

Miraculous Medal Novena Reflection

First Day of the Novena 5-11-20

Today we begin a nine day novena in honor of our Blessed Mother. I am sure that Mary must be very pleased that you are making this novena. I am pleased to be able go share a few thoughts with you each day. I wish that I could do so in person, but I guess we have to be satisfied with this. Let me say, right up front, that I miss celebrating Mass with you. I miss you.

In an episode of the comic strip “Family Circus,” the mother is by the bedside of her little boy who is saying his night prayers. He prays, “Dear God, bless our whole family, and keep us all from harm and sickness. Amen.” Outside the window are two menacing looking, ghost-like figures: One is a big ugly looking man with a rifle around his body, a knife in one hand, revolver in the other. The other figure is like a skeleton. In one hand it is holding a vial with the word “germs” written on it. In the other hand, a bag marked “disease.” In the final frame you see two big hands come down from heaven, picking up those two figures: A voice says: “Okay, harm, I gotcha. You too, sickness.”

My very dear parishioners, we are in the midst of a terrible pandemic, the coronavirus. What we have to do is pray as the boy did, to ask the Lord to protect us from harm, disease and sickness, and, in particular from the coronavirus. Since this is the month of May, which we call the month of Mary, I suggest that we do this through the intercession of our Blessed Mother. I suggest the we do this by praying the prayers from the Miraculous Medal novena.

We Vincentians have a special devotion to our Lady of the Miraculous Medal. Briefly, here is the story of the medal. The year was 1830, the place was Paris, France. The story begins with a young novice for the Daughters of Charity, the congregation founded by St. Vincent de Paul. When she was 9 years old, Catherine’s mother died. After the funeral, she climbed up on a chair and reached for a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary that stood high on a shelf in her mother’s bedroom. She clasped the statue to her breast and said aloud: “Now, dear Blessed Mother, you will be my mother.”

Mary did become her mother in a special way. She appeared to Catherine with outstretched arms. Mary foretold difficult times for Catherine. She said, “Do not fear. Have confidence. Do not be afraid.” Mary foretold difficult times for the entire world but added: “But come to the foot of the altar. There graces will be shed upon all who ask for them.” My dear friends, we are facing difficult times. Let us go to the foot of the altar, so to speak, and beg Mary to help us. And if we listen, I think we will hear us say to us what she said to Catherine: “Do not fear. Have confidence. Do not be afraid!”

In the delightful book, “Children’s Letters to God, a boy named Peter writes, “Dear God, my sister Tina has a girlfriend, Wendy, who never stops talking. It would take a miracle to shut her up. Have you got any left?”

Well, folks, I believe that God and Mary have a lot of miracles left. Maybe it will take a miracle to get rid of the corona virus. It could very well be that we will be taking part in making this miracle possible by our prayers. I encourage you to pray the novena and to pray it with your family.

Let us pray especially for the doctors, nurses, first responders, and all those who put their life and health on the line to serve us.

Let us pray for those infected by the virus, for those who have died from it and for those mourning their death.

Let us pray for those who are out of work, for small business owners who had to close, for those who do not have enough food to eat.

Let us all ask our Blessed Mother to intercede for us to her son Jesus to put an end to this terrible pandemic.

O MARY CONCEIVED WITHOUT SIN, PRAY FOR US WHO HAVE RECOURSE TO THEE.