 Reading time: 5 min.

For Saint John Bosco, devotion to Our Lady was not a mere accessory religious sentiment, but a sure path to holiness, a daily help in the spiritual struggle, a school of Christian life. All his pedagogy was born and flourished in the maternal light of Mary. "To his pupils," Don Rua attests, "it can be said that he could not speak without recommending devotion to Mary Most Holy, and especially to teach them to preserve purity, he strongly recommended devotion to Her." In his evening "sermonettes," a precious moment of educational familiarity, he always returned to this point, remaining in God's grace and loving Mary.

Don Bosco loved to translate faith into concrete and simple gestures. For him, devotion is not improvised; it is educated, cultivated, exercised. For this reason, during the novenas in preparation for Marian feasts and during Marian months, he proposed to the young people the celebrated **'fioretti'** (little sacrifices), small acts of love or sacrifice to offer to Our Lady every day. These were not magical formulas, but daily steps to learn interior life, grow in virtues, educate the heart and orient it towards good.

The Salesian Giovanni Battista Lemoyne collected a series of these fioretti, attributing them to the living tradition of the Oratory. Some were dictated by Don Bosco himself; others gathered from his words. These fioretti, "placed on the lips of the Most Holy Mary," still hand down to us today a simple, affectionate spirituality, embodied in life.

We present this precious collection in full:

1. I am your mother; throughout the day, often offer me your heart.
2. When you hear the hours strike, say, softly or in thought: *Hail Mary, my sweetness and my hope!*
3. Together with mine, often invoke the name of Jesus, my Son!
4. Often, at least in the morning and in the evening, kiss my medal.
5. On the way, greet my images, overcoming all human respect.
6. Get yourself a beautiful image of me, and look at it and kiss it often.
7. Greet me often, from the heart; and you will have my love!
8. Get and read a book that speaks of me and my love!
9. Write my name on your books and in your heart!
10. For love of me, be humble, patient, and pious.
11. Obey without hesitation; as I did in my house and in the temple.

12. If necessary, yield to the opinion of others, to please me.
13. When praying, always keep your hands joined before your chest.
14. Increase the number of my devotees with your words.
15. Every Saturday practice some mortification in my honour.
16. Every Saturday recite my litanies to obtain good death.
17. Every Saturday try to receive Holy Communion in my honour.
18. Receive Holy Communion often, especially on my feast days.
19. When you receive Holy Communion, often recommend sinners to me.
20. When you receive Holy Communion, commend yourself to me to obtain purity and charity!
21. Ah! my dear son, never commit a mortal sin!
22. From now on, with word and example, propose to prevent evil.
23. If you want to do me a pleasing favour, often recommend sinners to me.
24. Flee dissipated and less devout companions.
25. If you hear blasphemy, immediately say in your heart: *Praised be always the name of Jesus and Mary!*
26. If someone offends you, do not take revenge; forgive them for love of me!
27. Gossip displeases me; do not do it and do not listen to it.
28. Instead of complaining about displeasures, suffer them willingly for me.
29. In pains and afflictions, turn your gaze to me, your mother!
30. When something displeasing is imposed on you, immediately say, Yes, for the love of Mary!
31. Flee the spectacles of the world, and love solitude.
32. Be the peacemaker among your companions.
33. Oh! how dear it would be to me if you confessed well every eight days.
34. Have great confidence in your ordinary confessor, and do not change him without necessity.
35. Keep the confessor’s advice well in mind, and put it into practice.
36. During holidays, do not let fifteen days pass without confessing.
37. During holidays, regularly attend church to set a good example.
38. Love and respect priests; I too loved and respected the Apostles.
39. Be grateful and respectful towards those who benefit you in soul and body.
40. Save up a little something to give to the poor for love of me.
41. You are my garden; cultivate the most beautiful flowers.
42. With your virtues, be the paradise of my Divine Son!
43. Let your favourite virtue be the angelic virtue: chastity!
44. In ugly temptations, immediately say: *Most pure Mother, pray for me!*

45. Never cast bad glances.
46. Never read dangerous books; and before reading a book you don’t know, speak to your confessor about it.
47. Use great modesty in undressing and dressing.
48. Never make or listen to scandalous or worldly talk.
49. Do not utter, even in jest, a word that could cause bad thoughts.
50. Do not speak with dangerous people, if you want me to speak to your heart.
51. If you want to be my favourite, love the Child Jesus.
52. Love me a lot! I want to make you a saint!
(MB X,32-34)

The fifty-two fioretti collected from Don Bosco constitute a true spiritual itinerary, presented through the very voice of Our Lady who addresses her children with maternal tenderness. Each fioretto is a concrete, practical invitation, accessible even to the youngest.
It starts with the simplest gestures: offering one’s heart to Mary during the day, invoking the names of Jesus and Mary, kissing the medal, greeting sacred images on the street. These are acts that require little time but weave a living and personal relationship with the heavenly Mother into daily life.

The fioretti then touch upon deeper dimensions of Christian life: humility, patience, obedience, forgiveness, purity. Mary herself becomes a teacher, recalling her example, “Obey without hesitation; as did I in my house and in the temple.” The reference to Our Lady’s concrete life in Nazareth and the Temple makes these counsels even more credible and imitable.
Don Bosco paid particular attention to the virtue of purity, which he called the “angelic virtue.” Many fioretti concern the guarding of the eyes, modesty, fleeing dangerous occasions, and the trustful invocation: “Mother most pure, pray for me!”

The most fascinating aspect of this collection is the pedagogical method with which Don Bosco proposed it. The fioretti were displayed in a numbered chart, with a box next to it containing the corresponding numbers. During novenas and the month of May, each young person could daily draw a number, read the fioretto, and accept it as a personal message from Our Lady specifically for them, on that particular day. This method transformed devotion into a personal and exciting experience. It was not the monotony of a repetitive practice, but the daily surprise of an encounter, the joy of feeling called by name by the heavenly Mother.

Today these fioretti retain their spiritual power intact. In an era where dispersion

and superficiality risk fragmenting existence, they offer small concrete gestures to remain anchored to what truly matters. They are seeds of holiness within everyone’s reach, young and old, which Mary herself invites us to cultivate in the garden of our hearts.
As the last fioretto said, with that tenderness that is the seal of maternal love, “Love me a lot! I want to make you a saint!”