

EIGHTH DAY NOVENA PRAYERS (29 April)

1. Introductory Greetings

Leader: *In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.*

All: *Amen*

Leader: *The grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God Our Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*

All: *And with your spirit.*



2. Eighth Day: Opening Prayer

Let us Pray: Dear Mother Mary, ever a Virgin, help me to save my soul. Keep me firm in my holy faith and free to remain a child of God. With the help of God's grace I make my own the motto of St Dominic Savio: *Death, but not sin.*

I promise to live for the Glory of God and Salvation of souls. I promise to obey the Pope and my Bishop, desiring to live and die in the holy Catholic Church, the sure path to eternal salvation. And now, dear Mother Mary of Bandel, I humbly entreat you to grant me my petition should this be in accordance with God's holy will (*here make your request*).

3. Short Exhortation (please turn over)

4. Concluding Prayers

Our Father..

Hail Mary.. (x 3)

Glory be to the Father..

Hail Holy Queen..

V/. Pray for us. O Holy Mother of God.

R/. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ

Let us Pray: **O Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of God, Help of Christians,** you have deigned to set up your throne as Queen and Mother in this ancient shrine at Bandel to lavish on your beloved children the treasures of Divine Mercy.

From your merciful throne, O Queen of the Holy Rosary and Lady of Happy Voyage, cast your compassionate eyes on us, your children.

We entrust ourselves and all we have entirely to you!

We accept you as our All.

O Mother of Tender Mercy, cover us in your mantle

protect us from all evil and lead us to Jesus, your loving Son!

Obtain for us, O Lady of Bandel, the special gift of Wisdom from above, that we may know God's Will, and always do whatever Jesus tells us, for the Glory of God, and the salvation of souls. Amen.

5. Final Hymn

Be with us Lady of Bandel, Guide every step we take,

Lead us to Jesus, your loving Son, Wisdom from Heav'n above!





OLB Novena – Homily

blessed are you if you do them!

Eighth Day: 29 April 2021



If you know these things, **blessed are you if you do them. John 13, 17**

Yesterday we spoke of Our Lady as God's garden of paradise and that to consecrate oneself to her is the quickest path to holiness: Totus Tuus. At Bandel we have this call echoing through the relic of the mantle of our lady!

If you know these things, **blessed are you if you do them.**

This was the prophetic message of Don Bosco in the dream of: **The Fiendish Elephant and Mary's Mantle** (Biographical Memoires, Volume XIV (1879-1880) Pgs.487-488)

My dear boys, I dreamed that it was a feast day afternoon and that you were all busy playing, while I was in my room with Professor Thomas Vallauri (a contemporary lexicographer, prominent literary man and dear friend of Don Bosco) discussing literature and religion. Suddenly, there was a knock at my door. I rose quickly and opened it. My mother – dead now for six years – was standing there. Breathlessly, she gasped, "Come and see! Come and see!"

"What happened?" I asked.

"Come! Come!" she replied.

I dashed to the balcony. Down in the playground, surrounded by a crowd of boys, stood an enormous elephant.


"How did this happen?" I exclaimed. "Let's go down!"

Professor Vallauri and I looked at each other in surprise and alarm and then raced downstairs. As was only natural, many of you had run to the elephant. It seemed meek and tame. Playfully it lumbered about, nuzzling the boys with its trunk and cleverly obeying their orders, as though it had been born and raised at the Oratory. Very many of you kept following it about and petting it, but not all. In fact, most of you were scared and fled from it to safety. Finally, you hid in the church. I too tried to get in through the side door which opens into the playground, but as I passed Our Lady's statue beside the drinking fountain and touched the hem of her mantle for protection, she raised her right arm. Vallauri did likewise on the other side of the statue, and the Virgin raised her left arm. I was amazed, not knowing what to think of such an extraordinary thing.

The Elephant in the Sanctuary – Enemy of the Holy Eucharist

When the bell rang for church service, you all trooped in. I followed and saw the elephant standing at the rear by the main entrance. After Vespers and the sermon, I went to the altar, assisted by Fr. Alasonatti and Fr. Savio, to give Benediction. At the solemn moment when you all deeply bowed to adore the Blessed Sacrament, the elephant – still standing at the end of the middle aisle – knelt down too, but with its back to the altar.

Once services were over, I tried to dash out to the playground and see what would happen, but I was detained by someone. A while later, I went out through the side door which opens into the porticoes and saw you at your usual games. The elephant too had come out of the church and had idled over to the second playground where the new wing is under construction. Mark this well, because this is precisely the place where the grisly scene I am going to describe occurred.



At that moment, at the far end of the playground, I saw a banner followed in procession by boys. It bore in huge letters the inscription “*Holy Mary, help your forlorn children!*” To everybody’s surprise, that monstrous beast, once so tame, suddenly ran amuck. Trumpeting furiously, it lunged forward, seized the nearest boys with its trunk, hurled them into the air or flung them to the ground and then trampled them underfoot. Though horribly mauled, the victims were still alive. Everybody ran for dear life. Screams and shouts and pleas for help rose from the wounded. Worse – would you believe it? – Some boys who were spared by the elephant, rather than aid their wounded companions, joined the monstrous brute to find new victims.

Under Mary’s Mantle

As all this was happening (I was standing by the second arch of the portico, near the drinking fountain), the little statue that you see there (the statue of the Blessed Virgin) became alive and grew to life-size. Then, as Our Lady raised her arms, her mantle spread open to display magnificently embroidered inscriptions. Unbelievably, it stretched far and wide to shelter all those who gathered beneath it. The best boys were the first to run to it for safety. Seeing that many were in no hurry to run to her, Our Lady called aloud, “*Come all to me!*” Her call was heeded, and as the crowd of boys under the mantle increased, so did the mantle spread wider. However, a few youngsters kept running about and were wounded before they could reach safety. Flushed and breathless, the Blessed Virgin continued to plead, but fewer and fewer were the boys who ran to her. The elephant, meanwhile, continued its slaughter, aided by several lads who dashed about, wielding one sword or two and preventing their companions from running to Mary. The elephant never even touched these helpers.

Meanwhile, prompted by the Blessed Virgin, some boys left the safety of her mantle in quick sorties to rescue some victims. No sooner did the wounded get beneath Our Lady’s mantle than they were instantly cured. Again and again several of those brave boys, armed with cudgels; went out and, risking their lives, shielded the victims from the elephant and its accomplices until nearly, all were rescued.

The playground was now deserted, except for a few youngsters lying about almost dead. At one end by the portico, a crowd of boys stood safe under the Virgin’s mantle. At the other stood the elephant with some ten or twelve lads who had helped it wreak such havoc and who still insolently brandished swords.

Suddenly rearing up on its hind legs, the elephant changed into a horrible, long-horned specter and cast a black net over its wretched accomplices. Then, as the beast roared, a thick cloud of smoke enveloped them, and the earth suddenly gaped beneath them and swallowed them up.

Inscriptions on Mary’s mantle - Promises and Maxims

I looked for my mother and professor Vallauri to speak to them, but I could not spot them anywhere. Then I turned to look at the inscriptions on Mary’s mantle and noticed that several were actual quotations or adaptations of Scriptural texts. I read a few of them:

- They that explain me, shall have life everlasting. (Eccles. 24:31).
- He who finds me, will find life. (Proverbs 8:35).
- Whoever is a little one, let him come to me. (Prow 9:4).
- Refuge of sinners.
- Salvation of believers.
- Full of piety, meekness and mercy.
- Blessed are they that keep my ways. (Prow 8:32).



Avoid Foul Talk (Gossip)

All was quiet now. After a brief silence, the Virgin, seemingly exhausted by so much pleading, soothingly comforted and heartened the boys and, quoting the inscription I had inscribed at the base of the niche, "They that explain me, shall have life everlasting (Eccles. 24:31)", she went on: "*You heeded my call and were spared the slaughter wrought by the devil on your companions. **Do you want to know what caused their ruin? Foul talk and foul deeds.** You also saw your companions wielding swords. They are those who seek your eternal damnation by enticing you from me, just as they did with some schoolmates of yours. But "those for whom God keeps waiting longer, He punishes more severely." The infernal demon enmeshed and dragged them to eternal perdition. Now, go in peace, but remember my words: **Flee from companions who befriend Satan, avoid foul conversation, have boundless trust in me. My mantle will always be your safe refuge.**"*

Our Lady then vanished; only her beloved statuette remained. My deceased mother reappeared. Again the banner with the inscription, "*Holy Mary, help your forlorn children*", was unfurled. Marching in procession behind, the boys sang "Praise Mary, O ye faithful tongues." Shortly afterward, the singing waned and the whole scene faded away. I awoke in a sweat. Such was my dream.

My sons, now it is up to you to draw your own stenna. **Examine your conscience. You will know if you were safe under Mary's mantle**, or if the elephant flung you into the air, or if you were wielding a sword. I can only repeat what the Virgin said: "**Come all to me**". Turn to her; call on her in any danger. I can assure you that your prayers will be heard. Those who were so badly mauled by the elephant are to learn to avoid foul talk and bad companions; those who strive to entice their companions from Mary must either change their ways or leave the house immediately. If anyone wants to know the role he played, let him come to my room and I will tell him. But I repeat: **Satan's accomplices must either mend their ways or go!** Good night!

Note: Don Bosco had spoken with such fervor and emotion that for a whole week afterward the boys kept discussing that dream and would not leave him in peace. Every morning they crowded his confessional; every afternoon they pestered him to find out what part they had played in the mysterious dream.

That this was no dream, but a vision, Don Bosco had himself indirectly admitted when he said: "I regularly beg God to suggest./ A very bad night is usually a forewarning that Our Lord is about to reveal something to me." Furthermore, he forbade anyone to make light of what he had narrated.

But there is more. On this occasion he made a list of the wounded and of those who wielded one or two swords. He gave it to Celestine Durando, instructing him to watch them. The cleric handed the list over to us, and it is still in our possession. The wounded were thirteen – probably those who had not been rescued and sheltered beneath Our Lady's mantle. Seventeen lads wielded one sword; only three had two. Scattered marginal notes next to a boy's name indicate an amendment of life. That it mirrored the true state of things was admitted by the boys themselves later on. Also, we must bear in mind that the dream referred also to the future.

If you know these things, **blessed are you if you do them.** John 13, 17

*Let us today during this pandemic,
make a special act of entrusting ourselves to Our Lady
(light a candle before her, and pray the following prayer)*

**"I belong entirely to you, and all that I have is yours.
I take you for my all. O Mary, please give me your heart."**