

NOVENA 2016

Together for Europe

Prayer for a New Outpouring
of the Holy Spirit
Throughout the Church and the World

Reflections and impulses for prayer
based on the pleas of the Lord's Prayer

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Throughout the centuries Christians have prayed novenas. Nine days of spiritual preparation for upcoming church holidays and important events.

Novenas serve as a way to focus inwardly and to pray for divine intervention in certain requests.

The Pentecost Novena is a well established tradition. Prayed on the nine days between Ascension Day and Pentecost, it refers to the disciples of Jesus, who retreated in prayer and anticipation of the Holy Spirit.

This is hereby an invitation to all communities and movements of "Together for Europe", to pray this Novena in unity and as preparation for our congress and rally in 2016. It is optional to pray the novena on a personal basis or together as a prayergroup. Please read the suggestions on page 12 to 13.

May the Holy Spirit strengthen our prayers.

Signature:

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Biblical quotations from:
NIV (New International Version – online:
www.bibleserver.com)

FIRST DAY

“Our Father, who is in Heaven”

“You received the spirit of the sonship. And by him we cry: ‘Abba, Father!’” Romans 8:15

Impulse: We are Gods children and we are allowed to call him “Abba, Father”. There is deep intimacy, closeness and familiarity in this. God loves it, when we come to him, calling him lovingly our “Dad”. We can share all our joy, our sorrows and our concerns of the heart with him. He is always willing to listen to us and has a sympathetic ear for our pleas. Having God as our father also means that all his other sons and daughters are our brothers and sisters. Together, in all variety and across all denominational barriers, we can set out for the next nine days, in praying this novena together to our Father.

Prayer: Father, I exalt and praise you for your love for us and for being so close to us. Together with my brothers and sisters I pray: Pour out your holy spirit in our time! Renew the face of the earth by your love and power. Grant unity amongst your children and help us, to prepare ourselves inwardly and outwardly for the upcoming congress and rally “Together for Europe”.

Finally: Intentions of the day and the Lord’s Prayer

SECOND DAY

“Hallowed be your name”

“And Mary said: ‘My soul glorifies the Lord... For the Mighty One has done great things for me, holy is his name’”

Luke 1:46.49

Impulse: We cannot think big enough of God. He will always be greater. Especially, when he minimizes himself and his word becomes flesh living among us by the power of the Holy Spirit. – His name is a mystery: I am who I am. Success is not one of God’s names. It is blasphemy to pronounce violence and war in the name of God. We will always have to learn to glorify HIS name.

Prayer: Holy God, none of our praise expresses the greatness of your name. Only your son was worthy to praise you. He exalted you through his life and love, his words and deeds, his suffering and death. Lead by him we can proclaim: Abba, Father, hallowed be your name! Pour out your Spirit throughout Christianity to exalt your name by brothers and sisters living together in unity. “Not to us, Lord, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.” (Ps 115: 1)

Almighty God, you are perfect unity and communion. Glorify your name as unity enhances among all Christians.

Finally: Intentions of the day and the Lord’s Prayer

THIRD DAY

“Your kingdom come“

“Jesus said: ‘The time has come. The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!’” Mk 1:15

Impulse: Jesus proclaims that the loving sovereignty of God, that his kingdom has come near. It is Jesus’ most inner wish to preach the good news and to invite people trusting his Father. He talks about the kingdom of God in symbols and parables; it shines through all he is doing. People get healed and delivered from evil forces, living and breathing again. It is the mission that Jesus asked his disciples to fulfil: to preach the kingdom of God and reveal it in life bringing signs. He wants to enhance his healing lordship in and through us. May the kingdom of the Father light up our parishes and churches, may his kingdom spread throughout our country and all over the world.

Prayer: Abba, Father who art in Heaven, may your healing lordship come today. Overcome all hindrances in me with your love. Grant me today the resolution to seek at first your kingdom and your righteousness. All the people I love and those I am responsible for, I command to your healing sovereignty. Awaken the powers of life and overcome everything that destroys life in our society and our culture. I await your clear and loving work today.

Finally: Intentions of the day and the Lord’s Prayer

FOURTH DAY

“Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven”

“I desire to do your will, my God; your law is within my heart.” Ps 40: 8

Impulse: How the will of God can become reality in my life and not remain an abstract term? One possibility might be gratefulness. Paul gives us a helpful instruction in 1. Thess 5:18: “Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus.” Giving thanks promotes in us being attentive and astonished, e.g. how marvellous Gods work is in creation. Gratefulness leads me to a new perspective for my life and the world. Gratefulness is like water to the desert or a candle in the night. With a lifestyle of gratefulness we gain a fulfilling life that has a positive effect on our environment. That is how God’s will be done among us.

Prayer: Father in Heaven, I am grateful for showing us your will. I ask you with all my brothers and sisters to help us leading a life of gratefulness. We thank you for the upcoming congress and rally and ask your will to be done in all planning, preparing and performing.

Finally: Intentions of the day and the Lord’s Prayer

FIFTH DAY

“Give us our daily bread”

“How much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!” Matthew 7:11b

Impulse: Also mundane things have its place with God! The daily bread we ask for stands for a lot of things we need in life: food, attention, provision, safety etc.

God has no problem to provide us with everything we need. On the opposite, he does not want us to lack anything. He loves to reward his children. Anyhow, we shall not take his gifts for granted but to trust in his grace and ask for anything we need, like we would do to anyone we relate to. He is the giver of all gifts.

Prayer: Father, we ask you today to provide for the congress: Grant power, wisdom and joy to all those in responsibility. Send people to staff with their gifts and competences. We also ask you for your blessing on all the finances for the congress and rally, that all costs will be covered. We command ourselves with all our questions and sufferings to your care. We ask you for protection that no one will be harmed by any accident or difficulties.

Finally: Intentions of the day and the Lord’s Prayer

SIXTH DAY

“Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us”

**“And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”
Mk 11:25**

Impulse: Forgiveness can be compared with a coin that receives its value by double coining. In forgiving my neighbour and also myself God heals my life. One side of the coin is God given forgiveness which comes for free. The other side of the coin represents me forgiving those who have hurt me. It is God’s will for us to pass on forgiveness he offers us to live free and delivered by sin against God, ourselves and our neighbours. An unforgiving attitude destroys any relationship.

Prayer: Father in Heaven, we thank you for opening the way to you by offering forgiveness to us. Lord Jesus, we thank you for paying the price for our sins. Holy Spirit we ask you to help us living forgiveness towards ourselves and our neighbours so that the love and unity amongst us may be experienced. Bless the upcoming congress and rally with openness for forgiveness and reconciliation, that doors will be opened and walls torn down.

Finally: Intentions of the day and the Lord’s Prayer

SEVENTH DAY

“Lead us not into temptation”

“Why are you sleeping?” he asked them. “Get up and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. Lk 22:46

Impulse: There is no challenge for the enemy in dealing with sleepy Christians. The Lord wants us to be awake and praying. Authentic prayer makes us being wholehearted and honest. We cannot show off before God. The indigenous temptation lies within avoiding God and to not listen to his words but lingering around idols. We have hidden those idols like blind ambition, our career, striving for success, taking centre stage or prevailing.

Prayer: Do not let us fall down! If it happened, help us getting up. You know our weaknesses. Grant us strength if temptation misleads us from the way of unity you have shown us. Help us being observant. Do not let us accept the division among your people and striving for less than Jesus who prayed: “I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one – I in them and you in me – so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” John 17:22.23

Finally: Intentions of the day and the Lord’s Prayer

EIGHTH DAY

“Deliver us from evil“

“Take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.” Eph 6:16

Impulse: The last plea in the Lord’s Prayer is a cry for help towards God: “Deliver us from the mighty evil!” When we experience a difficult situation, being offended from the inside or outside or struggle with sin, we are called to find shelter in our faith. It is like a shield against the evil when we hold on to the Father of Jesus Christ. Relying on God we pray: “We are yours. You will deliver us for you are our Father today and forever.” God has given everything to redeem us – his son. There is nothing stronger than Jesus’ love for us, neither sin nor death. The love of Christ will conquer the evil one.

Prayer: Abba, Father of Jesus Christ, deliver us from this dark situation; deliver us from men who combat us. I trust your love. You have sent Jesus, your son. He has conquered sin and overcome death. I command us to his shelter. Grant us strength to overcome evil with good in the name of your son Jesus Christ. Grant us love stronger than fear and mistrust.

Finally: Intentions of the day and the Lord’s Prayer

NINETH DAY

“Yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever”

“The kingdom of God is in your midst! “ Lk 17:21

Impulse: Beyond all our pleas for our intentions, we have to be aware that we have also reason to rejoice and be hopeful! The kingdom of God, his presence among us, his glorious love, and the unity of his people – all that we are longing for is already happening among us. It is not yet perfect but fragmented and hidden but we can experience its reality. This is what we are living for and moving towards, this is what has become real with Jesus Christ. The kingdom of God is among us! As children of God we are shareholders of his kingdom, his power and glory!

Prayer: Lord, help us to not lose the foundation of our hope! Help us to understand in a more profound way what it means to be rooted in you and to take a share in your kingdom. Thank you for appointing me an heir as your daughter/son over your kingdom. Thank you for experiencing the power of your Holy Spirit in my life today. Thank you for your glory you show us already today. I ask you for the upcoming congress and rally “Together for Europe”: Open our eyes to your presence and work among us when we are gathered. Let us work on your kingdom, let us experience your power and glory!

Finally: Intentions of the day and the Lord’s Prayer

Here are some suggestions how you could implement this novena in your prayer life:

Time:

The novena could be used as model for your daily personal prayer.

- It is recommended to pray the novena on the usual days of the Pentecost novena: starting with Ascension until Pentecost 2016.
- Also, you could pray it the nine days before the congress starts to prepare those days in united prayer.
- As well, it is possible to pray the novena on a weekly basis, one certain day of the week over nine weeks long.

The novena could be prayed in communities, prayer groups or as Saturday night event, also on a pilgrimage.

- It is recommended to join once a week to pray one day of the novena together.
- Used in common prayer one could include a biblical discussion about the plea in question taken from the Lord's Prayer between impulse and prayer.

Closure of the prayer session:

There are different options to close the prayer session. It could be handy to choose one option for all nine sessions.

- Pray the Lord's Prayer out loud slowly. Include a period of silence after every plea.
- Praying the Lord's Prayer and including a certain intention or person: e.g. Father who art in heaven, hallowed be your name in my

family/community/during the congress, your kingdom come in my family/community/during the congress...

- Singing or praying the Pentecost sequence slowly followed up by the Lord's Prayer.
- A time of personal intercession or praise and worship closed by the Lord's Prayer.

The Lord's Prayer – intercession and everyday-life

If you include your prayer in your everyday-life, it will help you saying your prayer and dealing with your day:

- Take some time in certain moments every day when you repeat those pleas of the Lord's Prayer in your heart, e.g. sitting in your car or on the train on your way to work, before having lunch, on your way back home. It is important that you link the prayer to a certain act you perform every day.
- You might want to get back to the novena during the night – ask yourself: What could I pray for? What could I say thank you for that is linked to the plea of the Lord's Prayer today?

Veni, Sancte Spiritus

Holy Spirit, Lord of Light,
From the clear celestial height.
Thy pure beaming radiance give.

Come, thou Father of the poor,
Come, with treasures which endure;
Come, thou Light of all that live!

Thou, of all consolers best,
Thou, the soul's delightful guest,
Dost refreshing peace bestow.

Thou in toil art comfort sweet;
Pleasant coolness in the heat;
Solace in the midst of woe.

Light immortal, Light divine,
Visit thou these hearts of thine,
And our inmost being fill.

If thou take thy grace away,
Nothing pure in man will stay;
All his good is turned to ill.

Heal our wounds, our strength renew;
On our dryness pour thy dew,
Wash the stains of guilt away.

Bend the stubborn heart and will;
Melt the frozen, warm the chill;
Guide the steps that go astray.

Thou, on us who evermore
Thee confess and thee adore,
With thy sevenfold gifts descend.

Give us comfort when we die;
Give us life with thee on high;
Give us joys that never end.
Amen. Alleluia.

<http://www.catholicity.com/prayer/sequence-for-the-solemnity-of-Pentecost.html>