

Novena in Honor of the Blood of Christ

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Forward

Devotion to the Precious Blood of Jesus has a long and profound history within the popular devotions of people of faith. This is especially true of the traditional devotions of Latin America. This novena is an English version from the Spanish.

At the beginning of the 19th century the title “Precious Blood” or “Most Precious Blood” was accepted by the Catholic Church, largely through the efforts of Saint Gaspar del Bufalo. At any rate, devotion to the Precious Blood is deep in the hearts of believing praying Christians. Blessed Pope John XXIII added, “Blessed be the Precious Blood of Jesus,” to the Divine Praises in the rite of Benediction. He gave the Church the official version of the Litany of the Precious Blood.

Traditional devotions to the blood of Christ center upon the seven blood sheddings of Jesus. This novena addresses these seven blood sheddings of Jesus but there is a solid scriptural and theological orientation for every day of the novena.

The prayers of the novena are addressed directly to God the Father, under the title of “Eternal Father.” Many of the prayers are taken directly from the Roman Missal (without specific references.) The individual petitions are only suggestions. Each person or group is invited to make their own prayers.

Every day of the novena has a specific theme. The opening prayer is read every day. The scriptural references can be used for reflection and study day by day. In a community setting one or more appropriate hymns can be sung.

It is our hope and prayer that the novena will serve as a sincere devotion and prayer that will inspire and deepen a living of the spirituality of the Precious Blood of Christ.

Fr. Ernie

Father Ernest Ranly, C.P.P.S.
Missionary of the Precious Blood



Opening Prayer for Every Day

O God, our heavenly Father, out of love for the human family, you willed your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, to be our Redeemer through the shedding of his blood.

Blessing and thanksgiving be evermore to Jesus.
Who with his blood has saved us.

We give you thanks for the gift of our Lord's blood, which he shed until the last drop for our salvation. May the blood of Jesus, shed for us, purify us and protect us from all evil.

In the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we drink the blood of the new and eternal covenant. May it give us peace and may it unite us with all the human family, especially with the poor and the marginalized.

May the Precious Blood of Jesus become for us the blood of life, of unity and of peace. May this mystery of love and grace fill our hearts with the Holy Spirit. United with the Blood of Christ, may we participate with Christ in the work of redeeming our world of today.

Praise to the blood of Jesus.
Now and forever. Amen.

Day One: Blood Is Life

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Opening prayer (p. 4)

Presentation

“Then the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.’” (Luke 1: 30)

“When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the infant leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth filled with the holy spirit.” (Luke 1: 41)

“We should love one another, unlike Cain who belonged to the evil one and slaughtered his brother. The way we came to know love was that he laid down his life for us; so we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.” (1 John 3: 11, 12, 16)

Reflection

Jesus, our Redeemer, who comes from God the Father, was conceived in Mary by the Holy Spirit. He shares with us the totality of our humanity. Mary, his mother, and Elizabeth, understood perfectly well that blood is life, life is blood. The son of Elizabeth, St. John the Baptist, “leapt in her womb”. Mary gave living birth to Jesus in a stable on the outskirts of Bethlehem. Jesus, boy and youth, lived a healthy life with his human blood.

Blood shed violently, like the blood of Abel, cries out to heaven for justice and reconciliation. In today’s world, there are many cries of blood: cries of the victims of violence, of the tortured, of abused and aborted children, and of the poor. Do we hear the shouts of blood in today’s world? In these cries, the Blood of Christ, which speaks better than that of Abel, begs the Father for reconciliation and pardon.

Meditation

“Yes, God so loved the world that He gave His only son that whoever believes in Him may not die but may have eternal

life. God did not send the son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world may be saved through Him. Whoever believes in Him avoids condemnation.” (John 3: 16-18)

Resolutions:

- How can I get closer each day to God through the Precious Blood of his Son?
- How can I meditate and contemplate personally on the mystery of the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus?
- Do I hear the cry of Christ’s blood in today’s violence and injustice?

Final prayer

Eternal father, creator of the universe, God of life, you have created us in your image and likeness. We are living creatures through blood. You listen to the cries of the blood of your Son Jesus that calls to heaven for reconciliation and pardon. Help us be attentive to the cries of the blood of our brothers and sisters. Preserve in us the work of your love, so that, remembering always the mystery of our salvation, we are able to integrate in our daily lives this very mystery. Through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord. Amen

Our Father ...

Glory to the Father ...

V. Praise and thanksgiving be evermore to Jesus.

R. Who with his blood has saved us.

V. Glory to the Blood of Jesus!

R. Now and forever. Amen.

Day two: Jesus Sheds Blood in the Circumcision

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Opening prayer (p. 4)

Presentation

“When eight days were completed for his circumcision, he was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.” (Luke 2: 21)

Reflection

For the Jewish people the circumcision of male children was a sign of the covenant of belonging to the people of God. It was also a sign of professed fidelity to God. The circumcision of Jesus expressed his identification with the people of Israel, showing that Jesus was clearly human.

Mary and Joseph, faithful to the traditions of their people and what the Law of Moses commanded, fulfilled these precepts. Therefore, on the 8th day after his birth, they offered his life to God, in the rite of circumcision. In this moment also they gave a name to the recently born child. Mary and Joseph gave him the name of Jesus, which signifies Savior.

Meditation

“Though he was in the form of God, he did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at. Rather, he emptied himself and took the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men. He was known to be of human estate, and it was thus that he humbled himself, obediently accepting even death, death on a cross.” (Philippians 2: 6-8)

Resolutions

- To respect and obey both church and civil law.
- To renew our baptismal promises.

- To accept with dignity and respect, our sexuality.

Final prayer

Eternal Father, we offer you the Precious Blood of Jesus shed in the circumcision.

In the fullness of time, you sent your only Son, born of a woman, born under the Law. Help us to live in our lives the true spirit of laws. In Baptism we have become your children, the new people of God. Preserve in us your strength to be able to live with dignity and confidence, our sexuality. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen

Our Father ...

Glory to the Father ...

V. Praise and thanksgiving be evermore to Jesus.

R. Who with his blood has saved us.

V. Glory to the Blood of Jesus!

R. Now and forever. Amen.

Day three: Jesus Sheds Blood in the Agony in the Garden

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Opening prayer (p. 4)

Presentation

“Then going out he went, as was his custom, to the Mount of Olives, and the disciples followed him. When he arrived at the place he said to them, ‘Pray that you may not undergo the test.’ After withdrawing about a stone’s throw from them and kneeling, he prayed, saying, ‘Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me; still, not my will but yours be done.’ And to strengthen him an angel from heaven appeared to him. He was in such agony and he prayed so fervently that his sweat became like drops of blood falling on the ground.” (Luke 22: 39–44)

Reflection

Jesus is emotional and anguished before his death on the cross. With a few apostles he goes to the Garden of Olives to pray. “Take this cup from me; yet not my will but yours be done.” Only in the gospel of St. Luke, does Jesus shed blood in the agony in the garden. Here Jesus appears as an athlete before a competition. He feels the need to gather his energy. In this context, the angel is like a trainer who accompanies Jesus in his preparation before his struggle. His agony is so intense that his sweat changes to drops of blood. His sweat is no sign of anxiety and fear, but the result of physical and mental force.

Meditation

“In the days when he was in the flesh, he offered prayers and supplications with loud cries and tears to the one who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence.” (Hebrews 5: 7)

Resolutions

- To put the difficult decisions of life in the hands of God.
- To ask God to make good decisions.
- To do always the will of God.

Final prayer

Eternal father, we offer you the Blood of Jesus shed in the Garden of Olives. Jesus Christ, your son, during the days of his mortal life, presented prayers and supplications with great shouts and tears, which could save him from death. He was heard because, as your suffering Son, he humbly obeyed. Give us, oh Father, through the blood of Jesus shed in the Garden of Olives, the strength and perseverance to fulfill your will. Through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Our Father ...

Glory to the Father ...

V. Praise and thanksgiving be evermore to Jesus.

R. Who with his blood has saved us.

V. Glory to the Blood of Jesus!

R. Now and forever. Amen.

Day four: Jesus Sheds Blood in the Scourging

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Opening prayer (p. 4)

Presentation

“Then he released Barabbas to them, but after he had Jesus scourged, he handed him over to be crucified.” (Matthew 27: 26)

Reflection

After the prayer in the Garden of Olives, Judas betrayed Jesus with a kiss, and he was taken away to one tribunal after another. Pilate did not find fault to judge, torture, and condemn Jesus. Nevertheless, for political reasons, and to maintain his image before the Jews and before Roman authorities, he gave Jesus over to be scourged. The legal custom of the time assigned at least forty strokes of a whip. Because of this torture, Jesus shed much blood.

Today many innocent people are judged, tortured, and condemned because of the injustice and corruption of the authorities. The blood of Jesus shed in the scourging cries to heaven for justice, compassion, and respect for human rights.

Meditation

“Praise be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has bestowed on us in Christ every spiritual blessing in the heavens! It is in Christ and through his blood that we have been redeemed and our sins forgiven. So immeasurably generous is God’s favor to us.” (Ephesians 1: 3,7,8)

Resolutions

- To see Jesus suffering in the scourging in those victims of unjust torture.
- To recognize that the prisoners of war, hostages, the condemned are our brothers and sisters in Christ.

- To define an ethics of justice for all civil authorities.

Final prayer

Eternal Father, we offer you the Precious Blood of Jesus shed in the scourging. Accept it in recompense for the loss of so much innocent blood in the world. We ask for justice and a world ethic in defense of the rights of all of humanity. We understand that your loving Son suffered in obedience, and that each stroke that he received from the whip was an act of sacrifice and of love for the redemption of the world. Father of mercy, may your mercy never abandon us. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Our Father ...

Glory to the Father ...

V. Praise and thanksgiving be evermore to Jesus.

R. Who with his blood has saved us.

V. Glory to the Blood of Jesus!

R. Now and forever. Amen.

Day five: Jesus Sheds Blood in the Crowning of the Thorns

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Opening prayer (p. 4)

Presentation

“The soldiers led him away inside the palace, that is, the praetorium, and assembled the whole cohort. They clothed him in purple and, weaving a crown of thorns, placed it on him. They began to salute him with, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ and kept striking his head with a reed and spitting upon him. They knelt before him in homage. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the purple cloak, dressed him in his own clothes, and led him out to crucify him.” (Mark 15: 16–20)

Reflection

The process of the physical and psychological torture of Jesus continues. In the crowning with thorns, blood flows copiously from the head and countenance of Jesus. The cruelty of the Roman troops knows no limits. They ridicule Jesus not only because he is a king but because he is a Jew. Pilate questioned Jesus: “Are you the king of the Jews?” Jesus, without denying his identity and maintaining his dignity, answered: “My kingdom is not of this world.”

The psychological violence perhaps causes more pain than the physical violence. Caricatures, insults, jokes against our brothers and sisters are a type of violence, an example of spilling of their blood.

Meditation

“Though he was in the form of God, he did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at. Rather, he emptied himself and took the form of a slave, being born in the likeness of men. He was known to be of human estate, and it was thus that he humbled himself, obediently accepting even death, death on a cross.” (Philippians 2: 6–8)

Resolutions

- Never look down on anyone for reasons of race, for color of skin, for a different culture, for one's social class or religion.
- To pray that the leaders of the world promote laws that respect the rights of all persons.
- To recognize Jesus, crowned with thorns, as my true king: eternal and universal king, king of truth and life, king of sanctity and grace, king of justice, of love and of peace.

Final prayer

Eternal Father, we offer you the Precious Blood of Jesus shed in the crowning with thorns. Make all creation, liberated from the slavery of sin, serve your majesty, and glorify you without end. Grant to all peoples the gift of peace and unity. Help us to recognize the thorn-crowned Jesus in those who suffer because of race, religion, or color of their skin. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Our Father ...

Glory to the Father ...

V. Praise and thanksgiving be evermore to Jesus.

R. Who with his blood has saved us.

V. Glory to the Blood of Jesus!

R. Now and forever. Amen.

Day Six: Jesus Sheds Blood Carrying the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Opening prayer (p. 4)

Presentation

“Then he handed him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and carrying the cross himself he went out to what is called the Place of the Skull, in Hebrew, Golgotha.” (John 19: 16-17)

“As they led him away they took hold of a certain Simon, a Cyrenian, who was coming in from the country; and after laying the cross on him, they made him carry it behind Jesus. A large crowd of people followed Jesus, including many women who mourned and lamented him. Jesus turned to them and said, ‘Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me; weep instead for yourselves and for your children.’” (Luke 23: 26-28)

Reflection

Jesus carries his cross. We follow him in the fourteen stations of the Way of the Cross. According to tradition, Jesus falls three times on the way to Calvary. The soldiers force Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross of Jesus. Following him was a crowd of people including some women who express great sympathy for him. One woman, Veronica, wipes with a cloth the face of Jesus. Also tradition says that Jesus carrying his cross meets his mother Mary on the way to Golgatha.

The way to Calvary is a road of blood. Jesus had said to his disciples that if they wished to follow him, they needed to carry their cross each day. The act of carrying the cross is a historical and actual fact; but it also has a profound sense of mystery and symbolism for the redemption of the world. As Veronica, we must carry in our hearts the image of Jesus, wounded and covered with his own blood.

Meditation

“Yes, God so loved the world that He gave His only son that whoever believes in Him may not die but may have eternal life. God did not send the son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world may be saved through Him. Whoever believes in Him avoids condemnation.” (John 3: 16-18)

Resolutions

- To reflect on the significance of the phrase: “We must carry our daily cross.”
- To show solidarity with the suffering of others, as exemplified by Simon of Cyrene.
- After each fall in my life to raise myself up again with Jesus and continue forward.

Final prayer

Eternal Father, we offer you the Precious Blood of Jesus shed on the way to Calvary, for all those in the world who suffer the consequences of sin. Grant health to the sick and feed those who suffer from hunger; free from injustice the persecuted and ransom the imprisoned; help the immigrants and the abandoned find a home; protect the travelers and give salvation to the dying. Do not forget the work that you have begun in us, so our life is given to your truth and service. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Our Father ...

Glory to the Father ...

V. Praise and thanksgiving be evermore to Jesus.

R. Who with his blood has saved us.

V. Glory to the Blood of Jesus!

R. Now and forever. Amen.

Day seven: Jesus Sheds Blood in the Crucifixion

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Opening prayer (p. 4)

Presentation

“It was now about noon and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon because of an eclipse of the sun. Then the veil of the temple was torn down the middle. Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Father, into your hands I commend my spirit;’ and when he had said this he breathed his last.” (Luke 23: 33, 44-46)

Reflection

In the culture of Imperial Rome, crucifixion was very common in the execution of criminals. In history, Jesus was simply one more. But he is a human being, our blood brother, the same as so many others who are victims of war, of the violence and pains of death.

The evangelists relate many details of the three last hours of Jesus, his thirst, his pardon of those who did not know what they were doing, his cries to the Father in the moments of abandonment, the invitation of the good thief to paradise. When all was fulfilled, he gave his Spirit to the Father. From the cross, Jesus entrusted his Mother to John, our Mother, the Mother of the Church!

Meditation

“You have approached Mount Zion and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and countless angels in festal gathering, and the assembly of the firstborn enrolled in heaven, and God the judge of all, and the spirits of the just made perfect, and Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and the sprinkled blood that speaks more eloquently than that of Abel.” (Hebrews 12: 22-24)

Resolutions

- To remain always close to the cross of Jesus.
- To recognize in the death of Jesus victory over sin.
- To accept in faith, in love and in prayer, Mary as our Mother.

Final prayer

Eternal Father, we offer you the Precious Blood of Jesus shed in the crucifixion. Permit that, in perfect union with your only begotten Son, we offer you our lives as a gift of sacrifice. As participants in the eternal redemption, we celebrate the memory of our redemption at the foot of the cross. With Mary our Mother, we glorify you in the abundance of your grace and enjoy the victory of salvation. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Our Father ...

Glory to the Father ...

V. Praise and thanksgiving be evermore to Jesus.

R. Who with his blood has saved us.

V. Glory to the Blood of Jesus!

R. Now and forever. Amen.

Day eight: Jesus Sheds Blood in the Piercing of his Sacred Heart

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Opening prayer (p. 4)

Presentation

“Now since it was preparation day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, for the Sabbath day of that week was a solemn one, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken and they be taken down. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out.” (John 19: 31-34)

Reflection

Jesus, through his many sufferings and tortures, has commended his Spirit to God the Father. The lance that the Roman soldier thrust into his side, was simply a gesture to say, “All is finished.” Blood and water flowed. Jesus had shed his last drop of blood. It was exclusively the motive of love that brought Jesus to sacrifice himself and to shed his blood until the last drop for the salvation of the world.

The Fathers of the Church have seen in the water and the blood, that flowed from the side of Jesus, the sacraments of Baptism and Eucharist. Even more, what came from the side of Jesus is confirmation of the blood of the new and eternal covenant. From the side of Jesus came the profound mystery of the very church itself.

Meditation

“Though he was in the form of God, he did not deem equality with God something to be grasped at. Rather, he emptied himself and took the form of a slave, being born in the likeness

of men. He was known to be of human estate, and it was thus that he humbled himself, obediently accepting even death, death on a cross." (Philippians 2: 6-8)

Resolution

- To open our heart to the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
- To renew our baptismal promises.
- To deepen our participation in the Eucharist.

Final prayer

Eternal Father, we offer you the Precious Blood of Jesus, shed in the piercing of the Sacred Heart of your Son. Open our hearts to share his life and continue to bless us with his love. Help us renew and live our baptismal promises. Father of mercy, sanctify your church. May the opening of the heart of your Son be an invitation to all the peoples of the world to live in harmony, peace, and love. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Our Father ...

Glory to the Father ...

V. Praise and thanksgiving be evermore to Jesus.

R. Who with his blood has saved us.

V. Glory to the Blood of Jesus!

R. Now and forever. Amen.

Day nine: Blood of the New and Eternal Covenant, Blood of Eucharist

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

Opening prayer (p. 4)

Presentation

“When the supper was ended, he took the cup. Again he gave you thanks and praise, gave the cup to his disciples, and said: ‘Take this, all of you, and drink from it: this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in memory of me.’” (Roman missal)

Reflection

The feast of the Passover is the commemoration of the freeing of the people of Israel through the blood of the paschal lamb. Later, in the desert, Moses sealed the first Covenant of God with his people with the blood of animals. Now Jesus, celebrating the Passover in the Last Supper, proclaims that his blood, which the following day will be shed on the cross, is the blood of the new and eternal Covenant.

In the Old Testament, once a year the high priest was permitted to enter the “Holy of Holies” in the temple to offer the sacrifice of reconciliation. Now Jesus is the High Priest of the New Covenant who enters the presence of God with his own blood. In effect, the Eucharist is the realization of the Pascal mystery of Christ, the Supreme and Eternal Priest, who offers each day his own blood in sacrifice for the sins of humanity.

Meditation

“As my vision continued, I heard the voices of many angels who surrounded the throne and the living creatures and the elders. They were countless in number, thousands and tens of thousands, and they all cried out: ‘Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches, wisdom and strength,

honor and glory and praise.’ Then I heard the voices of every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea; everything in the universe cried aloud: ‘To the One seated on the throne and to the Lamb, be praise and honor, glory and might, forever and ever’” (Rev 5: 11-14)

Resolutions

- To read and meditate on the history of Salvation
- To participate in the mystery of the Eucharist with a living faith and an open heart.
- To pray for the sanctification of priests and other ministers of the Church.

Final prayer

Eternal Father, we offer you the Precious Blood of Jesus, poured out on the cross and offered daily on the altar. Father, for your glory and our salvation you appointed Jesus Christ eternal High Priest. May the people he gained for you by his blood come to share in the power of his cross and resurrection. Grant that all priests be faithful in their ministry to you and to your people. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen

Our Father ...

Glory to the Father ...

V. Praise and thanksgiving be evermore to Jesus.

R. Who with his blood has saved us.

V. Glory to the Blood of Jesus!

R. Now and forever. Amen.