

## Christmas Novena

“...I also tell you that in reading the nine Exercises of Christmas ... one remains astounded at the immense Love and the immense suffering of Our Blessed Lord Jesus Christ for love of us, and for the salvation of souls. I have never read in any other book on this topic a Revelation so touching and penetrating!”

St. Annibale Maria Di Francia Feb. 14, 1927

### The Nine Excesses of Love in the Incarnation of the Word

by Luisa Piccarreta, the Little Daughter of the Divine Will

“With a Novena of Holy Christmas, at the age of about seventeen, I prepared myself for the Feast of Holy Christmas, by practicing various acts of virtue and mortification; and, especially, by honoring the nine months which Jesus spent in the maternal womb with nine hours of meditation each day, always concerning the mystery of the Incarnation.”

#### FIRST EXCESS OF LOVE

As for example, for one hour, with my thought, I brought myself to Paradise, and I imagined the Most Holy Trinity: the Father, sending the Son upon earth; the Son, promptly obeying the Will of the Father; the Holy Spirit, consenting.

My mind was confused in contemplating a mystery so great, a love so reciprocal, so equal, so strong among Themselves and toward men; and then, the ingratitude of men, and especially my own. I would have remained there, not for one hour, but for the whole day; but an interior voice told me: “Enough – come and see other greater excesses of my love.”

#### SECOND EXCESS OF LOVE

Then, my mind brought itself into the maternal womb, and remained stupefied in considering a God so great in Heaven, now so annihilated, restricted, constrained, as to be unable to move, and almost even to breathe.

The interior voice told me: “Do you see how much I have loved you? O please, make Me a little space in your heart; remove everything which is not Mine, so you will give Me more freedom to move and to breathe.”

My heart was consumed; I asked for His forgiveness, I promised to be completely His own, I poured myself out in crying; but – I say this to my confusion – I would go back to my usual defects. Oh Jesus, how good You are with this miserable creature!

#### THIRD EXCESS OF LOVE

As I moved on from the second to the third meditation, an interior voice told me: “My daughter, place your head upon the womb of my Mama, and look deep into it at my little

Humanity. My love devoured Me; the fires, the oceans, the immense seas of love of my Divinity inundated Me, burned Me to ashes, and sent their flames so high as to rise and reach everywhere – all generations, from the first to the last man. My little Humanity was devoured in the midst of such flames; but do you know what my eternal love wants Me to devour? Ah! Souls! And only then was I content, when I devoured them all, to remain conceived with Me. I was God, and I was to operate as God – I had to take them all. My love would have given Me no peace, had I excluded any of them. Ah! My daughter, look well into the womb of my Mama; fix well your eyes on my conceived Humanity, and you will find your soul conceived with Me, and the flames of my love that devour you. Oh! How much I loved you, and I do love you!”

I felt dissolved in the midst of so much love, nor was I able to go out of it; but a voice called me loudly, saying: “My daughter, this is nothing yet; cling more tightly to Me, and give your hands to my dear Mama, that She may hold you to her maternal womb. And you, take another look at my little conceived Humanity, and watch the fourth excess of my love.”

#### FOURTH EXCESS OF LOVE

“My daughter, from the devouring love, move on to look at my operative love. Each conceived soul brought Me the burden of her sins, of her weaknesses and passions, and my love commanded Me to take the burden of each one of them. And it conceived not only the souls, but the pains of each one, as well as the satisfaction which each one of them was to give to my Celestial Father. So my Passion was conceived together with Me. Look well at Me in the womb of my Celestial Mama. Oh! How tortured was my little Humanity. Look well at my little head, surrounded by a crown of thorns, which, pressed tightly around my temples, made rivers of tears pour out from my eyes; nor was I able to make a move to dry them. O Please! Be moved to compassion for Me, dry my eyes from so much crying – you, who have free arms to be able to do it. These thorns are the crown of the so many evil thoughts which crowd the human minds. Oh! How they prick Me, more than thorns which sprout from the earth. But, look again – what a long crucifixion of nine months: I could not move a finger or a hand or a foot. I was always immobile; there was no room to be able to move even a tiny bit. What a long and hard crucifixion, with the addition that all evil works, assuming the form of nails, continuously pierced my hands and feet.”

So He continued to narrate to me pains upon pains – all the martyrdoms of His little Humanity, such that, if I wanted to tell them all, I would be too long.

I abandoned myself to crying, and I heard in my interior: “My daughter, I would like to hug you, but I am unable to do so – there is no room, I am immobile, I cannot do it. I would like to come to you, but I am unable to walk. For now, you hug Me and you come to Me; then, when I come out of the maternal womb, I will come to you.” But as I hugged Him and squeezed Him tightly to my heart with my imagination, an interior voice told me: “Enough for now, my daughter; move on to consider the fifth excess of my love.”

## FIFTH EXCESS OF LOVE

And the interior voice continued: “My daughter, do not move away from Me, do not leave Me alone; my love wants your company. This is another excess of my love, which does not want to be alone. But do you know whose company it wants? That of the creature. See, in the womb of my Mama, all of the creatures are together with Me – conceived together with Me. I am with them, all love. I want to tell them how much I love them; I want to speak with them to tell them of my joys and sorrows – that I have come into their midst to make them happy and to console them; that I will remain in their midst as a little brother, giving my goods, my kingdom, to each one of them at the cost of my life. I want to give them my kisses and my caresses. I want to amuse myself with them, but – ah, how many sorrows they give Me! Some run away from Me, some play deaf and force Me into silence; some despise my goods and do not care about my kingdom, returning my kisses and caresses with indifference and obliviousness of Me, so they convert my amusement into bitter crying. Oh! How lonely I am, though in the midst of many. Oh! How loneliness weighs upon Me. I have no one to whom to say a word, with whom to pour Myself out, not even in love. I am always sad and taciturn, because if I speak, I am not listened to. Ah! My daughter, I beg you, I implore you, do not leave Me alone in so much loneliness; give Me the good of letting Me speak by listening to Me; lend your ear to my teachings. I am the master of masters. How many things do I want to teach you! If you listen to Me, you will stop my crying and I will amuse Myself with you. Don’t you want to amuse yourself with Me?”

And as I abandoned myself in Him, giving Him my compassion in His loneliness, the interior voice continued: “Enough, enough; move on to consider the sixth excess of my love.”

## SIXTH EXCESS OF LOVE

“My daughter, come, pray my dear Mama to set aside a little space for you within her maternal womb, that you yourself may see the painful state in which I find Myself.” So, in my thoughts, it seemed that our Queen Mama made me a little room to make Jesus content, and placed me in it. But the darkness was such that I could not see Him; I could only hear His breathing, while He continued to say in my interior: “My daughter, look at another excess of my love. I am the eternal light; the sun is a shadow of my light. But do you see where my love led Me – in what a dark prison I am? There is not a glimmer of light; it is always night for Me – but a night without stars, without rest. I am always awake...what pain! The narrowness of this prison – without being able to make the slightest movement; the thick darkness...; even my breathing, as I breathe through the breathing of my Mama – oh, how labored it is! To this, add the darkness of the sins of creatures. Each sin was a night for Me, and combined together they formed an abyss of darkness, with no boundaries. What pain! Oh, excess of my love – making Me pass from an immensity of light and space into an abyss of thick darkness, so narrow as to lose the freedom to breathe; and all this, for love of creatures.”

As He was saying this, He moaned – moans almost suffocated because of the lack of space; and He cried. I was consumed with crying. I thanked Him, I compassionated Him; I wanted to make Him a little light with my love, as He told me to. But who can say all? Then, the same interior voice added: “Enough for now; move on to the seventh excess of my love.”

#### SEVENTH EXCESS OF LOVE

The interior voice continued: “My daughter, do not leave Me alone in so much loneliness and in so much darkness. Do not leave the womb of my Mama, so you may see the seventh excess of my love. Listen to Me: in the womb of my Celestial Father I was fully happy; there was no good which I did not possess; joy, happiness – everything was at my disposal. The angels adored Me reverently, hanging upon my every wish. Ah, excess of my love! I could say that it made Me change my destiny; it restrained Me within this gloomy prison; it stripped Me of all my joys, happinesses and goods, to clothe Me with all the unhappinesses of creatures – and all this in order to make an exchange, to give them my destiny, my joys and my eternal happiness. But this would have been nothing had I not found in them highest ingratitude and obstinate perfidy. Oh, how my eternal love was surprised in the face of so much ingratitude, and how it cried over the stubbornness and perfidy of man. Ingratitude was the sharpest thorn that pierced my heart, from my conception up to the last moment of my life. Look at my little heart – it is wounded, and pours out blood. What pain! What torture I feel! My daughter, do not be ungrateful to Me. Ingratitude is the hardest pain for your Jesus – it is to close the door in my face, leaving Me numb with cold. But my love did not stop at so much ingratitude; it took the attitude of supplicating, imploring, moaning and begging love. This is the eighth excess of my love.”

#### EIGHTH EXCESS OF LOVE

“My daughter, do not leave Me alone; place your head upon the womb of my dear Mama, and even from the outside you will hear my moans and my supplications. In seeing that neither my moans nor my supplications move the creature to compassion for my love, I assume the attitude of the poorest of beggars; and stretching out my little hand, I ask – for pity’s sake, and at least as alms – for their souls, for their affections and for their hearts. My love wanted to win over the heart of man at any cost; and in seeing that after seven excesses of my love, he was still reluctant, he played deaf, he did not care about Me and did not want to give himself to Me, my love wanted to push itself further. It should have stopped; but no, it wanted to overflow even more from within its boundaries; and from the womb of my Mama, it made my voice reach every heart, with the most insinuating manners, with the most fervent prayers, with the most penetrating words. And do you know what I said to them? ‘My child, give me your heart; I will give you everything you want, provided that you give Me your heart in exchange. I have descended from Heaven to make a prey of it. O please, do not deny it to Me! Do not delude my hopes!’ And in seeing him reluctant – even more, many turned their backs to Me – I passed on to moaning; I joined

my little hands and, crying, with a voice suffocated by sobs, I added: ‘Ohh! Ohh! I am the little beggar; you don’t want to give Me your heart – not even as alms? Is this not a greater excess of my love; that the Creator, in order to approach the creature, takes the form of a little baby so as not to strike fear in him; that He asks for the heart of the creature, at least as alms, and in seeing that he does not want to give it, He supplicates, moans and cries?’

Then I heard Him say: “And you, don’t you want to give Me your heart? Or maybe you too want Me to moan, beg and cry in order to give Me your heart? Do you want to deny Me the alms I ask of you?” And as He was saying this I heard Him as though sobbing, and I: ‘My Jesus, do not cry, I give You my heart and all of myself.’ Then, the interior voice continued: “Move further; pass on to the ninth excess of my love.”

### NINTH EXCESS OF LOVE

“My daughter, my state is ever more painful. If you love Me, keep your gaze fixed on Me, to see if you can offer some relief to your Jesus; a little word of love, a caress, a kiss, will give respite to my crying and to my afflictions. Listen my daughter, after I gave eight excesses of my love, and man requited them so badly, my love did not give up and wanted to add the ninth excess to the eighth. And this was yearnings, sighs of fire, flames of desire, for I wanted to go out of the maternal womb to embrace man. This reduced my little Humanity, not yet born, to such an agony as to reach the point of breathing my last. But as I was about to breathe my last, my Divinity, which was inseparable from Me, gave Me sips of life, and so I regained life to continue my agony, and return again to the point of death. This was the ninth excess of my love: to agonize and to die of love continuously for the creature. Oh! What a long agony of nine months! Oh! How love suffocated Me and made Me die. Had I not had the Divinity with Me, which gave Me life again every time I was about to finish, love would have consumed Me before coming out to the light of day.”

Then He added: “Look at Me, listen to Me, how I agonize, how my heart beats, pants, burns. Look at Me – now I die.” And He remained in deep silence. I felt like dying. My blood froze in my veins, and trembling, I said to Him: ‘My Love, my Life, do not die, do not leave me alone. You want love, and I will love You; I will not leave You ever again. Give me your flames to be able to love You more, and be consumed completely for You.’

### THE BIRTH OF JESUS

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As I was in my usual state, I felt I was outside of myself; after wandering around, I found myself inside a cave, and I saw the Queen Mama in the act of giving birth to Little Baby Jesus. What a wonderful prodigy! It seemed that both Mother and Son were transmuted into most pure light. But in that light one could see very well the human nature of Jesus containing the Divinity within Itself, and serving as a veil to cover the Divinity; in such a way that, in tearing the veil of human nature, He was God, while covered by that veil, He

was Man. Here is the prodigy of prodigies: God and Man, Man and God! Without leaving the Father and the Holy Spirit – because true love never separates – He comes to dwell in our midst, taking on human flesh. Now, it seemed to me that Mother and Son, in that most happy instant, remained as though spiritualized, and without the slightest difficulty Jesus came out of the Maternal womb, while both of them overflowed with excess of Love. In other words, those Most Pure Bodies were transformed into Light, and without the slightest impediment, Light Jesus came out of the Light of the Mother, while both One and the Other remained whole and intact, returning, then, to their natural state.

Who can tell the beauty of the Little Baby who, at the moment of His birth, transfused, also externally, the rays of the Divinity? Who can tell the beauty of the Mother, who remained all absorbed in those Divine rays? And Saint Joseph? It seemed to me that he was not present at the act of the birth, but remained in another corner of the cave, all engrossed in that profound Mystery. And if he did not see with the eyes of the body, he saw very well with the eyes of the soul, because he remained enraptured in sublime ecstasy.

Now, in the act in which the Little Baby came out to the light, I had wanted to fly and take Him in my arms, but the Angels prevented me, saying that the honor of holding Him first belonged to the Mother. Then, the Most Holy Virgin, as though stirred, returned into Herself and from the hands of an Angel received Her Son in Her arms. In Her ardor of love, She squeezed Him so tightly that it seemed that She wanted to draw Him into Her womb again. Then, wanting to let Her ardent love pour out, She placed Him at Her breast to suckle. In the meantime, I was completely annihilated, waiting to be called so as not to be scolded again by the Angels. Then the Queen said to me: “Come, come and take your Beloved, and you too, enjoy Him – pour out your love with Him.” As She was saying this, I drew near Mama, and She gave Him to me, into my arms. Who can say my contentment, the kisses, the squeezes, the tendernesses? After I poured myself out a little, I said to Him: ‘My beloved, You have suckled the milk of our Mama, share it with me.’ And He, all condescending, poured part of that milk from His mouth into mine, and then He told me: “My beloved, I was conceived united to suffering, I was born to suffering, and I died in suffering. And with the three nails with which they crucified Me, I nailed the three powers – intellect, memory and will – of those souls who yearn to love Me, keeping them all drawn to Myself, because sin had rendered them infirm and dispersed from their Creator – without any restraint.” As He was saying this, He gazed at the world and began to cry over its miseries. On seeing Him cry, I said: ‘Lovable Baby, do not sadden with your tears a night so happy for one who loves you. Instead of pouring ourselves out in crying, let us pour ourselves out in singing’; and as I said this, I began to sing. Jesus was amused at hearing me sing, and He stopped crying; and completing my verse, He sang His own, with a voice so powerful and harmonious that all other voices disappeared at the sound of His most sweet voice....