



Novena and Feast Day of Our Lady of Favours

“Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God.” (LK 1:30)

GURU MANDIR, India - There is no doubt that at Guru Mandir, Our Lady of Favours is performing miracles! I was motivated to say the aforementioned statement after seeing the crowd and their faith. This is the first time I am witnessing the feast of Our Lady of Favours as a seminarian, and I personally feel blessed to get this opportunity to take part actively, learn, and serve during the days of Novena and on the feast day of Our Lady of Favours.

The staff in the community prepared us well in advance about the Novena to be organized in preparation for the feast day from October 3–11. The brothers at Guru Mandir and I were really eager for the Novena, and we were working hard to make the days of the Novena and the Feast of Our Lady of Favours a memorable program in our lives. With the lovely blessings and the grace of our God, we had a holy adoration on October 2, which was a good and ideal beginning for the Novena.

Our fathers, who are well known for their preaching, guided us into the Novena. Each day was carefully planned by them around a theme, making it simple for us and the laypeople to understand our mother and emulate her.

The themes for the nine days were as follows:

1. Mary's Fiat
2. Mary, the Icon of Faith
3. Mary, the Handmaid of God
4. Mary, the Model of Charity
5. Mary, the Mother of the Rosary
6. Mary, the Perfect Disciple of Jesus Christ

7. Mary, the New Eve
8. Mary, the Dispenser of Graces
9. Mary, the Powerful Interceder

We were all able to understand our mother better through the reflections on these themes as they related to her faith, confidence in God, humility, charity, obedience, virtues, grace, Providence, and intercession. I could also notice that St. Montfort played a greater role in spreading the devotion of Mary, as fathers had quoted so much from the Montfortian Writings. We could also renew our faith and affection for our mother. The witness was the audience. Despite the poor weather, the numbers were rising every day. In addition to taking an active part in the liturgy, the laypeople took initiative in sponsoring the refreshments, donating the flowers, and gifting religious items as a gesture of affection. Along with the cooperation of the people and the blessing of Our Lady of Favours, the novena was indeed a spiritual preparation for the feast.

The serial lamps were used to adorn Guru Mandir for the feast day on October 12, 2023. We had invited the SMM fathers from our neighbouring community, nearby religious sisters, Montfort lay associates, and close friends. As more people came out for the feast, we received a great reception. With the help of our own built chariot, we started the feast day celebrations with the Rosary procession. Fr. Deepak, SMM led the Eucharistic celebration and shared a sermon about Mother Mary and how she has had a significant influence in his life, enriching us with his faith. We had a common dinner thereafter where we could all be together.

It was a beautiful experience for all of us to be present for this joyful event, and we also feel as though our Lady of Favours has interceded for us powerfully. Finally, I would affirm with confidence that this area will be a miracle and holy spot one day, as mentioned by the major celebrant, Fr. Deepak, on the feast day of our Lady of Favours.

AVE MARIA!

Stany D'Souza