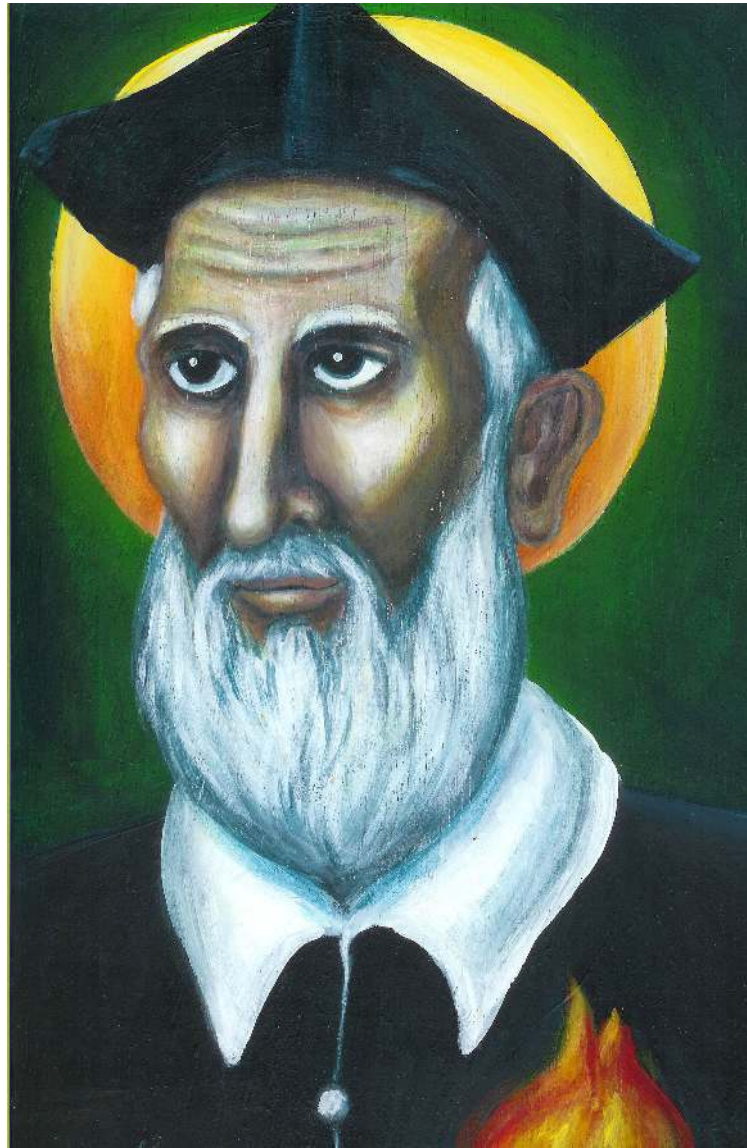


NOVENA



TO ST. PHILIP NERI

WHAT IS A NOVENA?

The Scriptures encourage the believer to “pray without ceasing” and the Church has consistently preached that holiness and happiness are partially the result of our prayerful co-operation with the work God does in us. Continual prayer, then, is not only a heartfelt response to God’s word in the Scriptures but a very practical way in which we are all able to help in the constant renewal of God’s work of grace.

The tradition of the Novena is a Catholic practice that developed as a way of activating our desire for constant prayer. A novena (from the Latin word *novem*, or “nine”) is the continual return to a specific form of prayer over the course of nine months, weeks, days, or even hours, usually undertaken as a means of preparing for a significant celebration in the Church’s life. Some say that this practice arose in veneration of the nine days the apostles spent together after Christ’s ascension into heaven (forty days after Easter) while awaiting the descent of the Spirit at Pentecost (fifty days after Easter). Others say that the number nine gained significance in the Catholic spiritual tradition because it represents the perfect number three multiplied by three: that is to say, the number of persons comprising the Trinity times three, and hence, absolute perfection.

In any event, whether a Novena is observed over a course of months or days it usually involves some sort of repeated intercession for a concrete need.

HOW DO I PRAY A NOVENA?

The form presented here in this Novena of preparation for the feast of St. Philip Neri is very simple. Each day begins with a short versicle and response. Then there is a brief reading about St. Philip’s life and personality taken from one of many biographical resources. That is then followed by four other prayers: the Prayer to St. Philip, the Lord’s Prayer, the Hail Mary, and the Glory Be. These prayers are all provided on the following page of this booklet.

As we prepare together for the celebration of the feast of our patron may we all learn to share more and more in his joy.

NOVENA PRAYERS

PRAYER TO SAINT PHILIP NERI

O Holy Saint Philip Neri, Patron Saint of Joy,
you who trusted Scripture's promise that the Lord is always at hand,
and that we need not have anxiety about anything:
in your compassion heal our worries and sorrows,
and lift the burdens from our hearts.
We come to you as one whose heart swells with abundant love for God
and all creation.
Hear us we pray, especially in this need: *(make request here)*
Keep us safe through your loving intercession
and may the joy of the Holy Spirit which filled your heart,
Saint Philip,
transform our lives and bring us peace. Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.
Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. Amen.

HAIL MARY

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.
Blessed art thou amongst women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb,
Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of
our death. Amen.

GLORY BE

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without
end. Amen.

DAY 1

MAY 17

V. Pray for us, O Holy Father Saint Philip.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

PHILIP'S YOUNG LIFE

Philip Neri, the 'Apostle of Rome,' was not actually a Roman at all. He was a Florentine, and proud of it. He was born on 22 July 1515, when Florence was still a republic. His parents were proverbially honest but poor, and his education was entrusted to the Dominican friars of San Marco ... In 1530, the Medici, supported by foreign armies, returned to power and the republic of Florence was extinguished forever. Soon after this Philip left his home ... to learn business under an uncle who was intending to make Philip his heir. He was never to see Florence or his family again, though to the end of his life he cherished the memory of his native city. But business was clearly not Philip's vocation ... He renounced his inheritance and made his way alone to Rome, where he knew no one and had no prospects.

Jerome Bertram, C.O.

Saint Philip and the Oratory, 2.

PRAYER TO SAINT PHILIP

LORD'S PRAYER

HAIL MARY

GLORY BE

DAY 2

MAY 18

V. Pray for us, O Holy Father Saint Philip.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

PHILIP AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

Philip felt constantly drawn to the solitude of the catacombs ... the burial places of the early Christians ... and in the catacombs of St. Sebastian something happened that can rightly be called Philip's "Pentecost." It was a kind of invasion of the Divine into his life ... Philip was in a small room of the catacombs ... and was praying with special devotion to the Holy Spirit ... [and] as he was thus praying ... one day in 1544, "he suddenly felt himself divinely filled with the power of the Spirit with such force that his heart began to palpitate within his body and to be inflamed with such love that, his nature being unaccustomed to such a palpitation of the heart, he indicated that he was completely unable to bear it..." There were from the time of Philip's Pentecost external effects that he could not hide, no matter how painful it was for him that they became known. First among these was a trembling and a shaking of his whole body, which also would cause the chair or the bench on which he was kneeling to shake. Witnesses testified that the objects near him were affected by the powerful throbbing of his heart. When he celebrated Mass there was fear that he would spill the wine or knock the chalice over and therefore he had to steady his elbows by leaning them on the altar ... His contemporaries testify to another strange phenomenon: an inner heat that warmed his entire body ... This heat was such that even in winter he went about with his cassock unbuttoned... The doctors who treated Philip in his old age puzzled over this strange phenomenon.

Paul Türks, C.O.

Philip Neri: The Fire of Joy, 16, 18.

PRAYER TO SAINT PHILIP

LORD'S PRAYER

HAIL MARY

GLORY BE

DAY 3

MAY 19

V. Pray for us, O Holy Father Saint Philip.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

PHILIP AND CHRISTIAN SERVICE

It is said that one day at San Girolamo, noticing the great gentleman Salviati spending too much time lost in prayer, Philip went up to him, gave a tug at his sleeve and told him to go straight to the Incurables and make himself useful there, adding that Jesus Christ was present in all churches but still more in the poor and the suffering, and that it would be a good thing for a man of quality like him to leave God in one way and go to him in the other. Now it was no small matter turning mattresses and sweeping out a room containing a couple of hundred beds, with someone being sick, someone else coughing, a third at his last gasp ... Such are the miracles, even rarer than the usual kind, that Philip achieved, for his chief aim was to reconcile seeming incompatibles, wealth and unselfishness, grandeur and misery. With Philip no reserved self-enclosed life was possible: one had to dilate, open out, in all one did, in all that happened, including even misfortune and death. There could be no real virtue without accompanying joy.

Marcel Jouhandeau
Saint Philip Neri, 43.

PRAYER TO SAINT PHILIP

LORD'S PRAYER

HAIL MARY

GLORY BE

DAY 4

MAY 20

V. Pray for us, O Holy Father Saint Philip.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

PHILIP AND THE ARTS

We cannot fail to notice that Philip took peculiar pleasure in gathering the faithful in numbers around him, not only in the church, but in the open air. In the earliest years of his apostolate we find him speaking of the kingdom of God and exhorting the young to a holy life, in the streets of Rome, or in the porch of some church ... When gatherings were held in the open air, Philip always blended some kind of recreation and diversion with the sermons and conferences on religion; there were always music and singing to render piety cheerful and attractive. This association of religion and music and gladness was an idea of deep wisdom, and it reveals to us one special feature of Philip's natural character as well as of his sanctity ... Philip's gentle, loving, and tender nature, together with his vivid imagination, disposed him from youth to love music, and he found in it both the source and nurture of all holy inspirations. It was this exquisite sensitiveness to all harmony which gave him that unutterable sweetness of expression, of speech, and of gesture, which endeared him to all. And it was this, too, that increased all through his life his capacity of the loftiest emotions of divine love. Artists and poets feel the mighty spell of music and we cannot have followed Philip ... without seeing that he was, implicitly at least, both poet and artist.

Alfonso Cardinal Capecelatro, C.O.
The Life of Saint Philip Neri, 197, 372.

PRAYER TO SAINT PHILIP

LORD'S PRAYER

HAIL MARY

GLORY BE

DAY 5

MAY 21

V. Pray for us, O Holy Father Saint Philip.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

PHILIP'S WARMTH AND PEACE

There can be no doubt that what first attracted people to Philip was the manifest presence of the Holy Spirit in his soul. Not everyone experienced it in the same way, but no one who spent any length of time in his company was in any doubt about it. The manifestations of this presence were sometimes extraordinary. For example, he often felt a burning sensation within his breast and even in the depths of winter he had to leave his windows open to keep cool ... This feeling was not merely subjective, for countless witnesses testified to having felt the heat of his internal flame, when, as often happened, he pressed a penitent's head to his heart. Temptations would be dispelled, a troubled mind set at peace, a conscience purified by contact with this mysterious fire.

Louis Bouyer

Saint Philip Neri: A Portrait, 80-81.

PRAYER TO SAINT PHILIP

LORD'S PRAYER

HAIL MARY

GLORY BE

DAY 6

MAY 22

V. Pray for us, O Holy Father Saint Philip.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

PHILIP AND THE CITY

Philip did not choose the life of a solitary; but carrying out his ministry in the midst of the people, he acted ... as “salt” for all those who encountered him. Like our Lord, he knew what it was to go down amidst the depths of human misery, whether it was found in the palaces of the nobility or in the back streets of Renaissance Rome. He was from time to time a conscientious critic, an enlightened counselor, and a smiling master. Precisely for this reason it was not so much he who adopted Rome but Rome that adopted him! For sixty years he lived in that city, which was beginning to teem with saints. If in its streets he met with suffering humanity, offering kind and perceptive words of comfort and support, he used to prefer gathering young people into the Oratory, his own true creation. He made it into a joyful meeting place, a kind of gymnasium for spiritual formation, and a centre for the diffusion of art.

Servant of God Pope John Paul II

Letter for the Fourth Centenary of the Death of St. Philip Neri, 3.

PRAYER TO SAINT PHILIP

LORD’S PRAYER

HAIL MARY

GLORY BE

DAY 7

MAY 23

V. Pray for us, O Holy Father Saint Philip.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

PHILIP AND HOME

The Congregation is to be the *home* of the Oratorian. The Italians, I believe, have no word for home - nor is it an idea which readily enters into the mind of a foreigner, at least not so readily as into the mind of an Englishman. It is remarkable then that the Oratorians ... should have gone out of their way to express the idea by the metaphorical word *nido* or nest, which is used by them almost technically ... the Congregation, according to St. Philip's institution, is never to be so large that the members do not know each other. They are to be "bound together by the bond of love, which daily intercourse creates, and thereby all are to know the ways of each, and feel a reverence for 'countenances of familiar friends...'" This is the principle idea conveyed by the word "nest"; but other things are to be added. An Oratorian has his own rooms, and his own furniture; and according to the traditions of the Chiesa Nuova, without being luxurious, they should be such as to attach him to them. They do not form a cell, but a nest.

Venerable John Henry Cardinal Newman, C.O.
in Placid Murray, O.S.B., *Newman the Oratorian*, 192.

PRAYER TO SAINT PHILIP

LORD'S PRAYER

HAIL MARY

GLORY BE

DAY 8

MAY 24

V. Pray for us, O Holy Father Saint Philip.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

PHILIP AND JOY AND HUMOR

Joy and cheerfulness have always been recognized as the distinguishing mark of Philip's school. In his own lifetime his room came to be known as "the School of Christian Mirth" ... He could not bear to see anyone else sad. "I will have no melancholy, no low spirits in my house," he used to say ... If he saw anyone looking sad he would sometimes give him a box in the ear, saying that it was not them but the devil he was beating. Everyone knew that a word from Philip, or a touch of his hand, was enough to cure the worst fit of depression, and Fabrizio de Massimi found that just to stand near the door of Philip's room could restore his cheerfulness. There is a delightful simplicity, too, in the story of how one day he cured a father of the Congregation who was suffering from a fit of extreme depression, by only saying to him, "Come, now, let us run together."

V. J. Mathews, C.O.
Saint Philip Neri, 79-80.

PRAYER TO SAINT PHILIP

LORD'S PRAYER

HAIL MARY

GLORY BE

DAY 9

MAY 25

V. Pray for us, O Holy Father Saint Philip.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

PHILIP'S INFLUENCE

But, as Newman said, Philip's mission was not to evangelize but to restore ... He converted Christians to Christianity - a mission ever necessary, and imperative in Rome at that time. Philip was a reformer who never left Rome. What he did was done without any means of power. He never held an important office. He was not even a priest till he was thirty-five. He wrote no books. He was in no sense a popular preacher or leader; he preached very little. His work was done by personal influence alone ... Philip's influence was of love. In that he does not differ from other saints, since a saint is precisely a person in whom love reaches its full maturity. But Philip's love found its scope in a freedom and simplicity which has a special appeal today, as we know from the popularity of Pope John XXIII. Philip had the same lovable qualities of sympathy, and honesty, shrewdness and humour. He rarely commanded; he preferred to elicit co-operation. He hated coercion, hated pretense and pretension; loved spontaneity. He distrusted solemnity and made fun of the dignified. His gaiety and nonsense shocked some earnest people, much to his delight. For he liked to be taken for a fool.

Meriol Trevor
Apostle of Rome, xvi-xvii.

PRAYER TO SAINT PHILIP

LORD'S PRAYER

HAIL MARY

GLORY BE



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