

□ Reading time: 8 min.

Saint John Bosco, apostle of the young and father of the orphaned, continues to be a powerful intercessor from Heaven. This novena, traditionally recited in the nine days preceding his feast day on 31st January, invites us to rediscover his educational charism founded on preventive love, reason, and faith. Through nine daily meditations, we contemplate the pillars of his spirituality: his mission to abandoned youth, devotion to the sacraments, filial love for the Pope and Mary Help of Christians, missionary zeal, and the prospect of Paradise. Let us entrust ourselves with confidence to his intercession.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

OPENING PRAYER

(to be recited each day)

O father and teacher of youth, Saint John Bosco,
who worked so hard for the salvation of souls,
be our guide in seeking the good of our own souls
and the salvation of our neighbour.

Help us to overcome our passions and human respect;
teach us to love Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament,
Mary Help of Christians, and the Pope;
and implore from God for us a good death,
that we may join you in Paradise. Amen!

FIRST DAY - 22 January

The mission to poor and abandoned youth

Don Bosco: *"Remember that education is a matter of the heart, and that God alone is its master."*

Invocation

Saint John Bosco, you received from God, while still a boy, the grace to know your mission through a prophetic dream: to become an apostle to poor, abandoned, and endangered youth. The Lord showed you how you were to transform wolves into lambs, not with blows but with gentleness and charity. This revelation illuminated your entire existence and made you a loving father to thousands of young people.

Intercession

O Saint John Bosco, obtain for me the grace to recognise clearly the mission that God has also prepared for me. Just as you dedicated your life to the neediest, help me to understand where the Lord is calling me to serve. Intercede that I may know how to see Christ in our poorest and most abandoned brothers and sisters, and grant me a heart capable of selfless love for those who are alone, marginalised, and without hope. Grant that I too may be an instrument of divine Providence for those most in need.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

SECOND DAY - 23 January

Faith in the sacraments and love for purity

Don Bosco: *"There are two wings to fly to heaven: confession and communion."*

Invocation

Saint John Bosco, you received from the Lord an unshakeable faith in the power of the sacraments of Confession and the Eucharist. You made these sacraments the heart of your pedagogy, leading countless young people to an encounter with Christ. You were also granted a special grace to love and defend the angelic virtue of purity, which you proposed as a sure path to holiness and happiness.

Intercession

O Saint John Bosco, obtain for me the grace of a living and active faith in the sacraments of the Church. Help me to approach Confession frequently and with devotion, to experience the infinite mercy of God. Grant that the Eucharist may become the centre of my life, a source of strength and joy. Intercede that I may guard with vigilance the purity of my heart, body, and mind, living in this world with dignity and respect for myself and for others. Grant all young people the grace to understand the beauty of chastity.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

THIRD DAY - 24 January

Fidelity to the Pope and to the Church

Don Bosco: *"Our pastors, and especially the bishops, unite us to the Pope; the Pope unites us with God."*

Invocation

Saint John Bosco, you received from the Lord the grace of a filial and unconditional love for the Roman Pontiff and a profound respect for the pastors of the Church. In difficult times for the Holy See, you remained a solid rock of fidelity, teaching your young people that where the Pope is, there is the Church, and where the Church is, there is Christ. You made obedience to the Vicar of Christ a distinctive feature of your work.

Intercession

O Saint John Bosco, obtain for me the grace to love the Church as you loved it, with all its riches and also in its human poverty. Help me to recognise in the Successor of Peter the voice of Christ guiding his flock. Intercede that I may know how to live in communion with the pastors whom the Lord has placed to guide his people, supporting them with prayer and collaboration, and preserve me from any spirit of division and sterile criticism.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

FOURTH DAY - 25 January

Devotion to Mary Help of Christians

Don Bosco: *"Those who desire graces from Mary Help of Christians should help our Missions and they will be sure to obtain them."*

Invocation

Saint John Bosco, you received from Heaven a most tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title of Help of Christians. The Virgin was your mother, teacher, and guide throughout your life. By her inspiration, you built the Basilica in Turin dedicated to her, which became a centre of graces and conversions. Mary sustained you in difficulties, enlightened you in your choices, and protected you from dangers. To Her, you entrusted all your children and your works.

Intercession

O Saint John Bosco, obtain for me the grace of a deep and filial devotion to Mary Help of Christians. As you invoked Her in difficult times, teach me to turn to Her with confidence in every need. Intercede that the Blessed Virgin may be my sure guide on the path to God, protect me from the snares of the evil one, and obtain for me all the graces necessary for my salvation. I entrust to Her motherly protection my family, the young, the Church, and the entire world. Mary Help of Christians, pray

for us!

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

FIFTH DAY - 26 January

Devotion to Saint Joseph

Don Bosco: *"Jesus, Joseph, Mary, help me to save my soul. These are the three names most terrible and formidable to the devil."*

Invocation

Saint John Bosco, you received from the Lord a special devotion to Saint Joseph, spouse of Mary and patron of the universal Church. You invoked him constantly, entrusting yourself to his powerful intercession in material and spiritual needs. You proposed him as a model for young workers and recognised him as co-patron of the Salesian Congregation. Saint Joseph always answered your prayers, providing for the needs of your works in a wondrous way.

Intercession

O Saint John Bosco, obtain for me the grace to invoke Saint Joseph with faith and constancy in all my needs. As you experienced his powerful protection, help me to trust in his fatherly goodness. Intercede that Saint Joseph may assist me in my daily work, guide me in the important choices of life, and sustain me in economic and material difficulties. To him I entrust my spiritual life, that he may help me to grow in holiness and to guard the purity of my heart. Saint Joseph, patron of a happy death, assist us in our final hour.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

SIXTH DAY - 27 January

The charism of a founder

Don Bosco: *"I have always needed everything and everyone to move forward."*

Invocation

Saint John Bosco, you received from God the extraordinary gift of being the founder of a great religious family. With the help of Mary Help of Christians, you brought to life the Salesians of Don Bosco, the Daughters of Mary Help of Christians with Saint Mary Domenica Mazzarello, the Salesian Cooperators, and the Association of

Devotees of Mary Help of Christians. Through these foundations, your educational charism spread throughout the world, reaching millions of young people on every continent.

Intercession

O Saint John Bosco, obtain for me the grace to understand and live my role in the Church, building communion and collaboration. As you knew how to involve lay people, religious, and priests in your educational mission, help me to work together with others for the building of the Kingdom of God. Intercede that a spirit of initiative and creativity in the service of the Gospel may flourish in me. Bless all the educational works, schools, oratories, and missions that continue your charism. Inspire many vocations to continue your work in the world.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

SEVENTH DAY - 28 January

The apostolate of the good press

Don Bosco: *"It is also our aim to spread good books."*

Invocation

Saint John Bosco, you received from the Lord the prophetic insight to use the press as a tool for evangelisation. You founded printing presses, published books, pamphlets, and the famous "Catholic Readings," reaching millions of people with the written word. You understood that the good press could be a powerful means to spread the truth, combat error, and form the people in a Christian way. You made the printed word an extension of your priestly ministry.

Intercession

O Saint John Bosco, obtain for me the grace to use the means of communication of our time with responsibility and wisdom. As you used the press for the good of souls, help me to make social media, the internet, and every form of modern communication an instrument of truth and goodness. Intercede that I may know how to bear witness to the Gospel also through the words I write and share. Protect the young from the dangers of the digital world and help everyone to use technology with intelligence and virtue, to build bridges and not walls.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

EIGHTH DAY - 29 January

Missionary zeal

Don Bosco: *"I recommend taking great care of vocations by suggesting three means: speak often of vocations, discuss the missions, have them read letters from missionaries."*

Invocation

Saint John Bosco, you received from the Lord an ardent missionary zeal that drove you to send your sons to the ends of the earth. Although old and ill, you organised the first missionary expeditions to Latin America, Asia, and Africa, entrusting your Salesians to the protection of Mary Help of Christians. You wanted the Gospel to reach every young person, especially the most distant and abandoned. Your missionary vision has brought the Salesian charism to every continent.

Intercession

O Saint John Bosco, obtain for me the grace of a missionary heart, burning with the desire that all may know and love Jesus Christ. As you sent your sons to distant lands, help me to be a missionary where I live, joyfully witnessing to the beauty of the Gospel. Intercede for all missionaries working in difficult lands, that they may be protected and sustained. Kindle in many young people the desire to consecrate their lives to the proclamation of the Gospel. Give the Church new, courageous, and generous evangelisers.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

NINTH DAY - 30 January

The sure guide to Paradise

Don Bosco: *"In your labours and sufferings, never forget that we have a great reward in paradise."*

Invocation

Saint John Bosco, you received from God the grace to be a sure guide for countless souls to Paradise. Through prophetic dreams, you saw the eternal destiny of many of your young people and helped them to prepare for their encounter with God. You taught that life is short and that we must think of eternity. Now that you contemplate the face of God in the glory of Heaven, intercede for us who are still pilgrims on earth.

Intercession

O Saint John Bosco, obtain for me the grace to live each day with my gaze fixed on Paradise, the ultimate goal of our existence. As you guided so many young people on the path of holiness, help me to walk faithfully towards the Father's House. Intercede that I may live well so that I may die well, persevering in God's grace until my last breath. When the hour of my passing into eternity comes, be the one to guide me, together with Mary Help of Christians and Saint Joseph, to the joy of Paradise. Pray for all the dying, that none may be lost but all may attain eternal salvation.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be

CONCLUDING PRAYER

(to be recited each day)

Glorious Saint John Bosco, father of the orphaned, teacher of the young, comfort of the afflicted, help of the abandoned, I turn to you with full confidence. Obtain for me from the Lord the grace I ardently desire [here you may state your particular intention].

You who always invoked with faith Mary Help of Christians and Saint Joseph, obtain for me through their intercession the grace I ask, if it is in accordance with God's will and beneficial for my eternal salvation.

Help me to live according to your example and your teaching, in Christian joy, in the faithful fulfilment of my duties, in love for the Church and the Pope, in purity, and in charity towards all.

Saint John Bosco, pray for us!

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

To obtain graces more easily, Don Bosco advised approaching the Holy Sacraments during the Novena and making or promising an offering for the Salesian Missions.

This novena can be recited in preparation for the feast of Saint John Bosco (31 January) or at any time of the year according to one's needs.