



INSPIRATIONAL & USEFUL RESOURCES

Novena to Saints Joachim and Anne

Saints Joachim and Ann, grandparents of Jesus and parents of Mary, we seek your intercession. We beg you to direct all our actions to the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls. Strengthen us when we are tempted, console us during our trials, help us when we are in need, be with us in life and in death. O divine Savior, we thank you for having chosen Saints Joachim and Ann to be parents of our Blessed Mother Mary and so to be your own beloved grandparents. We place ourselves under their patronage this day. We recommend to them our families, our children, and our grandchildren. Keep them from all spiritual and physical harm. Grant that they may ever grow in greater love of God and others. Saint Joachim and Ann, we have many great needs. We beg you to intercede for us before the throne of your divine Grandson. All of us here have our own special intentions, our own special needs, and we pray that through your intercession, our prayers may be granted. Amen. (Mention your request here).

Say this novena once a day for nine days in a row.

Excerpted from the book "Novena: The Power of Prayer" by Barbara Calamari and Sandra DiPasqua.

LECTIO DIVINA: OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE (LK1: 26-38)

1) Opening prayer

God of the poor and the humble,
we thank You today for choosing Mary
as the Virgin Mother of Jesus, your Son

Her faith and willing service
opened the way to Your new world.
Dispose us to seek Your will
and to cooperate with Your plans,
that we too, like Mary,
may give to the world its Savior,
Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord.

2) Gospel Reading – Luke 1:26-38

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the House of David; and the virgin's name was Mary.

He went in and said to her, "Rejoice, you who enjoy God's favor! The Lord is with you." She was deeply disturbed by these words and asked herself what this greeting could mean, but the angel said to her, "Mary, do not be afraid; you have won God's favor. Look! You are to conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you must name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His ancestor David; He will rule over the House of Jacob forever and His reign will have no end."

Mary said to the angel, "But how can this come about, since I have no knowledge of man?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you with its shadow. And so the child will be holy and will be called Son of God.

And I tell you this too: your cousin Elizabeth also, in her old age, has conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God." Mary said, "You see before you the Lord's servant, let it happen to me as you have said." And the angel left her.

3) Reflection

- The visit of the Angel to Mary reminds us of the visit of God to different women of the Old Testament: Sarah, mother of Isaac (Gen 18: 9-15), Anne, mother of Samuel (1 Sam 1: 9-

18), the mother of Samson (Jg 13: 2-5). To all of them was announced the birth of a son with an important mission in the realization of God's plan.

- The account begins with the expression "in the sixth month". It is the sixth month of the pregnancy of Elizabeth. The need of Elizabeth, a woman advanced in age who is expecting her first son with the risk of delivery, is the background of this episode. Elizabeth is mentioned at the beginning (Lk 1: 26) and at the end of the visit of the angel (Lk 1: 36-39).
- The angel says: "Rejoice, you who enjoy God's favor, the Lord is with you"! Similar words were also said to Moses (Ex 3: 12), to Jeremiah (Jer 1: 8), to Gideon (Jg 6: 12) and to other people with an important mission in God's plan. Mary is surprised at the greeting and tries to understand the significance of these words. She is realistic and wants to understand. She does not accept just any invitation.
- The angel answers: "Do not be afraid!" Just as it happened in the visit of the angel to Zechariah, the first greeting of God is always: "Do not be afraid!" The angel recalls the promises of the past which will be fulfilled thanks to the son who will be born and who is to receive the name of Jesus. He will be called the Son of the Most High and in Him will be realized the Kingdom of God. This is the explanation of the angel in such a way that Mary is not afraid.
- Mary is aware of the mission which she is about to receive, but she continues to be realistic. She does not allow herself to be drawn by the greatness of the offer, and observes her condition. She analyses the offer according to certain criteria which she has available. Humanly speaking, it was not possible: "But how can this come about, I have no knowledge of man?"
- The angel explains that the Holy Spirit, present in God's Word since the creation (Genesis 1: 2), is capable of things which seem impossible. This is why the Holy One who will be born of Mary will be called Son of God. The miracle repeats itself up until today. When the Word of God is accepted by the poor, something new happens, thanks to the will of the Holy Spirit! Something new and surprising, such as a son born of a virgin or a son born to a woman of advanced age, like Elizabeth, whom everyone said was barren and could not have children! And the angel adds: "See, your cousin Elizabeth also, in her old age, has conceived a son, and she whom people called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing is impossible to God."

- The response of the angel clarifies everything for Mary, and she surrenders: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord, may it be done to me according to your word”. Mary uses for herself the title of Servant, Handmaid of the Lord. This title of Isaiah, which represents the mission of the people not as a privilege, but rather as a service to the other people (Is 42:1-9, 49:3-6). Later Jesus will define his mission as a service: “I have not come to be served, but to serve!” (Mt 20:28). He learned this from His mother!

4) Personal questions

- What struck you the most in the visit of the Angel Gabriel to Mary?
- Jesus praises his mother when He says: “Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and keep it” (Lk 11:28). How does Mary relate to the Word of God during the visit of the Angel?

5) Concluding Prayer

To Yahweh belong the earth and all it contains,
the world and all who live there;

it is He who laid its foundations on the seas,
on the flowing waters fixed it firm. (Ps 24,1-2)

<http://ocarm.org/en/content/lectio/lectio-divina-our-lady-guadalupe-lk1-26-38>