



Novena to Saint Bakhita

30th January – 7th February

A HAPPY WOMAN

On 8th February we celebrate the feast of Saint Bakhita, **a happy woman**. Let us prepare ourselves with this Novena of prayer so that we may be gathered together in our prayer of praise and joy.

30th January

“Bakhita, you are happy because you trusted in God”

Initial Prayer

“I trust in You, Lord; I say: “You are my God, my days are in your hands. Blessed the man who hopes in the Lord.”

(from the Psalms)

*Saint Bakhita constantly trusted in God. She was always calm and serene even during her illnesses. She never showed her distress. She never allow herself any comfort even when she could. She preferred to suffer and offer her pains for the conversion of sinners and those far from God. When I saw her in great pain I asked her how she was and if I should call the nurse. She always answered me: **“As the Lord wants; no, do not call the nurse, for Heaven’s sake do not disturb her.”** She often referred to the Lord’s Passion saying that He had suffered much more. She also remembered her great sufferings during her slavery and she said that the present sufferings were nothing in comparison with those of the past and that now she knew for whom she was suffering.*

I never heard her desire the end of her life: she always desired to do what “el Paron” (the Master) wanted.

(deposition of M. Noemi Raccanello)

- Let us respond to each invocation: **Pray for us.**
 - *Saint Bakhita, you who put your trust in the Lord ...*
 - *Saint Bakhita, you who allowed the Master to guide you ...*
 - *Saint Bakhita, you who lived your daily life with faith ...*

Let us pray together

Heavenly Father, through the intercession of Saint Bakhita, grant us a great trust in You who are our rock and refuge. Grant that, in every circumstance of life, we may abandon ourselves to you like little children in the arms of the Father. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Resolution for daily living: *in my daily actions I want to make many acts of trust in the Lord.*

31st January

“Bakhita, you are happy because you hoped in the Lord.”

Initial Prayer

“In You, Lord, I place my hope, I raise my spirit to my God. You are the God of my salvation, every day I hope in You. Do not let me be disappointed!” (from the Psalms)

*She had an infinite hope in the Lord. When they proposed to her to go to Addis Abeba, she preferred to remain in Italy **because she had the strong hope** because she thought that God would take care of the conversion of her family. She communicated this hope to all those she met and told them to put all their hope in the “Paron”, that is, the Lord. She never showed self-presumption, on the contrary, she continually elaborated the awareness of her humility. I never heard a word of complaint from her ... on the contrary, she always said she hoped to see the Lord in Heaven.*

(deposition of M. Antonietta Filippin)

- Let us pray at each invocation: **Pray for us.**
- *Saint Bakhita, you who always hoped in God ...*
- *Saint Bakhita, you had hope that was heroic, prompt and joyful...*
- *Saint Bakhita, you had one single thought: to reach eternal life through the merits of Jesus and the great Goodness of God ...*

Let us pray together

Almighty God, through the intercession of Saint Bakhita, grant us an open and free heart; help us to be content with everything and never lose heart, hoping, in everything and for everything, in our "Paron". We ask this through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Resolution for daily living: *today I want to repeat often: "My good is to remain close to God, my hope is in Him."*

1st February

"Bakhita, you are happy because you were poor in heart."

Initial Prayer

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs."
(Mt 5:3)

M. Bakhita, answering my questions, told me that as a slave she never gave in to despair and that she felt in her heart a mysterious strength that sustained her. As soon as Illuminato Checchini, administrator of Mrs. Michieli, spoke to her of God, she told me that she saw a great new horizon open before her which she had already glimpsed, but she could not understand its meaning. She also told me that she prepared herself to receive Baptism with great piety and enthusiasm which increased evermore each day. Bakhita never gave importance to temporal things.

(deposition of M. Teresa Martini)

- Let us pray at each invocation: **Pray for us**

- *Saint Bakhita, totally trusting in Divine Providence ...*

- *Saint Bakhita, untiring seeker of God's grace ...*

- *Saint Bakhita, always attentive to the needs of your brothers and sisters ...*

Let us pray together

Heavenly Father, through the intercession of Saint Bakhita, grant us a poor and simple heart, like that of Mary and of your Son who became poor for the love of us. Imitating Him, let us place our confidence not in riches, but in your love and embrace.

Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Resolution for daily living: in my faith and balanced use of things, I want to share something with the poor.

2nd February

*“Bakhita, you are happy because you were
Humble and patient.”*

Initial Prayer

“Blessed are the meek, they will inherit the land.” (Mt 5:5)

M. Bakhita was very humble: you could see this in her daily actions. She kept her place, always happy. Sometimes, when I asked her whether those words, that action or that Sisters had offended her, M. Bakhita always replied no. And she never gave any importance to what had happened. At the most, she excused them saying they had so much to do. According to me, humility was like her second nature. I never saw her go against this virtue; she was always of great edification to everyone. I always saw her happy about everything. (deposition of M. Teresa Martini)

Let us pray at each invocation: **Pray for us.**

- *Saint Bakhita, humble and patient ...*
- *Saint Bakhita, meek and kind towards others ...*
- *Saint Bakhita, strong in every tribulation ...*

Let us pray together

Almighty God, through the intercession of Saint Bakhita, enwrap us with your meekness and patience so as to enjoy your peace even when things are not as we would like them to be. May your powerful hand sustain us and bless us so that we may enter our Heavenly homeland. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Resolution for daily living: I want to have patience with myself and with others.

3rd February

“Bakhita, you are happy because you were hungry and thirsty for justice.”

Initial Prayer

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for what is right, they shall be satisfied.” (Mt 5:6)

I never saw or heard that M. Bakhita went against the virtue of justice or the duty of gratitude. She never bothered me and I believe she never bothered others. I always saw M. Bakhita happy about everything; she never expressed her likes or preferences and never complained. (deposition of M. Amelia Cordioli)

- Let us pray at each invocation: **Pray for us**

- *Saint Bakhita, courageous witness of the truth ...*
- *Saint Bakhita, generous in loving ...*
- *Saint Bakhita, always the first in giving good example ...*

Let us pray together

Heavenly Father, through the intercession of Saint Bakhita, give us always a hunger and thirst for holiness so that everyone may be saved and come to know and love Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life. He lives and reigns forever. Amen.

Resolution for daily living: I want to correct my selfish attitudes and seek the common good.

4th February

“Bakhita, you are happy because you were merciful.”

Initial Prayer

“Blessed are the merciful, God will be merciful to them.”

(Mt 5:7)

M. Bakhita did everything for the love of God. She used to say this even to us as a recommendation. She saw God’s will in everything. She knew how to understand and to sympathize with the bodily defects of neighbours. She took every occasion to encourage us to love the Lord. Her sentences were simple and brief, but the way she expressed them was persuasive and showed a goodness which conquered people.

She herself told me that she willingly forgave those who treated her cruelly during her slavery. She often said: “We must forgive everything, however great the offenses may be, because the Lord had suffered so much for us and forgave his crucifiers.” She recommended me, very often, to love everyone, to forgive offenses and not to hate. (deposition of Serafina Piazza)

Let us pray at each invocation: **Pray for us.**

- *Saint Bakhita, visible image of divine mercy ...*

- *Saint Bakhita, model of sincere and total forgiveness ...*

- *Saint Bakhita, you considered everyone as your brother and sister*

Let us pray together

Heavenly Father, through the intercession of Saint Bakhita, grant us sentiments of sincere mercy towards everyone. Grant us that we may heartily forgive the offenses that we receive and thus savour the beauty of your forgiveness. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Resolution for daily living: I want to avoid judgments and negative criticism and nurture an attitude of understanding.

5th February

“Bakhita, you are happy because you were pure in heart.”

Initial Prayer

“Blessed the pure in heart, they will see God.” (Mt 5:8)

I always saw M. Bakhita very concerned to do what God wanted and with her thoughts always on Him. She often said, addressing even us, that it was imperative to do what the Lord wants, everything must be done for His love.”

I always saw M. Bakhita modest and reserved, and she always recommended this virtue to us. She used to tell us, “Remember that the Lord always sees you, so you must never be lacking. I had the impression that M. Bakhita was an angel on earth. Some of the Sisters of the Institute told me that M. Bakhita always preserved her baptismal innocence. (deposition of Serafina Piazza)

• Let us pray at each invocation: **Pray for us**

- *Saint Bakhita, pure of heart ...*

- *Saint Bakhita, amiable and upright with everyone ...*

- *Saint Bakhita, on fire with love ...*

Let us pray together

Almighty God, through the intercession of Saint Bakhita, grant us a transparent and upright heart able to contemplate your image in every brother and sister that we meet and with whom we live. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Resolution for daily living: I want to purify my thoughts and actions in the light of God’s love.

6th February

“Bakhita, you are happy because you were a peacemaker.”

Initial Prayer

“Blessed are the peacemakers, God will call them his children.”
(Mt 5:9)

I recognised in M. Josephine Bakhita great fraternal charity. I think she could have said, like St. Catherine of Genoa: “I have never had an evil thought about my Sisters.”

M. Josephine Bakhita spoke very little. I never heard her criticize others or talk of herself. She was very prudent in her behaviour, either with the soldiers or anyone else. (deposition of Fr. Bartolomeo Cesaretti of Grotte Di Castro, Italy, Military Chaplain in 1916 and Chaplain of the Sisters)

There was never a word of complaint, never a word that alluded to a lack of charity, never a curious question. You always felt at ease with M. Bakhita! (deposition of M. Noemi)

- Let us pray at each invocation: **Pray for us**

- Saint Bakhita, faithful peacemaker ...

- Saint Bakhita, always concerned for the good of others ...

- Saint Bakhita, promotor of communion and unity ...

Let us pray together

Heavenly Father, through the intercession of Saint Bakhita, grant that everywhere we may be instruments of your peace and grant this peace to every family and to the whole world. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Resolution for daily living: I want to try and be an instrument of peace and unity in my environment.

7th February

“Bakhita, you are happy because you suffered so much.”

Initial Prayer

“Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you for my sake. Be happy and glad because great is your reward in heaven.” (Mt 5:11-12)

I saw M. Bakhita patiently and constantly putting up with all her illnesses and pain. She told me that she offered them to God for the Church, for the Pope, the missions and our Congregation. She had universal intentions. I told her one day that the priest offered Christ's body on the altar and she offered her pain and her body. “Yes” she replied, “but what a difference!” Once I asked her if she felt pain in some parts of her body and she answered that she suffered pain all over her body, but she was happy because she had something to offer the Lord. Towards the end of her life, very often M. Bakhita prayed and recommended me to pray for the conversion of her African brothers and sisters, especially those who made her suffer. She justified their cruelty because they did not know the Lord. (deposition of M. Noemi)

- **Let us pray at each invocation: Pray for us**

- *Saint Bakhita, you bore witness to your faith in Jesus ...*
- *Saint Bakhita, you endured many humiliations with fortitude ...*
- *Saint Bakhita, you taught us to offer everything to the Lord ...*

Let us pray together

Heavenly Father, through Saint Bakhita's intercession, grant us to embrace lovingly every moment of our lives and to discover your presence close to us in the signs of the Cross. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Resolution for daily living: I will not complain in my daily difficulties.