



Novena

in honor of Mary,
Mother Thrice Admirable,
Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt

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Wunderbaren Mutter und Königin von Schönstatt*

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NOVENA

IN HONOR OF

MARY

**MOTHER THRICE ADMIRABLE,
QUEEN, AND VICTRESS OF
SCHOENSTATT**

By Sister M. Gunthildis Kley

FOREWORD

You have a problem and have decided to take refuge in the Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt through a novena. Perhaps you have knelt in the chapel of grace at a Schoenstatt center, or even made a pilgrimage there on the 18th of some month. That day is celebrated as covenant day, the day on which our Marian consecration, the covenant of love concluded by the founding generation of Schoenstatt with the Mother of God, is renewed. On covenant day you will see the words written on the antependium of the altar, "Nothing without you, Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt, nothing without us." The first part of the sentence reminds us that the mother of Jesus Christ mediates all graces. Every gift of God comes to us through the hands of Mary, who is also our mother. Through the second part, "Nothing without us," we would like to assure our Blessed Lady, "We are ready to help you with your tasks since you expect our cooperation."

What you hope to receive from the Mother of God in your present situation is clear to you. What you yourself will have to do during your novena in the coming days will become clear to you because this novena is not merely a prayer to be recited. The novena is rather to assist you in applying these ideals to your everyday life. Mary takes you, as it were, by the hand.



She re-enacts her own life before your eyes in order that you may follow her example. Give it a try – and have confidence. The Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt will answer your prayer.

Note to This Revised Edition

The complete title of the image of grace of the Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt has been assimilated into this edition. The original German text was published in 1955. The founder of Schoenstatt, Father Joseph Kentenich, added the advocacy Victress to the title of the image of grace in 1966, in gratitude to Our Lady for proving herself victorious in the history of his foundation, especially during his fourteen years of exile in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

PREPARATORY PRAYER

To Be Said Each Day of the Novena

Dear Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt! I come to you with unbounded confidence to enlist your help in obtaining from God that for which I humbly ask. Your divine Son has given you to me as a mother. His words "Behold your mother!" were addressed to me also. And to you he said, "Behold your son!" – a word equally binding for all time (John 19, 26-27). Behold, then, your child kneeling at your feet! What consolation to have you for a mother! Therefore I turn to you in my great need. I beg you with all my heart to help me, Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt! For it has never been known that anyone who fled to your protection was left unaided. You yourself carried a great burden. As Mother of Sorrows you stood beneath the cross. Now, that I come to you in my sorrow, will you disregard my urgent and humble request? No never! For you are the Health of the Sick, the Consoler of the Afflicted, the Help of Christians. What fills me with special confidence, however, is that you are called the Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt, a title of honor which means simply that you are wonderful, always and everywhere.

Obtain for me, then, from your beloved Son the answer to my prayer – and I shall repeat your Magnificat and sing the mercies of the Lord for all eternity. Amen.

FIRST DAY

God's Greeting to Mary

"The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary and she conceived of the Holy Spirit." (Luke 1, 38)

Down through the centuries the bells atop our churches and chapels have loudly proclaimed this mystery. Three times each day they wish to remind us of the beginning of our redemption.

Let us meditate for a moment on the Annunciation. How much light must have surrounded the Holy Virgin! What great mystery the Lord placed in her keeping! The coming of the Messiah was close at hand, and she who considered herself so little, was to become his mother! What joyous excitement must have seized Mary on hearing the unbelievable, that the Eternal Son of God wished to become one of us!

Let us ask ourselves, however, if this event meant only joy and happiness for Mary. O no, for well do we realize that the hour so long awaited also included the prophecy of impending great sorrow. To be sure, at the time of the Annunciation, the Holy Virgin did not see in detail the events to which she had given her consent. On the other hand she was familiar with the scriptural passages referring to the Messiah. At the price of extremely painful sufferings, he wished to redeem the world so deeply mired in guilt and sin. Then, didn't his mother also have to prepare herself for an ocean of sorrow? "The angel of the Lord declared unto Mary . . ." Mary greeted by God!

God probably has never sent an angel to you who greeted you and brought you a message. Who is it, then, who brings your messages? Is it perhaps the postal carrier conveying news that destroys all your life's dreams and happiness? You learn that... others have robbed you of honor and your good name, that... you have lost your home and possessions, or that your creditor threatens with foreclosure. Perhaps you received the death notice of one near and dear to you, or you wait with longing for news about the condition of a loved one. Or you are beset with problems interior and exterior which make life hard for you.

Do not say that the good God never sends an angel to you, nor a message! Kneel quietly before your God, as Mary knelt at the angel's greeting, and reflect,

"To those who love God, all things work together for their good!" (Romans 8, 28). Isn't your cross, whatever name it may bear, a greeting from God, a message from your Father to you, his child? Doesn't the angel of the Lord, as it were, stand also before you? As with Mary, he also awaits your *yes*.

Your suffering has a deep meaning. Ever since Christ died on Golgotha, he permits those he loves to share in his death that they might also share in his glory. Together with Christ we must suffer for our own redemption and for that of others.

Bow gently, then, under the hand of God and believe blindly that it is God who greets you in your sorrow, and that it is actually a message from heaven.

Believe firmly that now more than ever you are not abandoned by God, and trust implicitly that he will

hear you through the intercession of Mary, the Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt.

PRAYER

Dear Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt! Since you have walked in the darkness of blind faith and submitted at all times to the wish and will of the Almighty, help me amid cross and sorrow to discover the love of my Heavenly Father. Intercede for me that God may hear me and, if it be in accordance with his plans, grant what I ask for... (mention it here in silence).

EXERCISE

Pay close attention to every small event and look upon it as a greeting from God.

SECOND DAY

Mary's Answer to the Angel's Message

"Behold I am the servant of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word." (Luke 1, 38)

Was it easy for Mary to give that answer? Did she give it hastily, casually, and without reflection as we so often do when we pray the Angelus? Mary was frightened by what she saw and heard. She was frightened by the angel, frightened also, we may be sure, by the unheard-of task God expected of her who wished to be the servant, not the Mother of the Redeemer. This was all so completely unforeseen by Mary. She wished to remain a virgin and now that would be changed. There was not much time for reflection. She had to come to a quick decision. The angel stood there awaiting the answer – the freely given answer which would determine how God proceeded in future. It was the answer on which the redemption of the entire world would depend.

Mary did not clothe herself in the mantle of false humility; I cannot do it! She did not wrestle with the angel like Moses did with the Lord when he commanded him to go to Pharaoh and perform miracles, that he might let the people of Israel depart. Hesitatingly at last, Moses replied, "I have a slow tongue, let Aaron speak for me" (cf. Exodus 4, 10-14).

The humble Maid of Nazareth acted quite differently. After the angel revealed to her that she could become the Mother of God and remain a virgin

servant of God, Mary did not hesitate even a moment. With childlike simplicity and full of trust she uttered the words, "Behold I am the servant of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1, 38).

Now then, what is *your* answer to the sorrow you bear, what reply do *you* make to the message of your Father? - "How can I," you may ask, "answer yes to injustice, loss of honor, my home, and possessions?" Can people consent when death robs them of their dearest ones in life, when sickness tortures them and their very existence rocks under their feet?

Ponder thoughtfully! Your sorrow, whatever it is, God's fatherly love permits, yet his watchful eye keeps vigil over you. He desires only your good. He wishes to draw you to himself. Believe that with all your heart! Even when he permits you to live with a serious, humiliating, moral weakness, it can be for your benefit, for, "To those who love God all things work together for their good," as St. Paul says (Romans 8, 28). You need but humbly admit your misery and unceasingly raise your heart in prayer to him. Offer him your good will and try, at least for today, to give your willing consent to the cross which is so great a burden to you.

God is Father, God is Love,
Good is everything he does.

When things seem to you without rhyme or reason, say humbly with Mary, "Behold I am the servant of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word" (Luke 1, 38).

"Yes, Heavenly Father, yes, let your will always be done, whether it brings me joy, sorrow, or woe!"

PRAYER

Dear Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt, humble Maiden of Nazareth, obtain for me the grace to pronounce a sincere, humble, and resigned *yes* in my great sorrow. Teach me to bow under the hand of God, mindful of the words:

Trust in the Lord,
As your mother has taught,
The firmer your trust
The more the Lord must
Show goodness and mercy to you. Amen.

EXERCISE

Today say a willing *yes* to every unforeseen event that surprises you.

THIRD DAY

The Holy Spirit Praises Mary Through Elizabeth

"Blessed are you who believed." (Luke 1, 45)

On the first day of this novena you accepted your sorrow as a message from the Father. On the second day you tried to submit to God, your Heavenly Father as a child. With Mary, the Blessed Mother of God, you have given him your yes in the blind confidence that the will of your Father has planned only the best for you, even when he sends bitter sorrow. Today we witness the blessed meeting between Mary and Elizabeth. We marvel over the words spoken by Elizabeth, who was inspired by the Holy Spirit, "And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me... and blessed are you, who believed..." (cf. Luke 1, 42-45).

What was it that Mary believed? She believed in the almighty power of God, and did not doubt that to fulfill his plans he can even break the laws of nature. Truly, he had done great and incomprehensible things in her. She could carry the Son of God under her heart, and become mother without violation of her virginity. Yes, "blessed are you, who believed."

Remember that this word of the Holy Spirit from the lips of Elizabeth was uttered also for you. It applies, to you, too, if like Mary you can believe. The good God is almighty and ready, at Mary's request, to help you also if it be for your salvation, even if it requires a miracle. Isn't this a bright star of hope?

It is a delightful fact that Mary is your mother. Her most beautiful privilege of motherhood consists in obtaining God's favors for you. "Mary has come through," has been written a thousand times all over the sanctuaries and shrines of Our Blessed Lady, the Health of the Sick, the Consoler of the Afflicted, and the Help of Christians. Don't the shrines of the great Mother of God bear testimony to her mother love? Aren't they living memorials of her power? Mary can, wishes to, and will obtain miracles for you. The number of miracles obtained at her request is legion.

Christ himself challenges us to a strong belief in the miraculous help of God. He says, "Have faith in God. Amen, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart but believes that what he says will happen, it shall be done for him. Therefore I tell you, all that you ask for in prayer, believe that you will receive it and it shall be yours" (Mark 11, 22-24). Blessed are you, if you believe that God, through Mary's intercession, will grant your request, if it is for your good, or that he will at least give you the strength to carry your cross, if in his loving concern for you he deems it best not to lift it from your shoulders . . .

PRAYER

I trust your might, your kindness, Mother dear,
I do believe that you are always near,
Schoenstatt's great Queen, O Mother mild,
I blindly trust in you, and in your Child.

EXERCISE

Practice childlike confidence all day.

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EXERCISE

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FOURTH DAY

Mary's Joyful Answer in the Magnificat

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior..." (Luke 1, 46-47)

What does Mary's hymn of praise have to do with your novena and the beseeching cry of your heart for an answer to your request? Certainly you will break forth into a joyous Magnificat as soon as you have obtained what you asked for ... but now? No, that is asking too much. Are you thinking along these lines?

With a heart overflowing with joy, Mary proclaimed the great works of God. She wasn't thinking only of her own selection by God; her joy went out to the whole world, the redemption of which was at hand ... "His mercy is from age to age... He has lifted up the lowly... the hungry he has filled with good things..." (Luke 1, 50-52). She was jubilant over the good that would come to others.

In practical life, too, Mary's whole being revealed an attitude of eagerness to assist the needs of her fellow human beings. As soon as the wonder of wonders had happened and the Son of God had assumed flesh in her, she did not remain hidden in order to adore the God of her heart, the child of her womb. No, she hurried off to Elizabeth. There we find her at work. How typically human the Blessed Mother revealed herself. And it was there, in the service of another, that she sang her jubilant Magnificat.

You come with a request. Perhaps you are disappointed in God and people, or you find yourself in a deep, inner conflict. Or there are exterior

difficulties ahead of you. How then can you be expected to worry about others? You have enough to do to think of yourself. No one worries about you either. That is what you may think within yourself. Perhaps indignation and sadness have taken hold of you, or envy and jealousy over the good fortune of others are stirring within you, and now you are angry at your God!

I wonder if the Blessed Mother couldn't teach you a few things through her Magnificat. Doesn't it speak to you of service and self-forgetfulness? Why not try, despite your own sorrow and care, to bring a little happiness to others and to be truly kind to them through a friendly look, a kind word, or a helpful deed. And pray for others. While doing this you will soon discover that your own sorrow will lose much of its bitterness. You learn to forget yourself more and more and find profound happiness amid sorrow, just as St. Paul writes, "I am filled with consolation; I am overjoyed in all our affliction" (2 Corinthians 7, 4).

PRAYER

Dear Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt. You have sung your Magnificat because the Lord chose you for his mother, and because through your motherhood you became the handmaid and servant of all. Obtain for me the grace to bear my sorrow cheerfully and to always serve others in the hope that God may grant my petition through your powerful intercession, O Mother Thrice Admirable and loving Queen! Amen.

EXERCISE

Try to be cheerful and friendly in your work today. Use every opportunity to serve others.

FIFTH DAY

Mary's Complaint

"Son, why have you done this to us?" (Luke 2, 48)

You carry a heavy burden of sorrow. Yesterday, despite all cares, you made a great effort to be cheerful and pleasant. Perhaps you worked for others until you were tired. Now you return to yourself and your own problem. Something within you would like to rise up and demand an answer to the ageless question: Why? Why just me? . . . That is human. But there should be no bitterness in your question. Besides, it might comfort you to find the same question *why* even on the lips of God's own mother. "Why have you done this to us?" (Luke 2, 48). Tell me, could anything bring Mary closer to us than this truly human display of deep motherly concern? Or, for that matter, all the other incomprehensible events of her life, even to the very foot of the cross. Silently she stood there, without complaint!

You ask: "Why all the terrible sufferings, the disappointments in this world, why so much pain? Is there any meaning to it all?" A consoling little verse says:

When pain and sorrow are your part,
The Father calls: Come to my heart.

It's like this: God's love for you is even greater now that he permitted your sorrow. Through it he would like to purify you, to detach you from worldly things, and draw you to himself. You say so quickly, "God is

punishing me" and believe that he is no longer on your side. And yet *he loves you*, especially when you suffer patiently, for then you carry, as it were, part of his own Son's cross.

Nevertheless you will do well to accept your sorrow also in the spirit of penance. We all have many reasons to atone for our own and the sins of others. By means of your sorrow you can wipe out here on earth part of your temporal punishment due to sin. That, too, is a proof of God's love. Thus, pain and sorrow will become so many rungs on the ladder of salvation and sanctification.

But there is an even greater and nobler meaning to all your sorrow. Sorrow, endured in the right manner stamps your soul into the likeness of your Crucified Savior. Loving Jesus as you certainly do, don't you wish to become just a little more like him?

Moreover, through the pains and sorrows of life, you have a golden opportunity for acquiring many precious merits for eternity. Some day, at the hour of your death, you will rejoice over the occasions when, like gold, you were purified in the fire of sufferings, and when, like Christ, you fell to the ground under the weight of the cross. Periods of prosperity and pleasure will bring you no comfort then. But thrice blessed are you if you have borne the trials of life in union with God!

Your sorrow also offers you the opportunity to be an apostle, to help in saving many souls. One might say the Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt steps up to you and says, "Give me all your sacrifices, pains, and sorrows that I may offer them to God. They shall be made fruitful for the

salvation of souls and to remake the world according to the blueprint of Christ." Can you deny this request to the Mother of Grace of Schoenstatt? Wouldn't you like to become a victim of love through your labors and sacrifices in order to obtain many graces of conversion? Look into yourself and see if God and our Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt are not trying to awaken in you a spirit of heroic sacrificial action!

Perhaps the meaning of sorrow has now become clear to you. Nevertheless turn to Mary with complete trust. It may well be that God permitted your sorrow only that you might learn Mary's power and goodness. Trust in her like a child! The measure of your trust is the measure of fulfillment. As the little verse suggests:

In pain and woe to Mary go,
Tell her your grief – she'll bring relief!

PRAYER

Dear Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt, in sorrow you have sought your Son and found him again. You have summed up all your grief with the words, "Child, why have you done so to us?" (Luke 2, 48). I bring to you all my cares and beg you with all the fervor of my heart to obtain for me the answer to my prayer. May God's holy will be done in all things! Amen.

EXERCISE

Say repeatedly to yourself today, that your suffering has a deep meaning and that God will do what is best.

SIXTH DAY

God's Answer to Mary

To Mary's plaint in the temple, "Son, why have you done this to us?" her Son replied, "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" (Luke 2, 49).

Mary was not prepared for such an answer. How it must have afflicted her! Was she able even to think? All the sorrow of the last three days again came upon her heart: the sleepless nights, the anguish and uncertainty over her lost Child. And then her Son, head high, full of beauty and divine majesty, stood before her, his answer striking deeply to the very core of her mother-heart.

Mary had her Child again, but finding him, she realized she had lost him. Since the Father in heaven had first claim on the Son's heart, her mother-heart had to step back. She was to become one with Jesus in saying yes to the will of the Father. Mary did not comprehend at once what Jesus meant. But she "treasured all these things in her heart" (Luke 2, 51).

Do you find yourself in a similar situation? Perhaps you, too, have lost a son or the uncertainty about one of your loved ones has brought grief to your heart. Perhaps you have lost home and possessions, or seen the sun of your happiness setting behind a grave. You have lost your health – and what would be worse: the peace of your heart, nay God himself.

Don't you know that you, too, must be about your Father's business? Have you perhaps lost the greatest good, God himself, through mortal sin? If so, then take to the road quickly and seek your God "in the temple." Recover your peace of mind through a good confession.

But if it is earthly goods you have lost, then abandon yourself completely to the will of your heavenly Father. Perhaps you do not understand the lesson God wants to teach you through this suffering. This, however, you do know: The presence of your Heavenly Father is above you and all around you, keeping watch over you. Therefore, do not be angry with God! Do as Mary does; think it over, pray, and abandon yourself completely into the hands of Divine Providence. God's plans are plans of wisdom and love. Mary, too, understands you, especially now when your troubles surround you. Keep close to God and hold tightly to the hand of your mother. In every uncertainty pray to Mary:

If I don't know the way, you know it well.
That gives me peace and quiet more than I can tell;
Nothing on earth has ever been so plain.
Who trusts in Mary, never trusts in vain!

PRAYER

Dear Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt! Obtain for me the virtue of a profound trust in God and the grace to consider the will of God always as the highest and best. I put all my trust in you and fervently beg of you never to abandon me, but to obtain from God what I humbly ask for. Amen. (Mention it here in silence)

EXERCISE

Today, do not complain about hardships. Remember, instead, that you, too, can now be about your Father's business by doing his wise and holy will.

SEVENTH DAY

Mary's Prayer

"They have no wine!" (John 2, 3)

In a matter-of-fact way, simply, and with unbounded confidence the mother of the Lord said, "They have no wine!" Mary uttered these words at the marriage feast of Cana.

For thirty years the Son of God had lived the hidden life of Nazareth and carried on the trade of St. Joseph. Now he began to teach and "to speak as one who has authority" (cf. Luke 4, 32). As yet he had performed no miracle. One day the Savior with Mary his mother was invited to a wedding. They did not spurn the invitation. When, during the celebration the supply of wine ran out, Mary noticed it and rose. Was she preparing to leave in order to save the bridal couple embarrassment? No, that was not the reason for her rising. She went to her Son and told him in a whisper, "They have no wine" (John 2, 3).

These words implied more than the mere communication of a fact. Mary expected of the Lord a miracle, a miracle of water and wine! Something unheard of. Would it not have been better for her to say, "Let us depart and go home!" However she did not think of that. She asked for help for the newlyweds. This was the time, according to her wish, when the Son of God would perform his first miracle – not in the temple or synagogue, as we might have thought, but on the occasion of a wedding celebration. How typically human Mary was!

The words of Mary, "They have no wine!" must give you tremendous confidence! You are not asking for wine. No, you are in real need, not just in a disagreeable situation, in a slightly painful embarrassment. A heavy burden rests on your soul. Perhaps your whole existence, the welfare of your loved ones, or the salvation of your own soul is at stake. Doubt not for a moment that Mary – just as at Cana – stands now at the side of the Lord whispering to him for you, "They are in trouble and need your help. They have a particular difficulty only you can solve."

If Christ, at Mary's request, changed water into wine, in order to help the newlyweds in their predicament, won't he listen to Mary when she pleads for you, since your need is much greater?

PRAYER

Dear Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt! Beg and intercede for me with the same fervor with which you once pleaded the cause of the nuptial pair at Cana, "Lord, they have no wine!" Place my request before the Lord, then I will surely be heard. He will deliver me from my sorrow or give me strength to bear it. Amen.

EXERCISE

Say repeatedly today with our Blessed Mother, "Lord, they have no wine!" and include your own needs. Exercise confidence and persevering prayer.

EIGHTH DAY

God's Answer to Mary

"My hour has not yet come." (John 2, 4-5)

It would not be surprising if your heart were still captivated today from yesterday's lovely picture of the Mother of God in her role as a truly human, understanding mother. She took a daring step when she asked for a miracle, "Lord, they have no wine." And the answer of her Son who stands before her in all his divine dignity? "Woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come" (John 2, 4).

Perhaps her heart shrank momentarily at the seemingly harsh words of the Lord. However, she does not withdraw into offended and humiliated silence, as we perhaps might have done. Mary is firm in her belief; he will help just the same. She hesitates not a moment.

What does the Blessed Mother wish to teach you in your predicament? That you should form your own attitude after her example! Persevere in fervent prayer. Do not withdraw into offended silence, because you have prayed once and your prayer has not yet been answered. We are surprised to see Mary, in spite of the answer she received, speaking at once to the servants and giving them instructions. Truly, her confidence knew no bounds. You, too, like Mary, must expect everything from the Lord. "Call the servants," that is, trust implicitly until you receive an answer in your great need.

Christ himself has taught us this attitude. We recall here one of his parables: A man went to the home of his friend in the middle of the night, knocking and pleading persistently for the friend to please open the door and lend him some bread. Because he does not cease begging, the friend finally gets up and gives it to him, not because he is a friend, but rather to rid himself of the nuisance (Luke 11, 5-13).

Through the parable the Lord wishes to convey this thought to you: You must act like that friend who persevered in his pleading. Hence, do not lose confidence but pray without ceasing, always expecting help in your great need, even though you may have to wait for an answer.

You know the way for me, you know the time,
Into your hands I trustingly place mine.
Your plan is perfect, born of perfect love;
You know the way for me, that is enough.

PRAYER

Dear Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt! At the marriage feast of Cana you made your own the predicament of the bridal pair. Do not cease to plead with your divine Son also for me. I place all my trust and confidence in you and the irresistible power of your intercession. O great and loving mother of my Lord. Amen.

EXERCISE

Practice patience today.

NINTH DAY

A Word from Mary

"Do whatever he tells you!" (John 2, 5)

Mary still stands beside the Lord. She is not discouraged by his Word. Rather, her faith and trust remain firm as a rock: He can help! She calls the servants together and in a matter-of-fact way directs them, "Do whatever he tells you!" and truly, her complete trust is rewarded with complete victory. Christ performs the first miracle.

"Do whatever he tells you!" O magnificent word from the lips of Mary, good for all times and all generations! Indeed, as she did at Cana, so today and forever, Mary prepares the way for Christ.

What was the Lord's answer? Mary and the servants surrounding her are happy at hearing his words, "Fill the jars with water" (John 2, 7). Hurriedly they comply with the Lord's command. You, too, must make preparations if you expect an answer to your prayers. That is, you must remove sin from your heart through a good confession. You must make a clean break with all the illicit attachments, drive from you all envy and jealousy. Offer the hand of reconciliation to your enemy. Love the Lord your God with your whole heart and your whole soul and with all your strength. Also love your neighbor as yourself, those who live on the same floor, or work in the same shop or office with you, and fill the jars of your heart with water. These symbolize your good works and the purity of your

intentions. But above all, fill your soul to overflowing with boundless confidence, and also with the readiness to bear your sorrow as long as God wishes you to do so. Is that not already part of the answer to your prayers? Most certainly, for the Lord expects that we offer them with the right disposition of our heart. Follow, therefore, Mary's advice, "Do whatever he tells you!" Do it today, do it right away and without delay, and then trust humbly that through Mary, the Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt, the Lord will fulfill your petition.

PRAYER

O Mary, Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt! Obtain for me the grace of conversion and help me to faithfully observe God's commandments and to do his holy will. Do not permit my life to be an obstacle to the fulfillment of my prayer and the miracles of grace you wish to obtain for me, O clement, O loving, O sweet Virgin Mary! Amen.

EXERCISE

Today prepare yourself for a good confession.

CONCLUDING REFLECTION

You have now come to the end of your novena. It hasn't always been easy to persevere.

If your prayers have been answered, do not forget to make an appropriate thanksgiving. And if you still must wait, do not lose confidence. Make the novena a second and third time, or until your prayers are answered. You can communicate your request also to the Sisters of Mary at our Schoenstatt centers who keep vigil in the chapel of grace. They will gladly include your intentions in their prayers.

You are asking the Mother Thrice Admirable for a great favor. You may rest assured that it remains close to her loving heart. She will answer your prayer at the time best suited for you. And if she does not remove your sorrow from you, she will give you the strength to bear it courageously and with silent resignation. She will transform your interior life, give you new courage to carry on, and impart to you a humble readiness to submit completely to God's holy will. Thus, your restless and tortured soul will experience a miracle of grace. Tell me, wouldn't that be reason enough to pour out your heart in fervent thanksgiving to Schoenstatt's Mother of Grace?

She would like to draw you to herself and make you an apostle, eager to sanctify yourself, so that you will also lead others more surely to eternal happiness with

God. She would like to enter into a covenant of love with you. Therefore give yourself to her. Present to her all your good works, your prayers and labors, your daily cares and sacrifices, your anxieties and pains, all your sorrow. Don't you see, the Mother Thrice Admirable, Queen, and Victress of Schoenstatt presents you, with all you are and possess, to the Eternal God as a prayer, that he may renew the whole world and bring those estranged from their Heavenly Father, home to his love. Wouldn't you like to help fulfill that great wish of your heavenly mother? Enter into the covenant of love with her. Surely, she will outdo you by far in love and generous giving.

PRAYER

My Queen, my Mother, I give myself entirely to you, and to show my devotion to you, I consecrate to you this day my eyes, my ears, my mouth, my heart, my entire self without reserve. As I am your own, my good Mother, guard me and defend me as your property and possession. Amen.

Servus Mariae Nunquam Peribit
A Child of Mary Will Never Perish