

CHRISTMAS NOVENA
TO THE INFANT JESUS
(DECEMBER 16 -
DECEMBER 24)



DAILY OPENING PRAYER

Most Benign God of infinite charity, who loved mankind so much that You gave them Your Son, the greatest gift of Your love, so that, when He became a man in the Virgin's womb, He was born in a manger for our benefit and remedy; I, in the name of all mortals, give you infinite thanks for such a sovereign benefit.

In return I offer you the poverty, humility and other virtues of Your Son made Man, pleading by His divine merits, by the discomforts of His birth and by the tender tears that He shed in the manger, so He may infuse our hearts with profound humility, with an ignited heart, and with such scorn of everything worldly, so that the newborn Jesus keeps them in His cradle and lives eternally in us. Amen.

(Pray Glory be three times).



DAILY PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Sovereign Mary, who by your great virtues and especially by your humility, did merit to be chosen as the Mother of God, I beg you to prepare and make my soul and the souls of all praying this novena, for the spiritual birth of your Beloved Son. O sweetest mother, express to me of the profound retreat and divine tenderness with which you awaited to hold Him, so that we could be made less unworthy to see, love and adore Him for all eternity. Amen.

(Pray the Hail Mary nine times).

DAILY PRAYER TO SAINT JOSEPH

O most holy Joseph, spouse of Mary and adoptive father of Jesus! I give infinite thanks to God Almighty for having chosen you for such a high ministry and having adorned you with all the gifts given proportionate to such excellent greatness. I beg of you, for the love you had for the Divine Child, that you may embrace me with a fervent desire to see and receive Him sacramentally, as long as in His divine essence I see Him and enjoy Him in heaven. Amen.

(Pray an Our Father, Hail Mary and the Glory Be).



DAILY MEDITATIONS FIRST DAY - DECEMBER 16

In the beginning the Word rested in the bosom of His Father Almighty in heaven; there was the cause and the model of all creation. In those depths of an incalculable eternity was the Child of Bethlehem, before He deigned to descend to Earth and visibly took form in the manger in Bethlehem. That is where we must date the genealogy of the Eternal who has no ancestors, and contemplate the life of infinite satisfaction that He experienced there.

The life of the Eternal Word within His Father was a marvelous life and yet, a sublime mystery! He sought another dwelling, a created mansion. It was not because His eternal mansion lacked anything for His infinite happiness, but because His infinite mercy longed for the redemption and salvation of humanity, which without Him could not be achieved.

Adam's sin had offended God and that infinite offense could not be forgiven except by the merits of God Himself. Adam's race had disobeyed and deserved an eternal punishment; thus, it was necessary to save humanity and satisfy the fault that God, without leaving heaven, take the form of a man on earth, and with obedience to the designs of His Father, atone for that disobedience, ingratitude and rebellion.

It was necessary, in the sight of His love, to take the form, the weaknesses and systematic ignorance of man; to grow, to give spiritual growth; to suffer, to teach men to die to their passions and pride. That is why the Eternal Word, burning with desire to save mankind, resolved to make Himself human as well, and thus redeem the guilty.

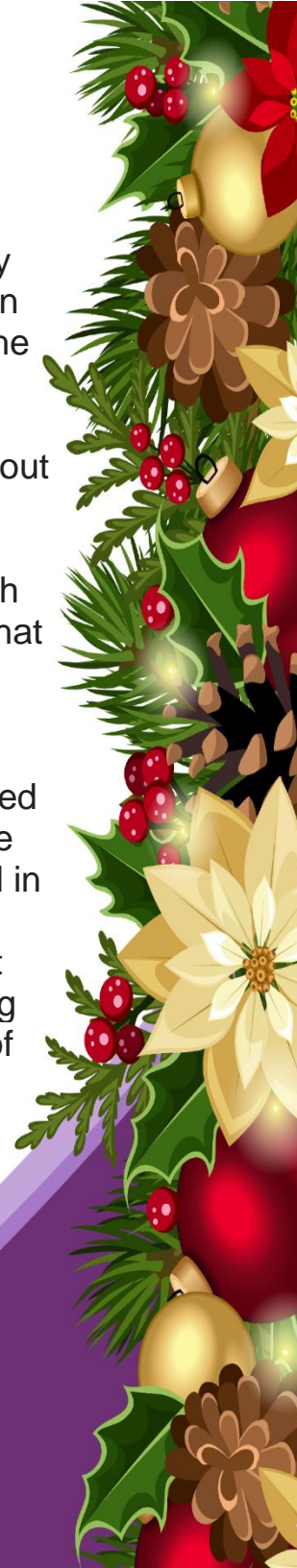


SECOND DAY - DECEMBER 17

The Eternal Word was about to take His created form in the holy house in Nazareth where Mary and Joseph lived. When the shadow of the Divine Decree overshadowed her, Mary was alone in profound prayer passing the silent hours of the night in the closest union with God; and while she was praying, the Word took possession of His created home. However, the Word did not arrive unexpectedly; He sent a messenger beforehand, who was Saint Gabriel the Archangel, to ask Mary, in the name of God, for her consent to the Incarnation. The Creator did not want to carry out that great mystery without the consent of His child.

That moment was very solemn: it was Mary's choice to refuse... With what adorable delight, with what ineffable pleasure would the Holy Trinity wait for Mary to open her lips and say the "yes" that would be a gentle melody for His ears, and with which conformed her deep humility to the omnipotent Divine Will. The Immaculate Virgin has given her consent.

The archangel disappeared. God clothed Himself with a created nature; the Eternal Will is fulfilled and the creation complete. In the region of the angelic world there was a great jubilation, but the Virgin Mary neither heard nor looked at them. She bowed her head and her soul was immersed in a silence that resembled God's. The Word had become flesh, and although still invisible to the world, He already lived among the men that His immense love had come to rescue. He was not only the Eternal Word; He was the Child Jesus, clothed in the human appearance, and justifying the praise that all generations have given Him in calling Him the most beautiful of the children of men.



THIRD DAY - DECEMBER 18

Thus, the Child Jesus began His life Incarnate. Let us consider the glorious soul and the holy body that He had taken, adoring Him profoundly. Firstly, admiring the soul of that Divine Child. Let us consider in that Soul the fullness of his sanctifying grace, of his beatific science, through which from the very first moment of His life He saw the Divine Essence more clearly than all of the angels, and read the past and the future with all His mysterious knowledge.

Everything He knew was by infusion from the first moment of His being, not by acquisition; but He adopted all the diseases of our nature that He could worthily submit to, even when it was not necessary for the great work He was to accomplish. Let us ask Him that His Divine faculties supplant the weakness of ours and give us new vigor; that His Memory teaches us to remember His Goodness, His Understanding to think of Him, His Will to do nothing but what He wants and all in His service. From the soul of the Child Jesus, we now pass to His Body, which was a world of wonders, a masterpiece of the hand of God.

His Body was not like ours, a hindrance to the soul; on the contrary, it was a new element of holiness. He wanted it to be small and weak like that of children, and subject to all the discomforts of childhood, to be more like us and participate in our humiliations. The Holy Spirit formed that Divine Body with such delicacy and such capacity to feel, that it could suffer the excess to fulfill the great work of our redemption. The beauty of that Divine Body was far superior to any imagined one. The Divine Blood that began to circulate through His veins from the moment of the incarnation is that which washes away all the stains of the guilty world. Let us ask Him to wash us in the sacrament of penance, so that on Christmas He will find us purified, forgiven and willing to receive Him with love to our spiritual benefit.



FOURTH DAY - DECEMBER 19

From His Mother's womb, the Child Jesus began to put in practice His eternal submission to God, which continued without any interruption throughout His entire life. He adored His Eternal Father, He loved Him. He surrendered to His Will. He accepted with resignation the state in which He found Himself, knowing all of its weakness, its humiliation, its discomforts.

Who among us would return to such a state while in full control of our senses and reason? Who could sustain such a prolonged martyrdom knowing full well it would be so pitiful in every way? It was through such a path that the Divine Child began His painful and humiliating journey; it was thus that He began to humble Himself before His Father; to teach us what God deserves from His children; to atone for our pride, the source of all of our sins. We truly desire to pray; let us begin by forming an exact idea contemplating the Child in the womb of His mother.

The Divine Child prays and prays in the most excellent way. He does not speak, nor meditate, nor indulge in tender affections. His very state was accepting of the intention to honor God in His prayer and that state expresses so perfectly all that God deserves and in what way He wants us to worship Him. We unite our prayers to those of the Divine Child in the womb of Mary; we unite ourselves to the profound dejection and that is the first effect of our sacrifice for God. We do not give ourselves to God to be something like what our vanity makes us pretend to be, but rather to be nothing, so we can remain eternally consumed and astonished, to renounce our prideful self-image, of all our greatness even spiritual pride, and all movement toward vainglory. May what we see disappear and only see God as our all.



FIFTH DAY - DECEMBER 20

We have seen the life led by the Infant Jesus in the womb of His Mother most pure. Let us today consider the life led by Mary during that same period of time. Today we need to meditate on this if we want to understand, insofar as it is possible for our limited capacity, the sublime mysteries of the Incarnation and the way in which we are to correspond to them. Mary never ceased aspiring for the moment in which She would enjoy the earthly Beatific Vision; the Face of God Incarnate. She was at the point of seeing that Human Face which would illuminate Heaven eternally. She was going to read the filial love in those very same eyes whose rays would forever scatter joy among millions of chosen ones. She was going to see that Face every day, at all hours, every moment, over many years.

She would witness Him in the apparent ignorance and innocence of infancy, the particular charm of youth, and in the severe reflections of maturity. She would do everything that His Divine Face wanted. She could hold Him to her with all of the freedom of maternal love; cover with kisses He who will judge everyone; contemplate Him with love as He dreamt and woke, until she had learned it by heart.

How ardently did she long for that day? Thus, was the life of pregnant Mary... This was unheard of, but not just for the reason that it was the magnificent type of all Christian life. Let us not content ourselves with admiring Jesus residing in Mary, but rather let us think that in us He also resides through His essence, power and presence. Yes, Jesus is born continually in us and of us through the good works that He makes us capable of, and through our cooperation with grace; through the way that a soul in the state of grace is the perpetual bosom of Mary, an interior Bethlehem without end. After communion Jesus lives in us, for some time, during a moment that is real and substantially like God and man, because the same Child that was in Mary is also in the Blessed Sacrament. What is all of this if not a participation in the life of Mary during those marvelous months, and anticipation full of delight like her?



SIXTH DAY - DECEMBER 21

Let us consider that Jesus had been conceived in Nazareth, where Joseph and Mary lived, and it would have been there, in all probability, where one would have expected Him to be born. However, God had arranged things in another way and the prophets had announced that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem of Judah, city of David. In order to fulfill the prophecy, God made use of a seemingly totally unrelated means; the order given by Emperor Augustus that all subjects of the Roman Empire register for a census in their place of origin.

Mary and Joseph, as descendants of David, were thus obligated to go to Bethlehem. The Blessed Virgin Mary's condition nor the necessity of Joseph to work could secure them survival, nor exempt them from this long and arduous journey, during the most rigorous and inconvenient season of the year. Jesus was aware of where He should be born and He inspired His parents to surrender to Divine Providence, and to subconsciously execute His designs.

Interior souls, observe this direction of the Divine Child, because it is the most important in the spiritual life: learn from who surrendered to God and is no longer belongs to himself, nor does he have to want for anything at any time because he only wants what God wants for him; following blindly even exterior desires, like changing direction of where he wants to go. Occasionally we must observe this dependence and impenetrable fidelity in all of Jesus Christ's life, and this is the point on which the saints and truly interior souls have endeavored to imitate Him, absolutely renouncing their own will.



SEVENTH DAY - DECEMBER 22

Let us consider the trip of Mary and Joseph toward Bethlehem, carrying with them the yet unborn Creator of the Universe, made Man. Let us contemplate upon the humility and obedience of the Divine Child who, although of Jewish race and having loved His people for centuries with an unexplainable predilection, now obeys a foreign ruler's dictate that a census be held, as if He was taking advantage of the moment to fulfill a role as an authentic subject of that ruler from the moment He came to this world.

Joseph's longing and Mary's anticipation are beyond expression in human language. The Eternal Father finds, if we may use this expression, adorably impatient to give His only son to the world and to see Him take His place among visible creatures.

The Holy Spirit burns in desires to present the light of the day in this holy humanity, that He Himself formed with Divine care.



EIGHTH DAY - DECEMBER 23

Joseph and Mary arrive in Bethlehem, seeking shelter in the inns without success, either because they find them full or because of their own poverty. However, nothing can disturb the inner peace of those fixed on God.

If Joseph experienced sadness upon being rejected house by house, thinking of Mary and the Child, he also smiled with holy tranquility upon looking at his chaste spouse. The sound of the closing doors was melodic to His ears. The yet unborn Child delighted in these refusals which were a prelude of His approaching humiliations. This is what He had come to find. The desire for those humiliations had been the motivation for Him to take human form. O Divine Child of Bethlehem! These days that so many spend at parties and amusements, or resting comfortably in rich mansions, were the days that your parents were fatigued and suffered all kinds of humiliations. Oh, the spirit of Bethlehem is that of a world who has forgotten God.

How many times has it been ours too! The sun sets on December 24 behind the rooftops of Bethlehem and its last rays glide over the top of the rugged rocks that surround it. Rude men roughly elbow the Lord in the streets of that eastern village and close their doors when they see His Mother.

The vault of heaven appears glittering above those hills frequented by shepherds. The stars appear one after another. A few more hours and the Eternal Word will be born.



NINTH DAY - DECEMBER 24

The night has completely covered the countryside of Bethlehem. Discarded by the people and without coats, Mary and Joseph left the inhospitable town and took refuge in a cave that was at the foot of the hill. The donkey that had served as a horse during the trip followed the Queen of Angels and in that cave, they found a meek ox, probably left there for a passerby who had gone to seek lodging in the city.

The Divine Child, unknown to His creatures, is going to have to attend to the irrational so that they warm with their breath the icy atmosphere of that winter night, and with this and with their humble attitude they show the respect and adoration that was denied in Bethlehem. The reddish lantern that Joseph held in his hand dimly illuminated that very poor enclosure, that manger full of straw that is a prophetic figure of the wonders of the altar, and of the intimate and prodigious Eucharistic union that Jesus has to contract with men.

Mary is in adoration in the middle of the grotto, and thus the hours of the night full of mysteries pass silently. But now, midnight has arrived, and we suddenly see within that manger, shortly before empty, the Divine Child, expected, foretold, desired during four thousand years with such indescribable longing! At His feet kneels His Most Holy Mother in the depths of an adoration which nothing can approach. Joseph also approaches Him and renders Him homage with which He inaugurates his mysterious and imponderable role of putative father to the Redeemer of mankind.

The multitude of angels descending from Heaven to contemplate this unequalled wonder, vibrate the harmonies of that "Gloria in Excelsis" in the air, which is the echo of the adoration produced before the Throne of the Most High made perceptible for an instant in the ears of the mere earth below. Convened by these angels, groups of shepherds from the area arrive to adore the newly born Child and present their most humble offerings.

The mysterious star of Jacob is already shining in the east, and the splendid caravan of the Magi is already setting off towards Bethlehem, who in a few days will come to deposit gold, frankincense and myrrh at the feet of the Divine Child, which symbolize charity, adoration and mortification. Oh, adorable Child, we too, who have made this novena to prepare for the day of Your birth, want to present our humble adoration. Do not reject it. Come to our souls, come to our hearts full of love.

Ignite in them a devotion to Your Holy infancy. A devotion which, truly practiced and zealously propagated, will guide us to eternal life, freeing us from sin and planting in us all of the Christian virtues.



JOYS OF THE DIVINE INFANT JESUS (DAILY)

Chorus to be sung after each spoken verse:

Come, come, come... come to our souls.

Jesus, come, come, come...

Come to our souls,

Jesus, come to our souls,

Do not delay, do not delay,

Jesus, come, come, come!

My sweet Jesus, my adored Child and Way.

Come to our souls! Come, do not delay!

O Supreme Wisdom, Sovereign God and King, as a child before us, our hope to bring.
O Divine Infant, come to reveal, a truth and a prudence, we can truly feel.

O powerful Adonai who commanded to us through Israel's Moses,
May the Infant show His Mighty arm and rescue us from any harm.

O Sacred Root of Joseph that brings your fragrant scent upon Angel's wings.
Sweetest Child, our anguish healed, "Lily of the Valley, sublime flower of the field."

David's key that opens closed doors, open the royal palace for all who are yours.
O Child with your hand from above release us from this sinful prison by your love!

O Light from the East, Eternal Ray in our night, show us the path, through this earthly fight.
Precious Child, Christians' joy to behold, Whose Smile glows within us, turning back the cold.

Mirror without blemish, Sovereign God Most Holy, erase the guilt of the lowly.
Divine Child Jesus, give the miserable shelter and save the outcast. Come quickly, come fast.



JOYS OF THE DIVINE INFANT JESUS (CONTINUED)

Chorus to be sung after each spoken verse:

Come, come, come... come to our souls.

Jesus, come, come, come...

Come to our souls,

Jesus, come to our souls,

Do not delay, do not delay,

Jesus, come, come, come!

King of nations, Israel's Emmanuel so traced, Shepherd of his people, His flock most embraced
The Child tends His charges with loving staff sound, whether wild sheep or gentle lamb found.

Heavens open wide, with dew and rain from above, benign shower, holy peace of the dove.
Come beautiful child, man's mortality healed, God made man, booming flower of the field.

Come that Mary anticipates her embrace, to hold and behold, Your Heavenly Face.
Come that Joseph, with sacred longing's pine awaits and arranges Your earthly shrine.

Help of the weak, protection in sorrow, solace in affliction, the outcast's tomorrow.
Life of my life, my vision sublime, my constant friend, my Brother Divine.

Look upon my eyes, enamored with Thee, kissing Thy hands, kissing Thy feet.
My arms stretch before You, and beyond my words' tries, my heart does implore you, my now constant cries.

Come our dear Savior, for Whom we do sigh.
Come to our souls! Come, quickly, come by!



DAILY FINAL PRAYER TO THE INFANT JESUS

Remember, O Sweet Child Jesus, You said to the venerable Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament, and through her to all Your devotees, these ever consoling words for our poor suffering and bereaved humanity: "Everything that you ask, ask by the merits of My Infancy and nothing shall be denied of you." Full of confidence in You, O Jesus, Who is Truth Himself, we place our misery before You. Help us to lead a holy life, in order to thus obtain a favorable eternity. Grant us, by the infinite merits of Your incarnation and Infancy, the graces which we need so much. We place ourselves in Your Hands, O Omnipotent Child, certain that our hopes will not be dashed, and that by virtue of Your Divine Promise, You will receive and serve our pleas favorably.

Amen.

