

NOVENA TO SAINT VERONICA GIULIANI



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Italian Capuchin Poor Clare nun, 1660-1727
Feast-day 9 July

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From the 22,000 pages of her *Diary*, behold Veronica, a shining example of how powerful and transforming is the love of God when it is welcomed by the creature. Her thoughts will serve to give us an idea of how much St Veronica allowed the Lord to act in her life, and of how her sanctification came about in an ordinary manner, notwithstanding her extraordinary mystical experiences. If we can take up this Saint's life testimony, even today she can be a path to knowing the Lord, and to salvation. That is the purpose of this *Novena* with Veronica.

***Translated into English July 2016**

1st day: St Veronica, a life open to the plan of God

From the Diary: "The Lord gave me to remember what He worked in my soul on the day I was to be clothed in the religious habit. Throughout the night He kept me vigilant by making me apprehend that which I had to do, the manner in which I was to carry it out, and with what kind of fervour. He so set me on fire that I could not be at ease. He awakened me two or three hours before daylight, and I experienced a certain prompting to consider the espousal I was about to make with Jesus. In a moment, the Infant Jesus appeared to me ... and it seemed He demanded of me, indescribably, a firm purpose not to allow the things of the world entry into my mind, not to want to give the least part of my humanity to the world, and to remain completely disposed to do the will of God, with the promise that He would grant me many graces if I corresponded heartily to his request. I knew that He was requiring of me a total dying to self, with every kind of self-denial, ever ready to practise mortification. All this left me eager to carry out everything purely for the glory of God; it seemed that I was left with the light of self-knowledge. I took the holy habit with some emotion, and, once I had crossed the threshold of the cloister, it seemed that I had left behind every other thought. The only thing that remained in my mind was what I had to do to correspond to the will of God."

Read and meditate on Jn 15:14-16: *You are my friends if you do what I command you. I no longer call you servants, because the servant does not know what his master does. But I have called you friends, because I have made known to you all that I have heard from the Father. You have not chosen me, I have chosen you, and I have chosen you that you might go and bear fruit, and that your fruit might endure; because all that you ask of the Father in my name, He will grant.*

Let us pray: O God, source of every good, who have chosen us in your Son before the creation of the world to be holy and immaculate in your sight in charity: grant that by the example of St Veronica we may know to respond to your plan of love under the action of your Holy Spirit. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

2nd day: St Veronica, a life possessed by God-Love

From the Diary: "Although I was occupied with my labours and manual work, from time to time there came upon me some forceful raptures of the mind all in God-Alone. This God-Alone gave my soul certain illuminations and made me understand that He desired me to be entirely despoiled, and at the same time, it seemed that He made me so; and then I saw my soul rejoicing in the fact. This God-Alone of whom I speak, I know not how to explain or make understood. It seems a most difficult task. Even so, I will, out of holy obedience, say what I can of what I have experienced with affections, lights and visions. First, while my soul remained in the arms of God, amidst the flights as if transported, I felt utterly united to the Supreme and Solitary Good. Then the Lord God gave my soul to understand that it was entirely with him alone. Only this knowledge would seem to communicate to the soul certain kinds of teaching; however, I cannot describe them, as they lie beyond description. The soul neither acts, nor speaks, but does nothing; but it does know that the Divine Agent is at work, performing wonders in her. In this light alone, in which she knows this God-Alone, she experiences an anticipation of paradise. Oh, how much this clarity of God-Alone does! In an instant it makes itself known as all-powerful, and gives the soul to see and understand this omnipotence of his. With this is given to the soul such interior knowledge, that she knows that she is capable of nothing; but she feels utterly contented at what the Lord God works in her, and through this operation, she understands this God-Alone to be the One who is at work in all things."

Read and meditate on Lk 10:38-42: *While they were on the way, he entered a village, and a woman, Martha by name, welcomed him into her house. She had a sister, Mary, who, sitting at the feet of Jesus, listened to his word. Martha, however, was completely taken up with many duties. For this reason, stepping forward, she said: "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to attend to the serving all by myself? Tell her to help me." But, Jesus said to her: "Martha, Martha, you fret and worry about many things, but one thing alone is necessary. Mary has chosen the better part, and it shall not be taken from her."*

Let us pray: With the same words as Veronica, we pray to You: "May the grace of your love remove from us every impediment and obstacle to the union of each of us with you. O my Lord, grant us a pure heart, true humility and a perfect resignation to your will, and such a detachment from all things and from ourselves that we may become one with you. We offer you our strength, and we renew our consecration to you.

3rd day: St Veronica, a life sustained by faith and by hope

From the Diary: "One night, when the pain returned, I saw that the Lord God gave me a particular illumination about myself and sorrow for my sins. In doing so, it seemed that He was reprimanding me: that I was failing to act with pure faith, as He had given me to understand and wanted from me continually. I experienced some particular effects when I acted from true faith. Thus, for example, it sometimes happened that I was asked for something beyond my strength and it seemed impossible. At the same time, I sensed a revival of hope and faith in God, and I

carried out the task easily. This act would give me such vigour that it opened for me a secret path: faith makes virtue grow and bestows merit on every act, both in us and in our neighbours. I understood from this that I had to exhort my neighbour to act with living faith; not so much by means of teaching, but by works of charity. At the same time, I saw clearly the way I was to carry this out, and I understood how useful to me would have been this way and manner that I should have been employing. It seemed that the Lord God revived interiorly the faith I had in him; and I understood that every act of pure charity towards neighbour, assisting him in acting from the motivation of faith, and reminding others or conversing in this vein, is greatly pleasing to him; in all this, I learned the right way of acting with pure faith.”

Read and meditate on Mt 14:24-33: *The boat, meanwhile, was some distance from land and was agitated by the waves, due to a head wind. Towards the end of the night he came walking to them across the waters. The disciples, seeing him walking across the waters, were disturbed and said: “It is a ghost,” and they cried out in fear. Peter said to him: “Lord, if it is you, command that I come to you upon the waters.” And he said: “Come!” Peter, stepping out of the boat, began to walk across the waters and went towards Jesus. But, for the violence of the wind, he became afraid and started to sink, crying out: “Lord, save me!” And immediately Jesus stretched out his hand, held him and said: “Man of little faith, why did you doubt?” As soon as he entered the boat, the wind dropped. Those who were on the boat prostrated themselves before him, exclaiming: “Truly, you are the Son of God.”*

Let us pray: Almighty and eternal God, grant unto us an increase of faith, hope and charity; and that we may obtain what you have promised, make us love what you command. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

4th day: St Veronica, “daughter of the Crucified”

From the Diary: “I was taken up and given a vision of our Lord who had in his hand a great cross. He said to me: This is what I have endowed you with; now by suffering you will participate in the fruits of this treasure. This is how the cross is described by those who love me. While He was speaking to me, He gave me interior knowledge of how precious suffering is, made me recognise that all genuine treasures are to be found in the cross, and having given the cross to me as a wedding dowry, He would give me all that He merited by his passion and death on the cross, granting me to participate in the fruits of the infinite merits of his precious Blood, and of all his merits.”

Read and meditate on Mt 16:21-25: *From that time, Jesus began to say openly to his disciples that he had to go up to Jerusalem to suffer greatly at the hands of men, of the high priests and scribes, be killed and rise again on the third day. But Peter took him aside and began to protest, saying: “May God save you from it, Lord, this shall never happen to you!” But He, turning around, said to Peter: “Get behind me, Satan! You are a scandal to me, because you do not think according to God, but according to men.” Then Jesus said to his disciples: “If anyone wants to follow after me, let him renounce himself, take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his own life shall lose it; but whoever loses his life for my sake, shall find it.”*

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, who to fulfil the will of the Father offered yourself up to the Cross, and willed in a special manner to associate St Veronica with your sufferings, grant us to contemplate your sufferings and to complete them in ourselves for the sake of your body which is the Church. You who live and reign for ever and ever. Amen.

5th day: St Veronica, a Eucharistic soul

From the Diary: “I would like everyone to reflect on this Divine Sacrament and properly penetrate the meaning of this great invention of love which the Lord God has found to abide with us as the Food of our souls, for our benefit! Oh God, it is enough to make us lose our senses even just thinking of it! Oh, think well on it, you who receive it with faith. And you who with true faith hold it in your hands, O priests! I think that you are not yourselves during the act of consecration, or that you are changed into God Himself. I am of the opinion that you become like fire, and holding in your hands Divine Love, it seems you set all on fire, and that you cannot explain in words what takes place in that moment and what the Divine Maker does in your souls. I often wonder to myself and consider that if we were really to think upon this divine work, we would be beside ourselves from the vehemence and strength such love imparts. Oh God, our hearts become the temples of the Holy Trinity! It can be said of these temples in the act of Communion: Hail, temple of the entire Trinity! That which the human mind cannot comprehend, comes to make itself contained by and united to our souls, and make itself one with us. Who would not resolve to love One who is so beneficent and so loving towards us? How could one sleep at night thinking of this? I do not believe anyone could want bodily repose at night, but that all our thoughts would be intent on preparing to receive such a great good.”

Read and meditate on Jn 6:48-58: *I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate manna in the desert and they are dead; this is the bread that has come down from heaven, so that whoever eats of it may not die. I am the true bread, descended from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he shall live in eternity, and the bread that I shall give is my*

flesh for the life of the world. Then the Jews began to discuss with each other: "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" Jesus said: "Amen, amen I say to you: if you do not eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you will not have life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood dwells in me and I in him. As the Father, who has life, sent me and I live from the Father, so whoever eats me shall live from me. This is the bread descended from heaven, not like that which your fathers ate and died. Whoever eats this bread shall live in eternity."

Let us pray: Grant us, Lord, to participate with faith in the Eucharistic Sacrifice and to approach with pure hearts the table of the Body and Blood of your Son, so that the divine life might increase in us. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

6th day: St Veronica, disciple of the blessed Virgin

From the Diary: "I found myself in a spacious and pleasant place; in the midst of it there was a most beautiful throne on which was seated the great Mother of God. Her aspect, her beauty, I could not possibly describe. She was more resplendent than the sun; in fact, the material sun seems dark in comparison to this light. She was vested all in gold, covered with most fine gems industriously worked; and on every gem were inscribed the following words: *Mater Amoris* (Mother of Love). She held the Infant Jesus in her arms, who was so graceful and beautiful as to steal my heart. All of a sudden, many saints and a multitude of Angels appeared, who, with a most wonderful harmony, were saying: 'Come, bride of Christ, receive the crown which the Lord has prepared for you for all eternity.' [from the Roman Liturgy]. When my confessor gave me for my Mistress the Blessed Virgin and told me the way in which I was to comport myself with the said Mistress, in that moment it became clear to me that the Blessed Virgin had already taken me as her disciple. Jesus renewed his espousal with me, confirmed my name as Veronica, adding that I was to be known as *Veronica of Jesus and Mary.*"

Read and meditate on Jn 19:25-27: *By the cross of Jesus stood his mother, the sister of his mother, Mary of Cleopas, and Mary of Magdala. Then Jesus, seeing his mother and the beloved disciple standing by her, said to her: "Woman behold your son." Then, he said to the disciple: "Behold your mother." And from that moment the disciple took her among his own.*

Let us pray: O Blessed Trinity, who chose Mary as 'daughter, mother and spouse' (St Francis) and entrusted to her St Veronica as daughter and disciple: grant us to meditate upon the life and virtues of so great a Mother, and to let ourselves to be guided by her in following Christ, who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

7th day: St Veronica, daughter of the Church

From the Diary: "I said: Spouse of my soul, by your most sacred Passion I ask of you the grace of the conversion of sinners. The Lord said to me: Oh, if you knew how innumerable they are! Everywhere there are none but sinners; they commit such great sins, that I must send punishments rather than forgiveness. They have become like beasts; they think neither of me nor of their souls. At that very moment, He gave me to understand interiorly that his love desires nothing other than to pour itself into souls, either by way of illuminations or by way of corrections or by way of calls and internal illustrations which He gives them; but few if any wish to make use of them. After this He said to me: And you, what do you wish to do about it? – O Lord, if I could, I would love you for myself and for all those who do not love you. I desire this, the Lord said to me, and immediately disappeared. I returned within myself; yet I was somewhat out of myself, in a daze at the abundance of graces. I could say nothing other than: Lord, I offer you your Holy Wounds. Let them speak for me, and I thank you for all you have granted to this soul. I could not speak for the pain I felt at the offences committed against God. I sighed, I wept and I said: My God, I have offended you. Saying this, increased my pain; and with arms outstretched, I continued saying: O Lord – mercy, pardon!"

Read and meditate on Jn 10:7-16: *Then Jesus said again: "Amen, amen, I say to you: I am the door of the sheep, all those who came before me are thieves and brigands, but the sheep did not accept them. I am the door: if someone enters by me, he shall be saved; he shall enter and exit and will find pasture. The thief comes only to steal, to kill and to destroy; I have come so that they may have life, and have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd offers his life for the sheep. The trader, however, who is not the shepherd and to whom the sheep do not belong, sees the wolf coming, abandons the sheep and flees, and the wolf attacks and disperses them; he is a trader and has no concern for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, I know my sheep and my sheep know me, as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I offer my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep who are not of this flock, these also I must lead; they will listen to my voice and they will become only one flock with one only shepherd.*

Let us pray: Christ our Saviour, who make your Church to grow with fruits of sanctity and new children, and who made St Veronica a participant in your redemptive sacrifice: grant us to be living members of your Body for the salvation of all men. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

8th day: St Veronica, model of humility and obedience

From the Diary: "This morning, during my spiritual communion, I experienced a rapture in which the Lord gave me an intimate communication regarding the annihilation of [the disordered love of] myself; and how I might conquer [this disordered self-love] in all my actions. In this there was a light on my own impotence; and in this communication the Lord God let me know that by way of annihilation and self-knowledge is found holy humility which is the root of all the virtues. But to make the tree fruitful and come to flower are needed the following means: namely annihilation, contempt, stripping of self, and continual mortification, abnegation in all things, even in things spiritual. All these are needed to accompany holy humility; and it is the guide in all things. But it cannot be practised unless one is entirely in accord with the divine will. Even the minimal preference for our own taste brings the foundation and the whole edifice crashing to earth. A great enlightenment came to me regarding a point of obedience, and at the same time I experienced something I had never before experienced. It seemed that that obstinacy I could never conquer was broken and lifted from me. From this I understood what a great good obedience is; I saw that all evils arise and draw their origin from some self-will; and that obeying promptly with generosity for the pure love of God, everything is turned to good. O holy obedience, what a great good you are to faithful souls!"

Read and meditate on Mt 20:20-28: *Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee approached with her sons, and prostrated herself before him to ask something of him. He said to her: "What is it that you want?" She responded: "Grant that these sons of mine might be seated, one at your right, the other at your left, in your kingdom." Jesus responded: "You do not know what it is that you are asking. Can you drink from the chalice of which I shall drink?" They said to him: "We can." And he added: "You shall drink of my chalice, however it does not fall to me to assign who shall be seated at my right hand and at my left; but it is for those to whom it has been granted by my Father." The other ten, having heard this, were indignant with the brothers; but, Jesus called them to him, and said: "The leaders of the nations, you know well, lord it over them and their great ones exercise their power over them. This is not to happen between you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first must make himself your slave, just as the Son of Man came to serve, and to lay down his life as a ransom for many."*

Let us pray: Lord Jesus, who have said, 'whoever wishes to be first among you must be your servant,' grant us to recognise that every good thing proceeds from you, and that in your kingdom of love 'to serve is to reign.' You who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

9th day: St Veronica, model of charity towards God and neighbour

From the Diary: "The Lord made me understand that He gives more of His love to whoever truly loves Him and places himself entirely at His disposition; this is because Love goes with love. Thus to a soul who loves, Love communicates Itself, and as it communicates Itself, It acts; and thus all that that soul does, she does not do, but the Love who is in her. When divine Love places Itself in a soul and makes Itself felt, she finds no rest but experiences a kind of loving madness. Whether with cries or with silence, she thinks always of Love. It makes her speak, and in speaking makes Itself felt in the soul. In an instant It silences her and gives her to feel, to sense and to understand in some way. But she cannot say a word about it, because It is infinite, incomprehensible, immense; and the less one speaks of It, the more one says of It. In a word, none can speak of Its greatness and none can comprehend It. All this Love makes the soul understand, and at the same time, she is all absorbed and outside of herself but entirely united to this Love. It made me realise that true charity consists in carrying out this work, with complete stripping of self and without any self-interest, neither towards creatures nor towards God; and so that she be totally directed towards the glory of God she must, first, have that pure and right intention to do everything only for love and with love. Charity without love of God is like something dead. Love is what confers value and gives life. So I understood that it is the same with all the other virtues. Without the life of this pure love, all is dead, all things are as if they did not exist. At this point, I was given to understand that I would be introduced into the school of his love, and then I would know all these things well."

Read and meditate on Jn 14:21-24: *"Whoever welcomes my commands and observes them is the one who loves me. Whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I shall love him and manifest myself to him." Judas, not the Iscariot, said to him: "Lord, how is it that you must manifest yourself to us and not to the world?" Jesus responded: "If someone loves me, he will observe my word and my Father will love him we shall come to him and take up our*

dwelling with him. Whoever does not love me does not observe my words. The word which you hear is not mine, but of the Father who sent me."

Let us pray: O Jesus, who have summed up in love the whole of the Law and the Prophets, grant us to love you above everything and our neighbour as ourselves. You who live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

