

Thy Kingdom come!

NOVENA TO THE SACRED HEART



REGNUM CHRISTI

ATLANTA

OPENING PRAYER FOR EACH DAY

Lord Jesus, true God and true man, in this novena dedicated to the Sacred Heart we want to thank you for the gift of having encountered you and having experienced your love for us. This experience gives meaning to our entire lives.

Everything about you, Lord – your gestures, your words, your glances – reflects the sentiments of your Heart. The intensity of your divine love reveals itself to us through the humanity which you assumed as Son of the Virgin Mary. We needed God to love us in this way: with intimacy, tenderness, and a human heart.

Make us not fear to live in deep intimacy with you, following the example of Saint John, who rested his head on your breast in the hour of suffering. May Saint John, who teaches us to “look on him whom they have pierced,” help us to always keep our eyes fixed on this Heart wounded for us, from which infinite treasures of grace and mercy are poured out on all people without ceasing.

Allow us to grow in knowing you intimately through the Gospel, the cross and the Eucharist, so that we can correspond more fully with our love to Love itself.

You entrusted to us the same grace as you did to St. Paul, “the very least of all the holy ones, ... to preach to the Gentiles the inscrutable riches of Christ” (cf. Eph 3:8). Make us always faithful to this mission.

V/ “As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love” (John 15:9).

R/ “As I have loved you, so you also should love one another” (John 13:34).

1st DAY. A merciful heart

V/ “Go and learn the meaning of the words, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ I did not come to call the righteous but sinners” (Matt 9:13).

R/ *The Lord replied: "I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. Get up now, and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness of what you have seen of me and what you will be shown" (Acts 26:15b-16).*

V/ *Your Merciful Heart, Lord, raises the needy from the dust, lifts the poor from the ash heap (Ps 113:7), and transforms and renews our life. May the certainty of your unconditional love for us move us to turn to you for pardon time and time again and so to rejoice in the love and peace of those who find rest in your mercy.*

R/ *"I have appeared to you for this purpose, to appoint you as a servant and witness of what you have seen of me and what you will be shown.*

2nd DAY. A gentle heart

V/ *"I say to you, offer no resistance to one who is evil. When someone strikes you on your right cheek, turn the other one to him as well" (Matt 5:39).*

R/ *When he had said this, one of the temple guards standing there struck Jesus and said, "Is this the way you answer the high priest?" Jesus answered him, "If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?" (John 18:22-23).*

V/ *It was written, Lord, that you, the most handsome of men would ride in the cause of truth, meekness and justice (Ps 45:3.5). Teach us that the supreme beauty of your Heart springs from your gentleness, which amazes us so much. Show the world the true face of God.*

R/ *"If I have spoken wrongly, testify to the wrong; but if I have spoken rightly, why do you strike me?"*

3rd DAY. A humble heart

V/ *"Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for yourselves" (Matt 11:29).*

R/ The people were astonished and said, "Where did this man get such wisdom and mighty deeds? Is he not the carpenter's son?" (Matt 13:54-55).

*V/ Our desire to stand in the limelight, to be appreciated and to be taken into account tires us out. Teach us the value of a life with you, *hidden in God* (Col 3:3), consumed like *incense before you* (Ps 141:2) to give glory to you alone.*

R/ "Is he not the carpenter's son?"

4th DAY. The heart of a servant

V/ "Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival. Amen, I say to you, he will gird himself, have them recline at table, and proceed to wait on them" (Luke 12:37).

R/ Jesus, fully aware that the Father had put everything into his power and that he had come from God and was returning to God, rose from supper and took off his outer garments. He took a towel and tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel around his waist (John 13:3-5).

*V/ Lord, you told us that you did not come *to be served but to serve* (Matt 20:28). Help us to imitate your spirit of service here on earth so that when you come to seek us you will find us watching. Then, Lord, bring us to the Kingdom where you yourself will draw near and serve us at your table.*

R/ He began to wash the disciples' feet and dry them with the towel around his waist.

5th DAY. The heart of a child

V/ Meanwhile, the disciples urged him, "Rabbi, eat." But he said to them, "I have food to eat of which you do not know." So the disciples said to one another, "Could someone have brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of the one who sent me and to finish his work" (John 4:31-34).

R/ Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword into its scabbard. Shall I not drink the cup that the Father gave me?" (John 18:11).

V/ Jesus, your food is to place yourself with full confidence in the hands of the Father, because obedience unites you completely with Him. Help us to understand that the Christian life consists in passing from orphanhood and solitude to the joy of being children, and from the slavery of our own whims to the liberty of a trusting obedience to the Father.

R/ "Shall I not drink the cup that Father gave me?"

6th DAY. A clean heart

V/ "The lamp of the body is your eye. When your eye is sound, then your whole body is filled with light, but when it is bad, then your body is in darkness. Take care, then, that the light in you not become darkness" (Luke 11:34-35).

R/ "Why are you anxious about clothes? Learn from the way the wild flowers grow. They do not work or spin. But I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them" (Matt 6:28-29).

*V/ Jesus, all of creation is transparent before your pure gaze, since in all things you contemplate the glory of the Father and see parables of his love for us. Do not allow that the darkness within us obscure our own gaze at the world which you created *very good* (Gen 1:31) nor impede us from seeing the work which you build up without ceasing in the hearts of people.*

R/ "Not even Solomon in all his splendor was clothed like one of them."

7th DAY. A heart thirsting with love

V/ A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink" (John 4:7).

R/ After this, aware that everything was now finished, in order that the scripture might be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I thirst" (John 19:28).

V/ Lord, throughout your life on earth you showed how much you thirsted for love. When you found yourself rejected on the cross, you wanted to show to all ages that you continued to love your small creature, crying out to us that you thirst. Lord, may the

Scripture be fulfilled, and may your Kingdom of love reach all the earth *as water covers the sea* (Isa 11:9).

R/ He said, "I thirst."

8th DAY. A wide open heart

V/ On the last and greatest day of the feast, Jesus stood up and exclaimed, "Let anyone who thirsts come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as scripture says: 'Rivers of living water will flow from within him'" (John 7:37-38).

R/ One soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out (John 19:34).

*V/ Jesus, the entire fruit of your sacrifice sprang out from your open side. Rivers of living water flowed from your Heart, water at the price of blood, redemption and grace without cost and without measure. Since then, Lord, *God's stream is filled with water* (Ps 65:10), holiness is within reach of all, and you, Lord, are the one who gives us to drink.*

R/ Immediately blood and water flowed out.

9th DAY. A glorious heart that desires to extend his Kingdom of love

V/ Jesus approached and said to them, "All power in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age." (Matt 28:19-20).

R/ "Do not be afraid. I am the first and the last, the one who lives. Once I was dead, but now I am alive forever and ever. I hold the keys to death and the netherworld" (Rev 1:17-18).

V/ Free of fear of death and of the netherworld, certain that our love cannot die, we want to help all people, our brothers and sisters, to live the new life that is born of baptism. Christ, you who are the first and the last, just as our encounter with you was the origin of our resurrected life, may it also be our final resting place in heaven.

R/ "I hold the keys to death and the netherworld."

CLOSING PRAYER

V/ *Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus (Phil 2:5).*

R/ *I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me (Gal 2:20).*

V/ Father, we ask you to grant that Christ dwell in our hearts through faith, and that we may be rooted and grounded in love. In this way, may we come to comprehend with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge (see Eph 3:17-19), and who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever.

R/ Amen.