



Sacred Heart Novena 2020

By David Stewart SJ

Thursday 11th June to Friday 19th June 2020

How to Pray This Novena

Set aside about ten minutes each day. Take your time over the words you read. Linger over a word or a phrase. Think about its meaning. Share your feelings with Jesus, and wait quietly to see what comes into your mind and heart. Blessed John Sullivan tells us that God is delighted to see us, even if we don't know what to say. God has our best interests at heart.

Beginning of each day

Prayer Moment

Let the Spirit of God lead you to a place of interior stillness and then allow yourself to become aware of God's gaze on you, full of love and hope for you. That gaze is sustaining and life-giving. Ask, in your heart, for a deepening, interior awareness of how you depend on God for your existence.

Novena prayer

Lord Jesus, you have said, 'Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you'. I come to you in faith and trust, in love and hope. Let me know your closeness to me, and your care for me and all who are dear to me.

My intention for this Novena is dear to me, and I know that what is important to me is important to you. Hear my prayer (mention your intention); grant what I ask, and may I always trust that in all that happens in life, you will be close to me as my friend, guide and saviour. And so, Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in you.

Day 1: Thursday 11 June

God sustains my life

SCRIPTURAL MOMENT:

LORD, our Sovereign, how majestic is your name in all the earth!
When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars that you have established;
what are human beings that you are mindful of them,
mortals that you care for them?
(Psalm 8)

MOMENT FOR REFLECTION: Stay with the idea of your dignity as a child of God for as much time as you can manage today. Thank God for this. Notice what moves in your heart and your soul as you ponder these things.

THE DESIRE: That I may know my utter dependency on God for my being and that I may wonder at the miracle of my own personal existence.

End with the Novena prayer

Day 2: Friday 12 June

God's faithfulness to me

SCRIPTURAL MOMENT:

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.
He makes me lie down in green pastures;
he leads me beside still waters;
he restores my soul.
He leads me in right paths
for his name's sake. (Psalm 23)

MOMENT FOR REFLECTION: Note any new awareness, or repetition of an awareness you already have, of God's care for you. What was happening in your own personal life when this inner knowledge became real for you? If, at this moment, you feel a deepening of

that awareness, however little, stay with it.

THE DESIRE: That I may know a deep confidence in God's caring for me, as I continue to wonder at my own personal existence.

End with the Novena prayer

Day 3: Saturday 13 June

God gives Godself to me, to us ...

SCRIPTURAL MOMENT:

When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, 'What are you looking for?' They said to him, 'Rabbi' (which translated means teacher), 'where are you staying?' He said to them, 'Come and see.' (John 1:35-39)

MOMENT FOR REFLECTION: Gently think about ways in which you've sensed God's call and indeed God's challenge to you. Ask to know that more deeply, more authentically; ask, too for the grace to respond generously, that you may not be deaf to his call. Stay with whatever emerges in your reflection as long as you can; offer your desires to the Heart of Christ and, if a conversation with Christ grows out of your prayer, let it.

THE DESIRE: That I may be more aware of how God calls me and of my freedom to respond.

End with the Novena prayer

Day 4: Sunday 14 June

Resistance to God's call

SCRIPTURAL MOMENT:

Jesus straightened up and said to her, 'Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?' She said, 'No one, sir.' And Jesus said, 'Neither do I

condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.' (John 8:1–11)
MOMENT FOR REFLECTION: Become as honest as you can be about your selfishness, too much self-regard, self-righteousness and not enough humility, not enough openness to other people and their goodness. In your prayer, speak to Jesus about these things; let him respond to you with mercy and compassion.

THE DESIRE: Asking for a profound, peaceful, personal sorrow for any infidelity to God's call.

End with the Novena prayer

Day 5: Monday 15 June

God's attitude towards us

SCRIPTURAL MOMENT:

He began to shout out and say, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' Jesus stood still and said, 'Call him here.'

(Mark 10:46–52)

MOMENT FOR REFLECTION: Have you ever thought of yourself as a 'loved sinner'? Or have you felt more a condemned sinner, wedged irretrievably in the consequences of sins, hopelessly caught up in your own sinfulness and that of the world? Our honesty & humility in prayer can help us to realise that we are not trapped and that it's God's desire to forgive, not to condemn. Speak, in your heart, to God about how much you want to know that fact interiorly. St Ignatius suggests, in a wonderful passage of the *Spiritual Exercises*, that I might ask for the grace to express a 'heartfelt cry of wonder' at the forgiveness and

mercy that has been given to me.

THE DESIRE: A joyful awareness that I am a loved sinner, a heartfelt knowledge of God's compassion.

End with the Novena prayer

Day 6: Tuesday 16 June

Knowing the person of Jesus

SCRIPTURAL MOMENT:

He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives

and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free,

to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour. (Luke 4:14–32)

MOMENT FOR REFLECTION: Take a few moments to think about how Jesus described his mission. He has something more than just an impressive display to offer. His care was for those in need and this led to the rejection he experienced, not least in his own hometown, but everywhere.

THE DESIRE: That I may know Jesus, become human for me, more intimately, love him more intensely and follow him more closely.

End with the Novena prayer

Day 7: Wednesday 17 June

Jesus moves towards his cross

SCRIPTURAL MOMENT:

As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus.

(Luke 23:26–26)

MOMENT FOR REFLECTION: Later in the passion account, Jesus was clearly seen and heard to forgive, from the very cross, moments before his death by execution. His physical agony would have been intense. Yet he could, at that moment, still speak of mercy. We can ask for an interior knowledge of what he was going through. We can ponder, also, the ways in which his heart will continue to go through agonies today. Reflect, then, on where he is crucified in our times, in the innocent, poor and weak for whom he came into our history.

THE DESIRE: That I may feel sorrow with Christ sorrowful, anguish with Christ in anguish, and that the reality of the mercy of God might reveal itself to me in the Passion of Jesus.

End with the Novena prayer

Day 8: Thursday 18 June

Jesus as he continues to his cross

SCRIPTURAL MOMENT: These things occurred so that the scripture might be fulfilled, 'None of his bones shall be broken.' And again another passage of scripture says, 'They will look on the one whom they have pierced.' (John 19:34)

MOMENT FOR REFLECTION: One of the soldiers, we hear, pierced the side of Jesus with his lance, penetrating to his heart, and out of his pierced side flowed blood and water. There is a tradition in the Church of thinking of this outpouring, from the Heart of Christ, as a fountain of sacramental life. We can ask, also, his mother Mary, one of the very few who remained close to the cross when most of the others fled, to share with us what was in her heart at this moment, the sword

that pierced her heart.

THE DESIRE: That I may know Jesus, become human for me, more intimately, love him more intensely and follow him more closely. To feel sorrow and anguish with him.

End with the Novena prayer

Day 9: Friday 19 June

Risen Christ, risen christian!

SCRIPTURAL MOMENT: We can ponder any of the appearances of the risen Christ in this time, perhaps particularly the Emmaus Road encounter (Luke 24:13-35) and how, for the two former disciples trudging wearily homewards, their great adventure apparently having failed, something unmistakably marvellous happened in their hearts. This sudden moment of consolation, not of their own doing, changed everything for them. Look also at the next passage, Luke 24:36-43, when he offers peace to his frightened friends.

MOMENT FOR REFLECTION: We can't imagine what the actual resurrection was like because it's too much for us, but what we can imagine is how it must have been for those dejected followers who, after the events of Calvary, had thought everything was over. Think of the way Jesus appeared to the disciples many times. Imagine the Risen Christ offering his peace to the world and to you. Talk to him; tell him what you feel you need.

THE DESIRE: To experience, interiorly and deeply, joy with Christ risen, the joy he wants to share with his friends as he comes back to them, having overcome all darkness, all sin.

End with the Novena prayer