

NOVENA

*dedicated to the
servant of God*

Mons. Joaquim Alves Brás



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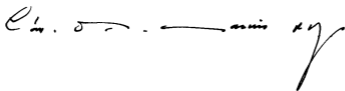
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The servant of God
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Imprima-se
Patriarcado de Lisboa, 10 de Julho de 2007
Cónego Dr. António Marim
Vigário-geral

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'António Marim', with a stylized flourish at the end.

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WHO IS MONS. JOAQUIM ALVES BRÁS?

Mons. Joaquim Alves Brás was born on 20th March 1899 in Casegas and was baptised on the same day. After a very tough adolescence marked with a lot of physical suffering caused by a coxae, he managed to be accepted by the Seminary “Menor de Fundão” at 18 years of age. He received Ordem de Presbítero on the 19th July 1925. He was Parish priest in the parish of Donas for five years until October 1930, year in which he became spiritual director of the Guarda

Seminary until 1942. From this date on he dedicated himself heart and soul to the institution that he founded. The “Obra de Santa Zita” in 1932, the “Instituto Secular das Cooperadoras da Família” in 1937 and the “Movimento por um lar Cristão” in 1962.

For his exemplary life as a priest and for his ecclesial work in favour of the Christian Family, he deserves to be called *the Apostle of the Family in Portugal*.

He was gifted with great inner strength and he had a constant wish to be identified with Christ by means of virtue and of serving his less fortunate brothers. The Eucharist was the centre and origin of his devotion to

God. He had a very tender and profound dedication to the Blessed Mary. In prayer and penance he found the joy and strength of his extraordinary apostolic activity.

Always devote and obedient to the Holy Father and the Bishops, his life was a continuous testimony of love to the church. The theme behind his Works, “Hard work and God in your heart”, sounds like an invitation to live in accordance with the Gospel. Mons. Joaquim Alves Brás died saintly in Lisbon, on the 13th March 1966.

The process of his beatification is taking place in Rome.

To those who receive graces through the intercession of the Servant of God, we ask that you should send them to:

Postulação

Mons. Arnaldo Pinto Cardoso
Via Nicolò V, 3 – 00165, Roma
Tel. 06/390901

Vice Postulação

Maria de Fátima Castanheira Baptista
Rua de Santo António à Estrela, 35
1399-043 Lisboa
Email: monsalvesbras@netcabo.pt

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THE REASON FOR THIS NOVENA

Novenas are part of the popular devotion, and thanks to their faith and perseverance in prayer, they provide the devout with numerous graces of God. They are a time for more intense and improved prayer. We can say that, in general, novenas aim to touch the heart of God and to receive from Him a special grace, through the intercession of a Saint whose example of life we admire. The present novena is in honour of the servant of God, Mons. Joaquim Alves Brás, also known as the advocate of families and has specific objectives:

- * To offer people, individually, in

families, or in specific groups that resort to the intercession of the servant of God, a simple form of contact with the word of God and with a note from Mons. Joaquim Alves Brás about Christian virtues;

- * To provide, in each of the nine days, an opportunity to enable inner growth through meditation and devotion to the practice of virtues, following the example of the Servant of God;

- * To get a more profound knowledge of the human and spiritual personality of the servant of God;

- * To encourage communion and solidarity among all people who resort to the Servant of God;

- * To obtain, through his intercession, special graces from God.

How to pray every day

You start by reading the Word of God, followed by a few moments of silence and introspection. Afterwards you read and reflect upon the notes written by the Servant of God about virtue. Lastly you say a prayer asking for the grace you wish for and finish it off with an “Our Father”, “Hail Mary” and “Glory Be.”

FIRST DAY
FAITH

Holy Scripture

«And now a woman, who for twelve years had been troubled with an issue of blood, came up behind him and touched the hem of his cloak, I shall be healed.

Jesus turned and caught sight of her; and said, Have no fear, my daughter, thy faith has brought thee healing» (Matt. 9, 20-22).

What is faith? It is that which gives substance to our hopes, which convinces us of things we cannot see.

It was this that brought credit to the men who went before us. It is faith that lets us understand how the worlds were fashioned by God's word; how it was from things unseen that the things we see took their origin» (Heb 11, 1-3).

Moment of silence and introspection

Annotation by the Servant of God

“Our faith is as necessary to our salvation as the foundations of a building or the roots of a tree.

It is impossible to construct a building in the air or get fruit from trees if the branches are separated from the trunk. Like this, it is impossible to

build our sanctification and make it produce fruit for the salvation of our souls without faith”.

Our faith must be strong and put into practice, so as to illuminate relationships between people and to find Christ in others and godsend in good deeds.”

Prayer

Oh God, One and Triune, you gave to your priest and servant Mons. Joaquim Alves Brás the grace to live his Priesthood in the love of the Holy Trinity and as an untiring apostle of the Christian family in order that all families may imitate the virtue of the Holy Family of Nazareth. Send forth

his witness as a model to the whole church so that in the image of the Triune God, the apostolic zeal to the Christian Family may grow in love for our less fortunate brothers and sisters.

Grant us our Lord, through the intercession of your servant Joaquim Alves Brás the grace that we ask, according to your will and by the glory of your name.

Amen

Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be.

SECOND DAY
HOPE

Holy Scripture

«Once justified, then, on the ground of our faith, let us enjoy peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, as it was through him that we have obtained access, by faith, to that grace in which we stand. We are confident in the hope of attaining glory as the sons of God; nay, we are confident even over our afflictions, knowing well that affliction gives rise to endurance, and endurance gives proof of our faith, and a proved faith gives

ground for hope. Nor does this hope delude us; the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom we have received» (Rom. 5, 1-5).

«It must be so, since our salvation is founded upon the hope of something. Hope would not be hope at all if its object were in view; how could a man still hope for something which he sees? And if we are hoping for something still unseen, then we need endurance to wait for it» (Rom. 8, 24-25).

Moment of silence and introspection

Annotation by the Servant of God

«You need to strengthen in your soul the virtue of hope, continuously

aspiring to reach God and trusting his grace to attain perfection. Practice our faith not only in hope but also in the faithful confidence of God, supported in Jesus Christ the centre of our lives. Incorporated in the mystical body of Christ, we await with invincible hope in heaven where Jesus prepares a place for us, we await for him even in the middle of the biggest adversities and provocations remembering the word of the psalmist “I won’t be afraid of the evil because you are with me” ».

Prayer

Oh God, One and Triune, you gave to your priest and servant Mons.

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Amen

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THIRD DAY
CHARITY

Holy Scripture

«One of the scribes heard their dispute, and, finding that he answered to the purpose, came up and asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? Jesus answered him, The first commandment of all is, Listen, Israel; there is no God but the Lord thy God; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with the love of thy whole heart, and thy whole soul, and thy whole mind, and thy whole strength. This is the first commandment, and the second, is this, Thou shalt

love thy neighbour as thyself. There is no other commandment greater than these» (Mark 12, 28-31).

«Charity is patient, is kind, charity feels no envy; charity is never perverse or proud, never insolent; does not claim its rights, cannot be provoked, does not brood over injury; takes no pleasure in wrong –doing, but rejoices at the victory of truth; sustains, believes, hopes, endures, to the last. The time will come when we shall outgrow prophecy, when speaking with tongues will come to an end, when knowledge will be swept away; we shall never have finished with charity» (1 Cor. 13, 4-8).

Moment of silence and introspection

Annotation by the Servant of God

«Charity unites us to God, total goodness makes us love Him as infinitely good in himself and to establish between Him and us a saintly friendship that lets us live his life and start to love Him as he loves himself.

As Jesus asked “We will live in his love doing and suffering everything only for love and seeking to love more and more. Jesus is the life of our active life. If we do not live in intimacy with him, so that at every moment he can give us vigour and vitality to improve our actions in our apostolic life, we will not have the life of the apostles. This is the virtue that most attracts me: love, love, love Jesus and

the rest will come without having to worry. If we want the real love of God we should practice charity with our neighbour. For us to practice charity we should practice our faith seeing Christ in our neighbour».

Prayer

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Amen

Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory Be.

FOURTH DAY
UNSELFISHNESS

Holy Scripture

«Blessed are the poor in spirit; The Kingdom of heaven is theirs (Mt 5,3).

Master, who art so good, what must I do to achieve eternal life? Jesus said to him, Why dost thou call me good? None is good, except God only Thou knowest the commandments. Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not wrong any man, Honour thy father and thy mother. Master he answered, I have kept all these ever since I grew up.

Then Jesus fastened his eyes on him and conceived a love for him; In one thing, he said, thou art still wanting. Go home and sell all that belongs to thee; give it to the poor, and so the treasure thou hast shall be in heaven; then come back and follow me. At this, his face fell, and he went away sorrowing, for he had great possessions» (Mark 10, 17-22).

Moment of silence and introspection

Annotation by the Servant of God

«It is not enough to give everything away it is also necessary to release our hearts from all our possessions.

It is necessary that our heart does not have any attachments.

It is not only the exterior that

counts. The Kingdom of God is in our heart and thus we must be unselfish. Voluntary and universal poorness, proclaim God's plenitude. We give everything up to be only with God. If I detach myself from everything to be only with God in his plenitude God will be always generous with me.

If the gospel recommends poorness, we should preach it with our life, according to our Master's example.

The poor in spirit is free... is more of a man... enjoys more freedom.

The person who is selfish is a slave and you can say he is less of a man.»

Prayer

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FIFTH DAY
PURITY AND CHASTITY

Holy Scripture

«And he called the multitude to Him and said to them, Listen to me, all of you and grasp this; Nothing that finds its way into a man from outside cannot make him unclean; what makes a man unclean is what comes out of a man. Listen, you that have ears to hear with.

When he had gone into the house, away from the multitude, his disciples asked him the meaning of the parable. And he said to them, Are you

still so slow of wit? Do you not observe that all the uncleanness which goes into a man has no means of defiling him, because it travels not into his heart, but into the belly, and so finds its way into the sewer? Thus he declared all meat to be clean and told them that what defiles a man is that which comes out of him. For it is from within, from the hearts of men, that their wicked designs come, their sins of adultery, fornication, murder, theft, covetousness, malice, deceit, lasciviousness, envy, blasphemy, pride and folly. All the evils come from within, and it is these which make a man unclean» (Mark 7,14-23).

«What God asks of you is that you should sanctify yourselves, and keep

clear of fornication. Each of you must learn to control his own body, as something holy and held in honour, not yielding to the promptings of passion, as the heathen do in their ignorance of God» (1 Thess.4. 3-5).

Moment of silence and introspection

Annotation by the Servant of God

«Chastity, like virginity, is like the true and pure love of God.

Whoever loves God with all his heart would have a spiritual adultery loving sexual pleasure or any creature.

Chastity is a virtue that makes us similar to angels... achieving each day enriching it with lots of graces.

Because Christ lives in us, is present in us, we should respect his presence, keeping our body pure and saintly... and for that we need austerity and prayer. »

Prayer

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SIXTH DAY
OBEDIENCE

Holy Scripture

«But when John had been put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God's kingdom: The appointed time has come, he said, and the kingdom Of God is near at hand; repent, and believe the gospel. And as he passed along the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Simon's brother, Andrew casting a net into the sea (for they were fisherman); Jesus said to them, Come and follow me; I will make you into fishers of men. And they dropped their nets immediately, and they followed him» (Mark 1, 14-18).

I said, See, my God I am coming to thy will. He must clear the ground first, so as to build up afterwards. In accordance with this divine will we have been sanctified by an offering made once for all, the body of Jesus Christ» (Heb 10,9-10).

Moment of silence and introspection

Annotation by the Servant of God

«The practical form of doing what God wants is to obey him. Obedience binds us to God. Those who obey practice charity. It is the best of moral virtues, after the virtue of religion. Give merit to ordinary acts of life. It gives us the security that we are going in the right direction.

In addition to prayer it is neces-

sary to obey the rules, meditate about the excellence of this virtue, finding a way to know how Jesus and the saints practice obedience. To think what the consequences of disobedience are. To practice obedience in little things.

True obedience is born with faith and only faith will maintain it.

The best way to follow Christ is by practicing obedience. The same Holy Spirit says that God is happier with obedience than with sacrifices.

Obedience is the sacrifice of our desire and of our intelligence; Therefore the biggest of all sacrifices.»

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SEVENTH DAY
JUSTICE

Holy Scripture

«Blessed are those who mourn; they shall be comforted. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for holiness; they shall have their fill. Blessed are those who suffer persecution in the cause of right; the kingdom of heaven is theirs. And I tell you, that if your justice does not give fuller measure than the justice of the scribes and Pharisees, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven» (Matt. 5, 6.10. 20).

«Why then, give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's» (Matt 22, 21).

Moment of silence and introspection

Annotation by the Servant of God

«It is not a favour you do to God when you try to be perfect, but duty of justice to Him, because all you are, have and know, you have received from God.»

The virtue of justice in the servant of God corresponds to the interior verticality that he measured situations and judged problems. His spirit of Christian justice can be resumed in this expression: «fight for the rights of the humble without hurting the rights of the great.»

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EIGHTH DAY
HUMILITY

Holy Scripture

«At that time Jesus said openly, Father, who art Lord of heaven and earth, I give thee praise that thou hast hidden all this from the wise and the prudent, and revealed it to little children.

Come to me, all you that labour and are burdened; I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon yourselves, and learn from me;

I am gentle and humble of heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For my yolk is easy, and my burden is light» (Matt.11, 25. 28-29).

Moment of silence and introspection

Annotation by the Servant of God

«Our virtues should stand out. Jesus was humble and humble until he died on the cross. I have to be humble to be a faithful follower of Jesus.

We learn with Jesus to be humble to suffer with patience and resignation, in silence without complaining about our suffering, disappointments and contempt;

We finally learn to love Christ, as he loved us until he died on the cross».

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NINTH DAY
STRENGTH

Holy Scripture

«Be on watch, stand firm in the faith, play the man, be full of courage. And let everything you do be done in the spirit of charity.» (1Cor. 16, 13-14).

«I have no more to say, brethren except this; draw your strength from the Lord, from that mastery which his powers supplies. You must wear all the weapons in God's armoury, if you would find strength to resist the cunning of the devil» (Eph. 6, 10-11).

Moment of silence and introspection

Annotation by the Servant of God

«Our will is the principal power of our soul. It's through our will that we determinate the execution of our actions. We need to have a strong and reflected conscience; we should always meditate and think of what we are going do. Trying hard never to fall in temptation of wrong doings. Having a continuous strong will power will help us to keep our good resolutions».

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*«I would like to add just one more “a” to my name.
Instead of “Bras”, I would like to be called “Brasa”,
meaning burning coal; so you too,
like burning coal, shall go out into the world to ignite it
and to inflame the souls with the fire of God's Love.»*

Mons. Joaquim Alves Brás