La Salette Laity NOVENA

To promote the growth and development of La Salette Laity in the Province of Mary, Mother of the Americas and throughout the World of La Salette Laity.



International La Salette Laity

by Rev. James A. Henault, M.S.

Introduction

La Salette Laity – consist of men and women inspired by the Apparition of Our Lady of La Salette with a desire to grow in holiness and make her message known.

They seek to develop a closer relationship to Our Lady of La Salette, and the spirituality and charism of her message. They make a commitment:

- 1. To Daily Reflective Prayer
- 2.To A Formation Program that deepens their knowledge and appreciation of the message, charism, spirituality, and ministries of the Congregation and
- 3. To living La Salette values in their lives and ministry.

This text of the novena has been redeveloped for use by our La Salette Laity and those willing to support them in their efforts of making known the message of La Salette in their lives.

It was first developed to invite people to pray for the preparation for the **Feast of La Salette: September 11-19**th, 2016 and from Sept. 30th to Oct. 9th, 2016, in prayerful support of the Second International Gathering of La Salette Lay Leadership.

May we all be inspired, strengthened in our faith, and renewed in our mission to share the message of Our Lady of La Salette.





Day 1: The Invitation

Mary said at La Salette: "Come near my children, do not be afraid."

Reading (Luke 19:1-5): Jesus came to Jericho and intended to pass through the town. Now a man there named Zacchaeus, who was a chief tax collector and a wealthy man, was seeking to see who Jesus was; but he could not see him because of the crowd, for he was short in stature. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree in order to see Jesus, who was about to pass that way. When he reached the place, Jesus looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down quickly, for today I must stay at your house." And he came down quickly and received him with joy."

Reflection

Just as Jesus chose the imperfect Zacchaeus to host him for supper and so change his life, so too Mary selected Maximin and Melanie to be recipients of her message at La Salette. The two cow herders on the mountain that day did not have a good prayer life, they rarely went to Church, the simply lived life as best they could without a strong relationship to God.

Mary reminds us that we are her children and the sons and daughters of God always. God choose those that he knows will carry out his work and so does Mary. The simple invitation to come near would radically change the lives of these two young children as they realized the ramifications of this encounter and then as they brought the message to the world.

We too have been chosen by God and Mary to be his followers and messengers in the world. By our baptism we became God's children. By our encounter with the message and charism of La Salette we have learnt of the love and mercy of our God for us in our lives. Accepting the invitation from the Lord and from Mary, without fear, we are transformed day by day in our life of faith. This change calls us to act differently in our relationship with God, Mary and the neighbors we encounter.

Pause for personal reflection.

Prayer for the day:

Heavenly Father, you have called us to be your children. You sent Mary to us at La Salette to remind us to live out this call. We know that you love us as we are and that you are constantly calling us to a closer relationship with you and one another. Help us to generously respond to your invitation without fear. May we dwell in your love and mercy today and every day. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father ... Hail Mary ...

La Salette Laity prayer: Loving and merciful God, be with us as we continue on our path of learning and sharing the message of Our Lady of La Salette and help us to apply this message in our daily lives. Help us to see our relationships through the eyes of Our Weeping Mother at La Salette. Help us to live out our ministries of service in the reconciling love of Her Son, Jesus crucified. Help us to say our prayers well as instructed by the Beautiful Lady at La Salette.



Day 2: Great News

Mary said at La Salette: "I am here to tell you great news."

Reading (Luke 4:16-19): Jesus came to Nazareth, where he had grown up, and went according to his custom* into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. He stood up to read and was handed a scroll of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the passage where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord."

Reflection

The great news of the apparition is the same Good News that Christ came to proclaim. We are loved and cherished by our Father in heaven. He calls us to a closer relationship to Him and to one another by reach out to us, still sinners, by bestowing redemption to us. The reign of God is around us as the Spirit of God and enables us to do what Jesus and Mary his mother have done for us over the centuries.

Jesus reaches out to the poor, the lowly, the downtrodden, the sick and oppressed just as God has constantly done throughout the ages. He hears the cry of the poor and delivers them from their hopeless and fears consistently throughout salvation history. He welcomes them as his beloved children into his warm embrace in the past and in the present.

Mary reminds us of the constant love and mercy and forgiveness of the Father for all, especially for those who seem to be further away and in greatest need.

Our ministry as La Salette laity is to bring this love to those whom we meet by our care for them in times of trouble and renewing the world's hope and trust in an all-loving God and our tenderly compassionate Mother.

Pause for personal reflection.

Prayer for the day:

Heavenly Father, you comfort us in all of our needs. You sent your Son into the world to reconcile us to yourself and to one another. Mary at La Salette continues to proclaim the place that we all have in your Kingdom and asks us to share this great news with the world. We thank you for this wonderful gift of salvation and ask your grace to bring that message of hope and blessing to the whole world. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father ... Hail Mary ...

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Day 3: Submission

Mary said at La Salette: "If my people will not submit, I will be forced to let fall the arm of my Son. It is so strong, so heavy, that I can no longer withhold it. If I would not have my Son abandon you, I am compelled to pray to him without ceasing; and as to you, you take not heed of it."

Reading (Philippians 2:5-8): "Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross".

Reflection

The hymn relates how Jesus emptied himself so that he could come to earth and be our Savior by taking on our humanity in its fullness. He let go of his position at the Father's right hand so that he could lead us to the fullness of life itself by testifying to the truth of who we are by his life and death and resurrection.

Letting go of our own will, of the desire to control our own destiny, relinquishing the desire to be master of our own life, leads us to salvation in Jesus Christ. He reconciled us to the Father and thus requests that we become ambassadors of reconciliation as we live in his. As Jesus faced his death, he prayed in the Garden of Olives to be freed from his impending death but only if that was the Father's will. Through this honest prayer, he lets the Father know his hesitancies at moving forward but the Father also strengthens his acceptance of what lies ahead.

Submission is not to deny our situation and difficulties in life. Instead, it is recognizing the adversities we face and moving forward, knowing that we are not alone, and that God is with us. We are not abandoned in our sufferings, but rather we are invited to recognize that together we too can rise to a new life.

Pause for personal reflection.

Prayer for the day:

Heavenly Father, you sent your only begotten Son into the world to show us the fullness of life. Through his submission to your will, we have been saved. He shows us the way to truly live through a deep relationship with you. He invites us to follow in his way by building the kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven. Each and every day he gives us all that we need to sustain a worthy life and asks us to bring forgiveness into the world which he reconciled. Help us to let go of our hesitancies and fears. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father ... Hail Mary ...

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Day 4: The Sin of the World

Mary said at La Salette: "Six days I have given you to labor, the seventh I have kept for myself; and they will not give it to me. It is this which makes the arm of my Son so heavy. Those who drive the carts cannot swear without introducing the name of my Son. These are the two things which make the arm of my Son so heavy."

Reading (John 1:35-41): The next day John [the Baptizer] was there again with two of his disciples, and as he watched Jesus walk by, he said, "Behold, the Lamb of God." The two disciples heard what he said and followed Jesus. Jesus turned and saw them following him and said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" He said to them, "Come, and you will see." So they went and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day. It was about four in the afternoon. Andrew, the brother of Simon Peter, was one of the two who heard John and followed Jesus. He first found his own brother Simon and told him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated "the Anointed One").

Reflection

When John the Baptist pointed out Jesus to his disciples as "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world", he makes a profound statement about Jesus and sin. Jesus came into the world to reconcile us to the Father through his birth, life, death, and resurrection. He would recognize the ultimate sin that divides us from God and one another. It is not the evil actions about which Mary spoke in her message at La Salette. It is that division that began with the sin of Adam that has separated us from our true selves and from God.

The constant temptation of all humanity is to become masters of our own lives and push God aside. Believing that we can live well without God in our lives is the ultimate sin. In every age, in all parts of the world we see people who try to thrive in the world without God. They rely upon themselves, upon others, look at fate rather than faith.

Mary reminds us that for Catholics there are essential activities in our lives: prayer, especially Sunday Eucharist and Sabbath rest and respecting God's name. Mary invites us to allow Jesus to take away the sin of the world that has caused separation between us and God, our Church and each other.

Pause for personal reflection.

Prayer for the day:

Heavenly Father, you sent your only begotten Son into the world to show us the fullness of life. Through his submission to your will, we have been saved. He shows us the way to truly live through a deep relationship with you. He invites us to follow in his way by building the kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven. Each and every day he gives us all that we need to sustain a worthy life and asks us to bring forgiveness into the world which he reconciled. Help us to let go of our hesitancies and fears. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Day 5: Disasters and Suffering

Mary said at La Salette: "If the harvest is spoilt, it is all on your account. I gave you warning last year with the potatoes, but you did not heed it. On the contrary, when you found the potatoes spoilt, you swore, you took the name of my Son in vain. They will continue to decay, so that by Christmas there will be none left. If you have wheat, it is no good to sow it; all you sow the insects will eat, and what comes up will fall into dust when you thresh it. There will come a great famine. Before the famine comes, the children under seven years of age will be seized with trembling and will die in the hands of those who hold them; the others will do penance by the famine. The walnuts will become bad, and the grapes will rot."

Reading (Job 1:20-22): Then Job arose and tore his cloak and cut off his hair. He fell to the ground and worshiped. He said, "Naked I came forth from my mother's womb, and naked shall I go back there. The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD!" In all this Job did not sin, nor did he charge God with wrong.

Reflection

Some of the most difficult portions of the message of La Salette to understand are Mary's prophecies of famine and death. Many have a false image of God that centers around wrath and punishment. How many times have we heard others ask, "How can a good and loving God cause such destruction and pain in our world?" Have we ever asked the question: why is God doing this to me?

Mary, like the prophets before her, speaks of the difficulties we face unless we change our ways. The story of Israel and of the Christian era often speak of death and destruction that result from sin, from abandoning God, from living without Him in our lives. These are the natural consequences of sin – not the vengeance of our God.

Job was able to realize that his God did not punish or afflict his life with turmoil. Job speaks clearly that what happens to him was not the result of punishment – as he was truly united with God – rather it speaks of this as a test from the evil one.

God wants us to prosper in our lives and gives us all good gifts. However, when we refuse these gifts, we so often experience the difficulties of trying to live alone. Mary reminds us that famine and difficulties await us if we do not have God in our lives. We experience the famine of food and water, of safety, of untreated disease, of loneliness and hopelessness, of violence and hatred, brought about by our own sinfulness and apathy. Mary calls us to something better.

Pause for personal reflection.

Prayer for the day:

Heavenly Father, you love us and have placed us in the center of your creation, charging us to be masters of the world that you formed in your great love. Help us to respect the wonders of this great planet and help it to grow and develop in partnership with you. Bless those who this day struggle for food, water, or shelter. Give to your people the skills and wisdom to grow our world into an environment worthy of you. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father ... Hail Mary ...

La Salette Laity prayer: Loving and merciful God, be with us as we continue on our path of learning and sharing the message of Our Lady of La Salette and help us to apply this message in our daily lives. Help us to see our relationships through the eyes of Our Weeping Mother at La Salette. Help us to live out our ministries of service in the reconciling love of Her Son, Jesus crucified. Help us to say our prayers well as instructed by the Beautiful Lady at La Salette.



Day 6: Conversion

Mary said at La Salette: "If they are converted, the stones and rocks will change into mounds of wheat, and the potatoes will be self-sown in the land."

Reading (Mark 10:23-29): Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it is for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" The disciples were amazed at his words. So, Jesus again said to them in reply, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to pass through [the] eye of [a] needle than for one who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." They were exceedingly astonished and

said among themselves, "Then who can be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "For human beings it is impossible, but not for God. All things are possible for God."

Reflection

Conversion happens at various levels in our lives. The first conversion we can experience is to come to know God and to enter a relationship with our loving God. A further level could be to make that relationship formal by entering the Church that supports and guides our relationship with Him and one another. A further conversion is that we begin to allow God to bless us in our lives with his great gifts. However, the ultimate conversion is to be found in the prophets in the scriptures, reflected well in Mary's own words at La Salette.

The prophets speak of a return to the original reconciled world of God, humanity and nature. Isaiah speaks of these messianic days where there was complete harmony restored in the world. Mary uses two powerful examples when she speaks of the results of conversion: the stones will be changed into heaps of wheat; the potatoes will be self-sown in the fields.

These images are even more profound for a farmer who toils in the field. The stones in the field were the enemy of the planter: often they would break the plows. They had to be removed by hand and carted off. Planting potatoes was done by hand, one at a time, dragging loads down the rows in the field. Again, the hardship of planting would be taken away and bring forth a harvest that would be self-sown in the land.

Mary speaks of these obstacles being turned into the harvest itself. Allowing God's love to fill our lives and bear fruit in us is like transforming the stones and potatoes of our burdensome life into a blessed harvest. Falling in love strengthens us to look beyond hardships and see the best in all things. If we let go and trust in God, we will be richly rewarded.

Pause for personal reflection.

Prayer for the day:

Heavenly Father, you have called us to trust in you in all that we do and all that we are. Help us to be converted so that we open ourselves to your grace which enables us to live fully in union with you. Ease the struggles that face us and help us to recognize the paschal mystery – death leads to new life – in our daily toils and blessings. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father ... Hail Mary ...

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Day 7: Prayer and Eucharist

Mary said at La Salette: "Do you say your prayers well, my children?", she asked the shepherds. Both answered with complete frankness: "Not very well, Madam." She exhorted them: "Ah, my children, you must be sure to say them well morning and evening. When you cannot do better, say at least an Our Father and a Hail Mary; but when you have time, say more. There are none who go to Mass except a few aged women. The rest work on Sunday all summer; then in the winter, when they know not what to do, they go to Mass only to mock at religion."

Reading (Mark 14:22-26): While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is my body." Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed* for many. Amen, I say to you, I shall not drink again the fruit of the vine until the day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." Then, after singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Reflection

Mary gently challenges the children to have a personal relationship with God through their prayer life. After having asked the two children if they pray well, she simply asks them to pray at least the Our Father and Hail Mary at morning and evening and when they have time, to pray more.

The two basic Catholic prayers remind us of who we are and who God and Mary are in relationship with us. By beginning our day and finishing our evening with these two basic prayers, we become mindful that our day is not ours to live alone but that God loves us and chooses to live in us. God will give us all that we truly need for that day as we recognize our dependence upon him.

Our prayer to Mary recalls her acceptance of the role as Mother of God. The Hail Mary reminds us that Mary is also our mother who deeply cares for us and intercedes for us. We are children loved and cared for, watched over and protected, fed and nurtured by God, Our Father and Mary, our Mother.

When we gather for Sunday Eucharist we are reminded of the great events of salvation – the Last Supper, the death of Jesus through crucifixion and his being raised from the dead on the third day. Each time we gather to be fed and nourished by his Word and Sacrament, we become God's family as we worship the Lord our God together.

Pause for personal reflection.

Prayer for the day:

Heavenly Father, you sent your only begotten Son into the world to show us the fullness of life. Through his submission to your will, we have been saved. He shows us the way to truly live through a deep relationship with you. He invites us to follow in his way by building the kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven. Each and every day he gives us all that we need to sustain a worthy life and asks us to bring forgiveness into the world which he reconciled. Help us to let go of our hesitancies and fears. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

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Day 8: The Little Things in Life

Mary said at La Salette: "Have you never seen wheat that is spoilt, my children?" the Beautiful Lady then asked them. "No, Madam", they replied. "But you, my child," she insisted, addressing the little boy in particular, "you must surely have seen some once when you were at the farm of Coin with your father. The owner of the field told your father to go and see his ruined wheat. You went together ... When you were still half an hour's distance from Corps, your father gave you a piece of bread and said to you: 'Here, my child, eat some bread this year at least; I don't know who will eat any next year, if the wheat goes on like that."'

Reading (Matthew 10: 26-33): Therefore, do not be afraid of them. Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known. What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge. Even all the hairs of your head are counted. So, do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father.

<u>Reflection</u>

Too many people in this world don't believe that God personally cares about them. Like Maximin's father, they go through life with no appreciation of the fact that God cares about the fine details of their daily life.

For many of us we pray in general for the needs of the Church and World. God truly cares about those big things that impact the

millions. God also cares about the major events of our lives, including the challenges that we cannot easily handle on our own – sickness, loss, divorce, loss of employment, our fears, and limits. But Mary at La Salette also reminds Maximin (and us), that it is also insignificant events for him as a child, that she (and her Son) notices and concern her.

This event was powerful enough to lead Maximin's father to realize and believe that Mary and her Son care about the events of his daily life. As a result, Maximin's father came back to Church and was active in his faith until he died.

The call for our conversion urges us to stop each day and find God at work in our lives, perhaps to perform an examination of conscience that recognizes God's presence and work in our lives and world.

Pause for personal reflection.

Prayer for the day:

Loving God, we know that you love us and care for us each and every day as you watch over and bless our pilgrim journey back to you. Help us to grow in our awareness of all the great gifts that you bestow on us each day. Help us always to be grateful for your intervention in the little and major events things of our life. We ask this through the intercession of Mary, our Mother, and in the name of Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Our Father ... Hail Mary ...

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Day 9: Sent Forth

Mary said at La Salette: "Well, my children, you will make this known to all my people Well, my children, you will make this well known to all my people."

Reading (Matthew 28:16-20): The eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had ordered them. When they saw him, they worshiped, but they doubted. Then Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age."

Reflection

Mary sends the two children forth to make her message known; Jesus sends the Eleven forth to instruct and baptize the world. The sending forth would not be for only those immediately called and commissioned but it would be for all their successors, including us.

The message of La Salette, like that of the Gospels, was offered to the world and is to be brought to the world by people like us. The spirit of La Salette will fill our lives as we become better disciples of Mary. But discipleship is more than a personal study or knowledge. It is a call to conversion and giving witness to the world of the power and love of the Lord and Mary, His Mother.

We constantly learn about who God is through our interaction with God through our prayer, reflection, good works, and an attitude of gratefulness. We are true children and messengers of Mary as we live out the values she came to proclaim.

Our living the message is the ultimate testimony to the power of Mary at La Salette. The children changed their relationship with God and others, even risking rejection and derision, and were true to what they witnessed.

Today thousands have dedicated themselves to live lives worthy of Mary by acting on her words, bringing reconciliation into the world. As La Salette Laity we play a crucial role in making this message known to her people by our daily witness to the transformative power of Mary's message.

Pause for personal reflection.

Prayer for the day:

Prayer for the day: Heavenly Father, your Son Jesus entrusted the development of his ministry to the Apostles and to the Church and to each of us. Mary at La Salette called us to bring her message to the world so that all can hear of her great hope for us and the power of conversion that can transform us. Help us to generously respond with enthusiasm to the invitation to go forth. Lord God, may we continue to appreciate your love and mercy and share this precious gift today with all your children. We ask this through the intercession of Mary and by the grace of Christ, her Son. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary.

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Our Lady of La Salette, reconciler of sinners,

PRAY WITHOUT
CEASING FOR US
WHO HAVE
RECOURSE TO THEE.

