring to light those who feel invisible,

restore confidence to those who are distrustful,

and make those who live in anger feel loved.

With you by my side, I will be able to do my part to bring souls to God.

38

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May 21



Mary
MOTHER
OF LOVE

Mary mother of Love

40

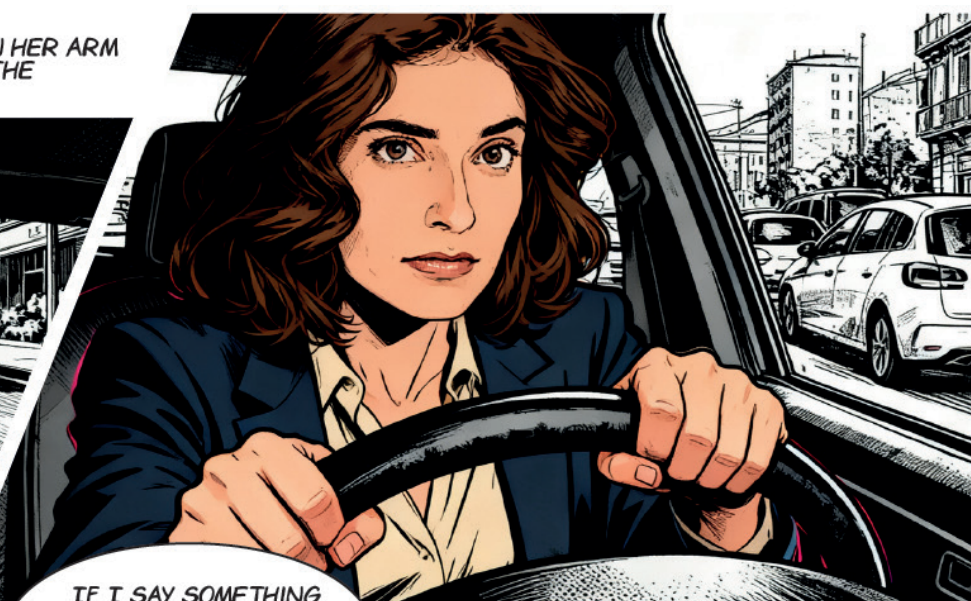
Psalm 140

*Deliver me, O Lord, from evildoers;
protect me from those who are violent,
who plan evil things in their minds
and stir up wars continually.
Surely the righteous shall give thanks
to your name;
the upright shall live in your presence.*

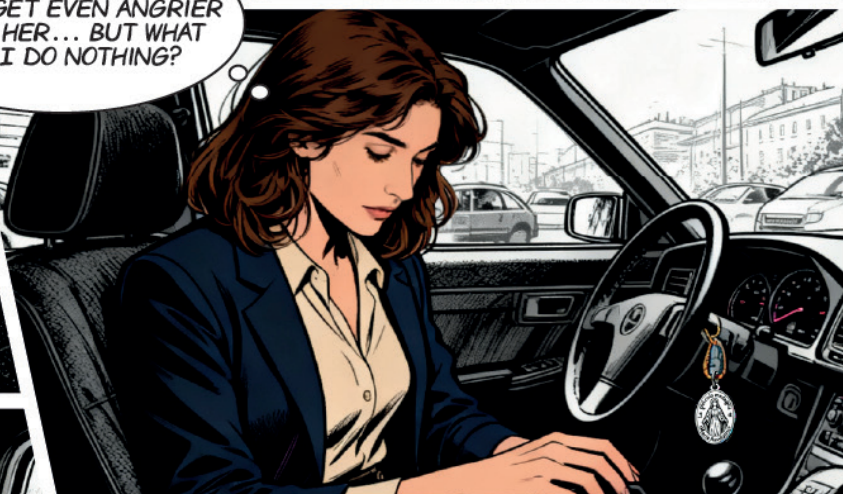


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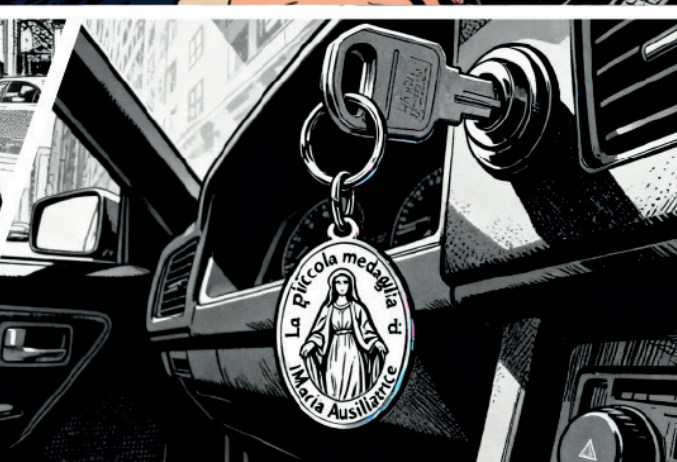
SHE TURNED UP AGAIN WITH A HUGE BRUISE ON HER ARM AND A SPLIT LIP. THIS TIME SHE BUMPED INTO THE DOORFRAME WHILST PLAYING WITH THE CAT...



IF I SAY SOMETHING, HE'LL GET EVEN ANGRIER WITH HER... BUT WHAT IF I DO NOTHING?



LORD, WHAT SHOULD I DO?



MARIA, TI PREGO, FAMMI CAPIRE COME AIUTARE LA MIA AMICA
MARY, PLEASE HELP ME UNDERSTAND HOW TO HELP MY FRIEND
WITHOUT PUTTING HER IN DANGER... GIVE ME THE RIGHT WORDS, ...



MAYBE I COULD TALK TO SOMEONE WHO KNOWS WHAT THEY
RE DOING, LIKE A WOMEN'S SHELTER... I MUSTN'T JUST
PRETEND NOTHING'S HAPPENED!!!!



MARY, GIVE ME
THE STRENGTH!



The Rector Major's words

Mary, Mother of Love, reminds us that Christian love does not erase humanity, but rather exalts it, bringing it to its fullness. We are accustomed to thinking of Mary as a superhuman being, immune to the seasons of the heart. Yet, as Don Tonino Bello reminds us, she too “experienced that splendid season of existence, made up of wonder and tears, of startled moments and doubts, of tenderness and trepidation, in which, as in a crystal goblet, all the scents of the universe seem to be distilled.”

Mary loved. She loved with the very flesh of which we are made. She loved Joseph — that righteous, quiet man who stood by her side without understanding everything, but trusting. She loved with the care of a mother who notices when the wine runs out at Cana. She loved with the anxiety of one who searches for three days for a lost son in the streets of Jerusalem. She loved with the trembling of one who stands beneath a cross and can do nothing but remain there.

Yet her love never took the place of God: it reflected him. Like a well that draws from a deep vein of water - clear precisely because it lies underground - Mary's earthly love is pure not in spite of her humanity, but through it.

Her love for Joseph, for her Son, and for the nascent community springs from the very same flame of love for God.

This tells us something crucial about genuine love: it is always directed outwards. It does not take up space, it does not crush, it does not sever. It respects. It sustains. It makes itself small to make room for the other. It knows how to stand beneath the cross without fleeing, it knows how to keep in silence the words it does not understand, it knows how to give without expecting to receive. Mary does not love in order to be loved: she loves because Love has taken up residence within her, and she has learnt not to hold it back.

Have faith: if you draw on Mary's love, you are nourished by the fire of God's love.

Are we able to keep this flame alive?

Prayer of someone who loves and stands by others

Mary, Mother of Love.

Your 'Yes' is the truest and purest declaration of love that exists.

You loved with a love of which we are incapable.

You were loved with a love that we all hope to find.

Help us to be unconditional, like you.

Help us to understand what the living fire is,

the bush of God that never goes out,

distinguishing it from the fire that consumes us, burns us, and wounds us.

Inside and out.

So that in a world full of possessiveness, obsession and selfishness

we may all rediscover the power of authentic feelings.

We all need love.

When people asked for some special grace Don Bosco used to say:

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May 22

Mary
MOTHER
OF
FRAGILITY

Mary mother of Fragility

46

Psalm 46

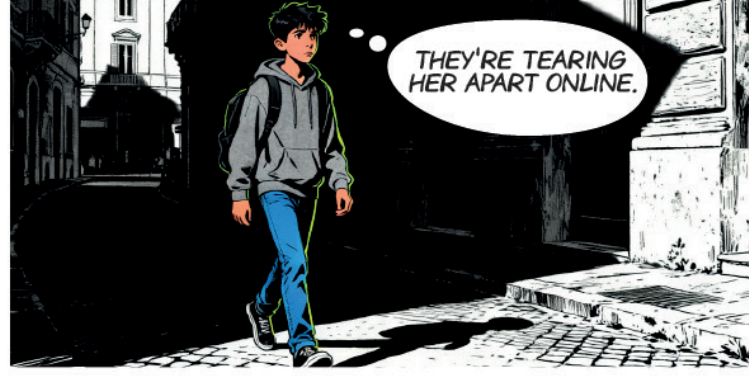
*God is our refuge and strength,
a very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear,
though the earth should change,
though the mountains shake
in the heart of the sea.*



2026
novena



I NO LONGER KNOW HOW TO HELP HER!



THEY'RE TEARING HER APART ONLINE.



WHY DON'T THEY JUST GIVE IT REST!!



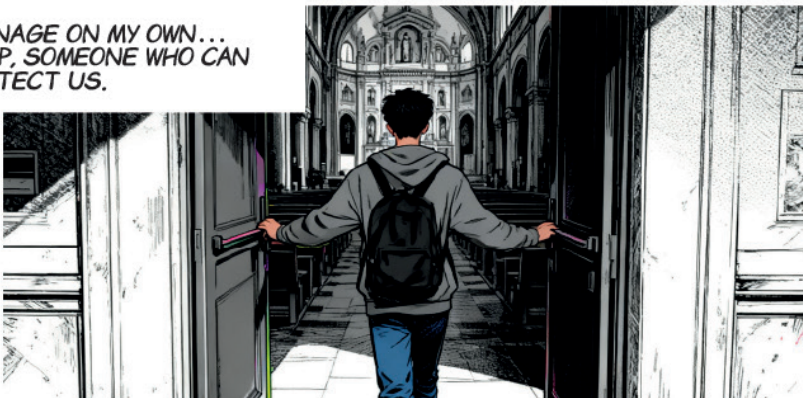
ANSWER ME!!!



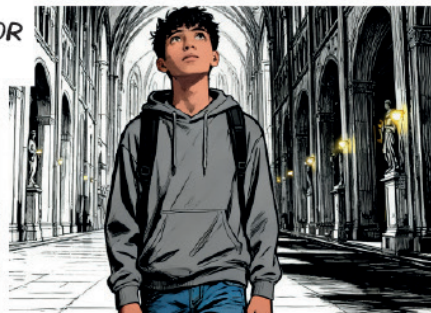
WHY DON'T YOU WANT TO TELL YOUR TEACHERS OR YOUR PARENTS?



I CAN'T MANAGE ON MY OWN... I NEED HELP, SOMEONE WHO CAN REALLY PROTECT US.



THE YOUNG MAN STEPS THROUGH THE CHURCH DOOR, LEAVING THE CHAOS OF THE CITY BEHIND HIM.



THE AIR INSIDE IS COOL, AND THE SILENCE IS BROKEN ONLY BY THE SOUND OF A FEW DISTANT FOOTSTEPS AND THE CRACKLING OF LIT CANDLES. HIS EYES SLOWLY ADJUST TO THE DIM LIGHT.



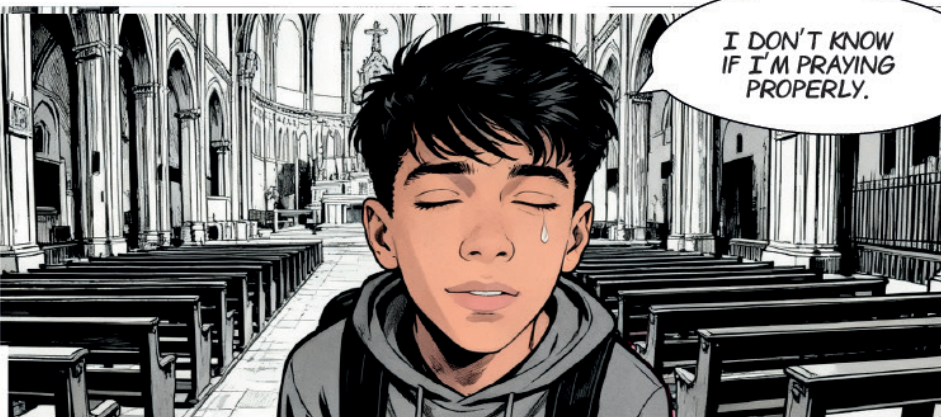
IT'S DIFFERENT HERE...
MAYBE SOMEONE WILL
LISTEN TO ME HERE.



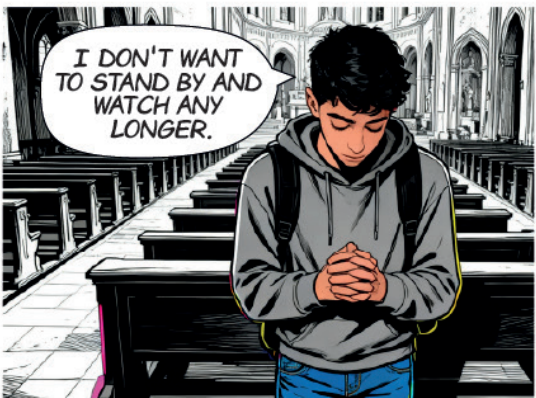
MARY,
HELP OF CHRISTIANS,
YOU WHO ARE A MOTHER,
I BEG YOU...



PROTECT MY FRIEND, MAKE HER FEEL LESS ALONE
GIVE ME THE COURAGE TO STAND UP FOR HER



I DON'T KNOW
IF I'M PRAYING
PROPERLY.



I DON'T WANT
TO STAND BY AND
WATCH ANY
LONGER.



WHEN I LEAVE HERE, I'LL TALK TO SOMEONE ABOUT IT
A COUNSELLOR, A PRIEST, MY PARENTS... ENOUGH OF THIS SILENCE!

The Rector Major's words

Mary, Mother of Fragility. “Lord, to whom shall we go? You alone have the words of eternal life.” This is Peter’s confession — but it could be that of anyone who finds themselves at rock bottom. And that is the beauty of it: even when we are not standing firm, even when our faith falters and our certainties crumble, those words of life reach us all the same. It is not we who keep ourselves standing: we are held.

In such moments, the human soul seeks a haven. It seeks an embrace in which to lose itself without having to explain itself. It seeks a hand that does not judge, but simply accompanies. Mary is this. Not a statue, not an idea, but a maternal presence who knows the weight of the night — she who watched beneath the cross, she who held a dead body close to her heart, she who waited in silence through the longest Saturday in history.

The human being carries an age-old wound within: unable to forgive him or herself. More than the judgement of others, it is their own inner court that condemns them without appeal. Mary is the mother of fragility because she abandons no one, not even those who consider themselves lost. Mary is the one who never ceases to seek out the most stubborn sinners, at times when shame is stronger than hope, drawing them to herself with a mercy that melts the hardness of the heart.

Like the woman in the Gospel who searches for the lost coin, like the father who sees his son from afar, Mary does not wait for her children to mend their ways before loving them. She goes in search of the lost, the submerged, those crushed by judgement — both their own and that of others. She does not pass judgement: she brings life. That life which death could not hold back, which still resonates today in every word of hope given to those who do not deserve it, or rather — to those who believe they do not deserve it. There, in her arms, all is still. And in the silence, we begin again.

Have faith: Mary will bring you comfort by embracing your frailties.

But are we capable of letting her carry us?

Prayer of someone who is fragile

Mary, Mother of Fragility.

You have always stood by the weak,
the downtrodden, those who count for nothing in the eyes of society.
You cannot fail to stand once again alongside those who are faltering.
You cannot ignore the cry for help from those who cannot forgive themselves.
You cannot leave in despair those who have been cast into a ditch
and are being crushed deeper and deeper, day by day.
Defend us: you who help sinners, look upon us too.
Throw me a rope so that I may cling to it and help those who cannot manage.
For in this life, Mother, there are no instructions
and not everything gets a second chance.
Take us in your arms: when we are so fragile
we are all a little like children. We are all your children.

50

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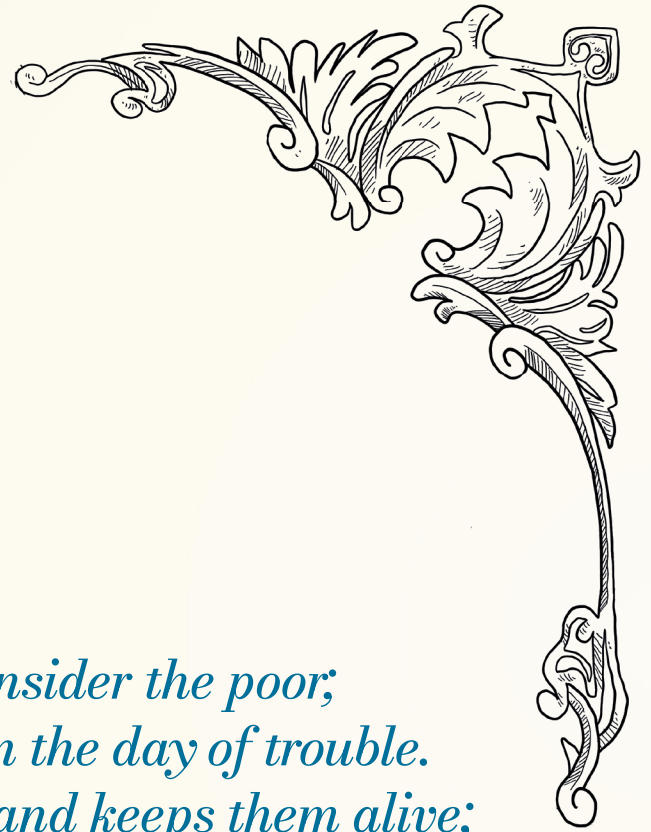
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May 23



Mary
MOTHER
OF
SORROWS

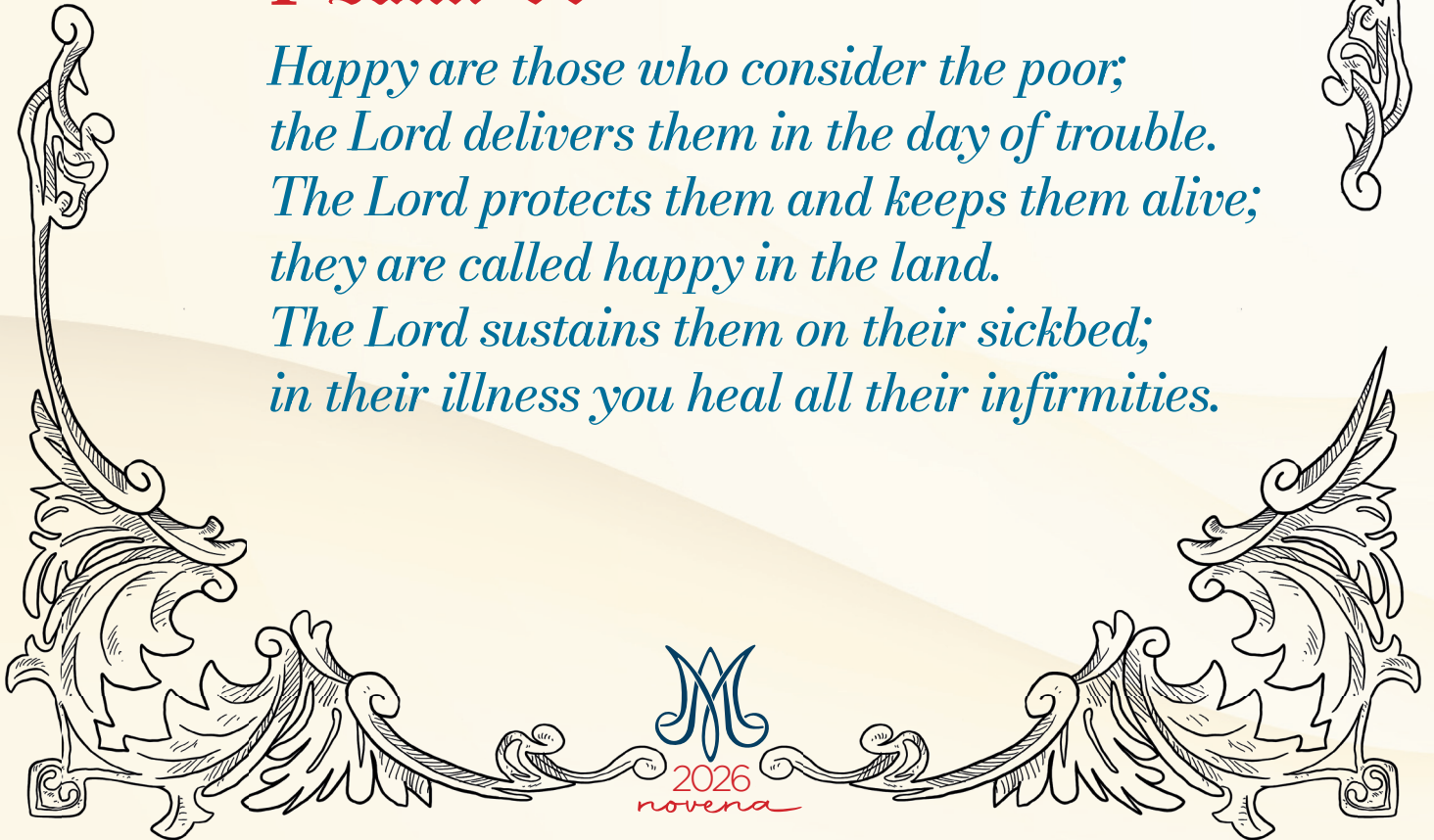
Mary mother of Sorrows



52

Psalm 41

*Happy are those who consider the poor;
the Lord delivers them in the day of trouble.
The Lord protects them and keeps them alive;
they are called happy in the land.
The Lord sustains them on their sickbed;
in their illness you heal all their infirmities.*



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IN A HOUSE BATHED IN THE WARM GLOW OF THE EVENING LIGHT, A MAN ENTERS THE LIVING ROOM WITH SLOW, DELIBERATE STEPS, HOLDING A STATUETTE OF MARY HELP OF CHRISTIANS IN HIS HANDS.



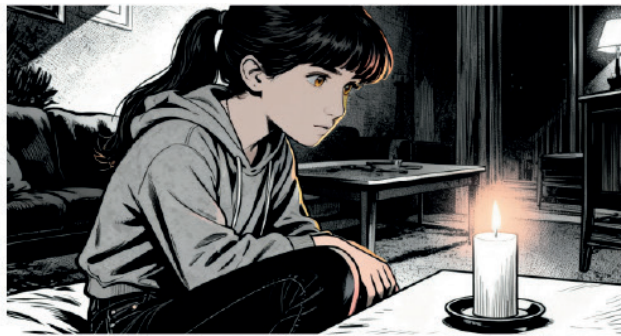
MARY, HELP US TO GET THROUGH THESE DIFFICULT TIMES



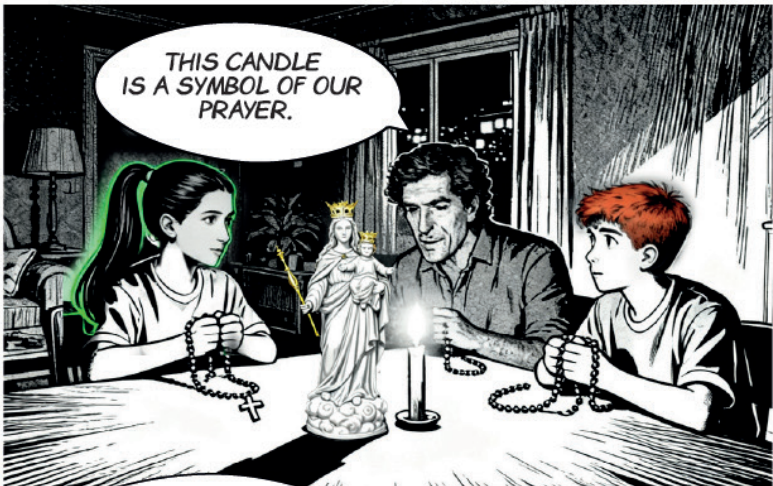
DAD, CAN MARY REALLY HELP MUM GET BETTER?



I DON'T KNOW WHAT LOVE IS, BUT I KNOW IT CAN BE THERE FOR HER AND GIVE US THE STRENGTH TO LOVE HER WHOLEHEARTEDLY, NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.



THIS CANDLE IS A SYMBOL OF OUR PRAYER.



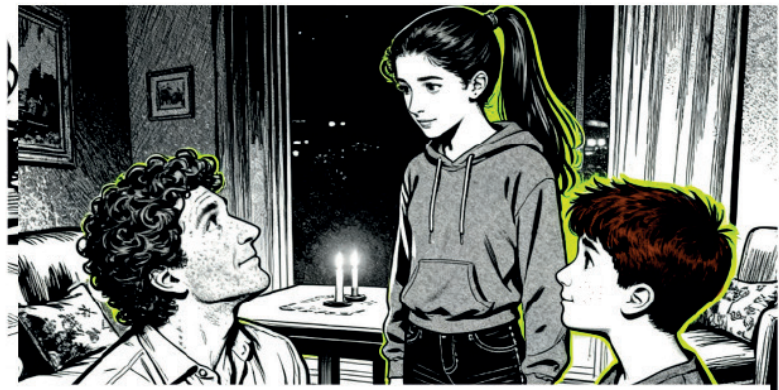
IT'S LIKE TELLING MARY THAT WE DON'T WANT TO REMAIN IN THE DARKNESS OF FEAR.



MARY, OUR HELP, I ENTRUST MY MOTHER TO YOU...



HAIL MARY, FULL OF GRACE ... HOLY BE....



IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT...

The Rector Major's words

May 23

Mary, Mother of Sorrows, is the woman who remains when everyone else flees: at the foot of the cross, in the place where suffering is most unjust and most incomprehensible. The Gospel simply tells us that “standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and the disciple whom he loved”. No dramatic gesture is recounted, not a single word; only her presence, simply “standing there”, without protest, without diminishing the mystery of the cross. It is this ability to remain close to those who suffer, even though she cannot change the course of events, that makes Mary the mother of all human suffering.

She is the Mother of Sorrows, the Woman of Good Friday: she sees her own son die, and yet she does not prevent the fulfilment of what the Son and the Father have decided for the salvation of the world. Not because she is insensitive, but because she has learnt to trust in God even in the midst of darkness. Simeon had foretold her that ‘a sword would pierce her soul’, and on that day the prophecy is fulfilled in its fullness. In her, all the suffering of mothers, of parents, of friends who see those they love suffering, finds an echo, a place, and understanding.

Precisely for this reason, Mary has a unique role in the suffering of humanity. Jesus, from the cross, gives her to us as Mother: ‘Behold your mother’.

From that moment on, every tear may seek her face, every wound may find refuge in her heart. The tradition of ‘Our Lady of Sorrows’ reminds us that she participates from within in her Son’s passion, sharing in his redemptive mission and thus becoming a powerful intercessor for those in pain. In our illnesses, in our bereavements, in our hidden depressions, Mary is a mother who weeps with us and for us, yet at the same time supports us so that pain does not have the final say. With her, the night is pierced by a presence that whispers to the heart: ‘Stay, you are not alone; beneath this cross I am here with you too.’

Have faith: Mary will accompany you through your Calvary, just as she did with Jesus.

But are we capable of letting others support us through the darkest moments of our lives?

Prayer of someone who lives in suffering

Mary, Mother of Sorrows.

You who endured your Son's ordeal on Calvary,

you cannot remain indifferent to the cries of pain from those who suffer.

For illness shatters lives and emotions,

serenity and families, peace and everyday life.

Be with the sick in their final hours

and do not abandon those left behind in despair.

Because suffering makes us fragile, and fragility makes us lose ourselves.

It makes us immobile and prevents us from rising from our condition.

It makes us dependent and incapable of recognizing what is not love.

But with your support and guidance, we can all emerge from our loneliness.

We can hope for the future and build bridges of peace.

We can have another chance.

We can raise young people in joy.

And reach the end of our journey saying in tears of joy, "She did it all."

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M
2026
novena

**Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit
of thy womb, Jesus.**

**Holy Mary, Mother of God,
pray for us sinners,
now and at the hour
of our death.
Amen.**





SALESIAN OF DON BOSCO
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