

How to pray the Novena

- Give yourself about ten minutes to slowly read the content of each day.
- Repeat the scripture to yourself a few times, and allow it centre you on the love of God.
- Mull over the meditation, ending with the short prayer.
- In the novena prayer, there is the opportunity to pray for the grace of God's love in your life, and mention any special concern or intention you are bringing to the novena. Feel free to do so.

The theme this year is the call and invitation of Jesus to come to know, love and follow him in our Christian lives. Real prayer is always to be understood as a personal meeting with our risen Lord, who invites us to enter into a loving relationship with him. In our own words we speak to him from our hearts, communicating whatever thoughts come to mind from the gospel quotations and reflections.

Closing prayer each day

Lord Jesus, your Sacred Heart is always open in love to each of us, especially when we are suffering. To all who come to you seeking your help, you show your compassion and healing power. You care for us when we are lost, sympathise with us in loneliness and comfort us in mourning; you are closest to us when we are weakest. You reach out your hand to us when we stumble and have most need of your help. I ask you to listen to my prayer during this novena, and grant what I ask. If what I ask is not for my own or others' good, grant me always what is best, that I may build your kingdom of love in our world. Amen

A NOVENA prepares us over nine days to receive the graces of God special to a feast.

In this Sacred Heart novena, contributed to us by Enda O'Callaghan SJ, the grace we ask is to know personally the love of God in the heart of Christ.

The Novena to the Sacred Heart takes place from 15-23 June 2017. Many churches celebrate this novena, or at least pray the novena prayer. During the nine days we renew our love of the heart of Jesus, who loved us first. This novena presents a short piece of scripture followed by a meditation, a reflection and a prayer.

NOVENA TO THE SACRED HEART

Day One: Thursday 15 June
Jesus the patient friend

SCRIPTURE: 'Behold I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to them and eat with them, and they with me' (Rev.3:20).

MEDITATION: Jesus has been standing, knocking at the door of our hearts, and he will do so until the end of our lives with infinite patience. But it is never too late to open that door and invite him into our lives.

PRAYER: Lord, we do not understand why you love us so much and why you are so patient with us. It can only be because you are love itself. Help us to hear that persistent knocking and to open ourselves to you.

Day Two: Friday 16 June
A day with Jesus of Nazareth

SCRIPTURE: The two disciples said to Jesus, 'Master, where do you live?' Jesus said, 'Come and see' and they stayed with him that day (Jn.1:38).

MEDITATION: Because it is a relationship of love, Jesus always leaves us free to respond or not. To those who want to find him, he says, 'Come, and meet me in real prayer and open your hearts to me'. This is how we come to know him personally, and it leads us to loving him and following him.

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, you are telling each of us to come and see, help us to truly meet you in prayer and to discover the joy of coming to know and love you.

Day Three: Saturday 17 June
The humble Jesus

SCRIPTURE: 'Come to me all you who labour and are burdened and I will give you rest ... learn from me, for I am gentle and humble of heart' (Mt.11:28).

MEDITATION: We can learn much about what kind of person Jesus was by looking at how he lived and how he interacted with all those he met. He met and dined with people who were treated as outcasts in society and brought them peace. He healed those who were sick.

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, you know what it is like to live our human life. Help us to remember that you love everyone and see the good in each person, and help us to love them as sisters and brothers.

Day Four: Sunday 18 June
Jesus the compassionate friend

SCRIPTURE: And a leper came to him, beseeching him, 'Lord, if you will, you can make me clean'. Moved with compassion, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him saying, 'I will, be clean' (Mk.1:40-42). And immediately the leprosy left him.

MEDITATION: In his day, Jesus met much human suffering and it affected him deeply. Here, on meeting this leper, he looks into his eyes and reaches out and touches the untouchable.

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, you always looked on everyone with deep compassion, and just being in your presence brings a healing of body and mind. Help us in our day to be your eyes, which look with compassion on others.

Day Five: Monday 19 June
The call to follow Jesus as Christians

SCRIPTURE: 'My sheep hear my voice; I know them and they follow me' (Jn.10:27).

MEDITATION: Jesus came among us to bring about the kingdom of his father on earth. He always knew that he would need followers to come after him and bring his message of love and peace to distant people. By our baptism we are all called to witness to Christ by how we live our Christian lives.

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, help us to hear your call in all the different experiences of our human lives. Give us the grace to respond with generosity and fidelity, knowing that you are always walking with us.

