

CHRISTMAS NOVENA



The Christmas Novena is a traditional practice of Colombian popular religiosity, which is prayed with faith and love. Its creator was 'Fray Fernando de Jesus Larrea' a Franciscan from Quito Ecuador, who in the late eighteenth century sent it to his spiritual child Doña Clemencia Gertrudis de Jesus Velez Caycedo Ladroon de Guevara de Aróstegui y Escoto, founder of the religious school 'La Enseñanza' in Bogota.

In the nineteenth century, Mother Maria Ignacia, from the religious community 'La Enseñanza' (her name was Bertilda Samper Acosta) daughter of two writers (Don Jose Mario Samper and Doña Soledad Acosta) reformed and composed the so called 'joys'.

According to Father Carlos Augusto Mesa, this tradition is so Colombian that it is practically unknown elsewhere. The closest thing to the Christmas Novena is the 'Mexican posadas' a tradition in Mexico that is similar in form but not in content. They evoke the journey of Mary and Joseph asking for lodging before the birth of the Baby Jesus in Bethlehem.

The Christmas Novena is the last preparation at the end of Advent for the coming of the Baby Jesus. For priests, the old version is the official one, because over time some have wanted to change the text to make it more understandable to people, but this has brought about inaccuracies.





Pilgrims of Love

The Pilgrims of Love Mission would like to invite you to gather spiritually and in prayer to celebrate the mystery of Christmas.

This novena will begin on December 16th and will end on December 24th, marking the date of the birth of Christ with the celebration of the Holy Eucharist at midnight. The Liturgical seasons of Advent and Christmas are for the Pilgrims of Love the main festivity, since the Divine Infant Jesus is the light which guides our evangelical mission around the world.

We believe in our hearts that the Child Jesus, born in a poor and humble manger in Bethlehem, brings us the greatest message of love and redemption. Let us try to identify with the teachings of the Baby Jesus, learning to be small, humble and docile of heart. Let us live this Christmas as though it is the first and last of our lives, with all our hearts and love, welcoming our Messiah and Saviour.

EVERY DAY PRAYER

TO START THE NOVENA

Oh most benign God of infinite charity, Who loves mankind so much that You gave us in your Son, the best token of Your love, that You became man in the womb of the Virgin, to be born in a manger for our health and remedy; I, in the name of all humanity, give infinite thanks for this sovereign gift.

In return, I offer You the poverty, humility and other virtues of Your Son, made Man; beseeching You for His divine merits, for the inconveniences in which He was born and for the tender tears that spilled in the manger, prepare our hearts with profound humility, a fiery love and total contempt of all the earthly things, so that the newborn Jesus may keep His cradle in them, and dwell there eternally. Amen.

Recite three Glory Be's

Fallow by the consideration of the day.



FIRST CONSIDERATION

16TH DECEMBER

In the beginning of time the Word rested in the bosom of the Father in the highest Heavens. The sin of Adam had offended God and that infinite offense could not be forgiven, except by the merits of God himself. The race of Adam had disobeyed and deserved an eternal punishment; therefore in order to save mankind and to satisfy for that fault, God the Son incarnated and with the obedience to the plans of His Father, atoned for that disobedience, ingratitude and defiance.

It was necessary in the gaze of His love that He take the form, the weaknesses and ignorance of man, to grow and to give spiritual growth; to suffer and die to passions and pride. For this, the Eternal Word, burning with the desire of man's salvation, incarnated to redeem the guilt of mankind.

Consideration of the day, followed by the Prayer to the Most Holy Virgin...

PRAYER TO THE MOST HOLY VIRGIN

PRAYER FOR EVERY DAY, AFTER THE CONSIDERATION

Sovereign Mary, by your great virtues and especially by your humility, you rightly deserved that God would choose you for His mother, I implore that you prepare my soul, and the souls of all those who are making this novena at this time, for the spiritual birth of your adored Son.

Oh sweetest Mother! Grant us the profound recollection and divine tenderness in which you waited for God, so that we may become worthy to see, love and adore Him for all eternity. Amen.

3 Hail Mary's and 1 Glory Be

PRAYER TO SAINT JOSEPH

PRAYER FOR EVERY DAY, AFTER THE PRAYER TO OUR LADY

Oh most holy Saint Joseph! Husband of Mary and adopted father of Jesus. I give God infinite thanks, because He chose you for such a noble position and adorned you with all the gifts worthy of such excellent greatness.

I request that, by the love that you have for the Divine Child, burn in me, the fervent desires to see Him and to receive Him sacramentally, until I may see and take joy in His Divine Essence in Heaven. Amen.

Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be



JOYS TO THE DIVINE INFANT JESUS

Oh my sweetest Jesus, My beloved child ;Come our souls are waiting, for Your love so mild! ;Come our souls are waiting!

With His highest wisdom
Our Sovereign God smiled
And Chose to be lowered
To the state of a child!
Divine Infant, come teach us
And we will agree
With the prudence we learn
True wise men we'll be!

Oh my sweetest Jesus, My beloved child ;Come our souls are waiting, for Your love so mild! ;Come our souls are waiting!

Oh, powerful God
Through Moses is speaking,
To Israel's people
The commandments He's seeking!
This Child seems so weak
Yet His arms are so strong
Come promptly to save us
And keep us from wrong!

Oh my sweetest Jesus, My beloved child ;Come our souls are waiting, for Your love so mild! ;Come our souls are waiting!

Oh most holy root
Bloom of Jesse's tree
Present to the world Your fragrance, so sweet
Dear sweet Child Flower of the field
Lily of the Valley
You are now revealed

Oh my sweetest Jesus, My beloved child ;Come our souls are waiting, for Your love so mild! ;Come our souls are waiting!

The great key of David
That opens the doors
And welcomes the exiled
To royal palace shores!
Baby Jesus release us
With Your gentle aid
From this tragic jail
Which our sins have made!

Oh my sweetest Jesus, My beloved child ;Come our souls are waiting, for Your love so mild! ;Come our souls are waiting!

Oh light of the East
The eternal suns rays S
plendors in the darkness
And falls on our gaze!
Oh precious Child
Our Christian joy
Show us Your smile
Oh dear sweet boy!

Oh my sweetest Jesus, My beloved child ;Come our souls are waiting, for Your love so mild! ;Come our souls are waiting!

Holy of Holies,
A Spotless mirror
The unsurpassed image
Almighty God's, nearer!
You come as a Child
And save the banished
Protect the wretched
And our sins are vanished!

Oh my sweetest Jesus, My beloved child ;Come our souls are waiting, for Your love so mild! ;Come our souls are waiting!

The King of nations,
Illustrious Emmanuel
Shepherd of the flock!
The longed for, of Israel!
Sweet Child Who guards
The dear little lamb
With Your staff, gently guides
The sheep and the ram!

Oh my sweetest Jesus, My beloved child ;Come our souls are waiting, for Your love so mild! ;Come our souls are waiting!

The Heavens open up
Rain falls from above
Beneficial dews Wash us with love!
Come God incarnate
New Child unconcealed
The stars brilliant light
Flower of the field

Oh my sweetest Jesus, My beloved child ;Come our souls are waiting, for Your love so mild! ;Come our souls are waiting!

JOYS TO THE DIVINE INFANT JESUS

Come and see Mary
Who readies her arms
To hold her new born
And share her Sons' charms
Come, see St. Joseph
Yearning, mild as a dove
Preparing of himself
A tabernacle of Your love!

*Oh my sweetest Jesus, My beloved child
;Come our souls are waiting, for Your love so
mild! ;Come our souls are waiting!*

Aid for the suffering
Protector of the weak
Comfort for the sad
Light whom the banished seek!
Life of my life
My adored Master,
My constant friend,
My Divine Pastor!

*Oh my sweetest Jesus, My beloved child
;Come our souls are waiting, for Your love so
mild! ;Come our souls are waiting!*

I see before me
You whom I love!
I kiss Your feet
And Your hands above!
Prostrate on the ground
with my arms stretched out
what my words can't confirm
my cries leave no doubt.

*Oh my sweetest Jesus, My beloved child
;Come our souls are waiting, for Your love so
mild! ;Come our souls are waiting!*

**Come, our Saviour, for whom we wait Come
to our souls, Do not be late!**

PRAYER TO THE BABY JESUS

EVERY DAY PRAYER TO END THE NOVENA

Remember, Oh Holy Child Jesus, that which you have said to venerable Sister Margaret of the Blessed Sacrament, these words so full of consolation for our poor, burdened and suffering humanity: "Ask all that you desire through the merits of My Holy Childhood. Nothing will be refused you."
(pause so that everyone can make their petitions in silence)

Full of confidence in You O Jesus, Who are Truth itself, we come to make known all our misery to You. Help us to lead a Holy life in order to attain a Blessed Eternity. Grant us through the Infinite Merits of Your Incarnation and of Your Childhood, the graces of which we are in most need.

No, we shall not be deceived in our hope. We abandon ourselves to You, Oh Omnipotent God, so that in virtue of Your Divine Promise, You will favorably receive and deign to grant our prayer. Amen.



SECOND CONSIDERATION

17TH DECEMBER

The Archangel Saint Gabriel, was sent to ask Mary, on behalf of God, for her fiat to the incarnation. The Creator did not want to perform this great mystery without the acceptance of His creature, when the shadow of Holy Spirit came to rest over her, Mary was alone, engulfed in prayer. The silent hours of the night passed in the closest union with God, and during that prayer, the Word took on His human nature.

The Immaculate Virgin had given her assent, the Archangel had disappeared and God has clothed Himself in the flesh; the eternal Will has been fulfilled and creation completed. The Word was made flesh, and though still invisible to the world, now lived among men, that His immense love has come to rescue.

THIRD CONSIDERATION

18TH DECEMBER

This is how the Child Jesus had begun his incarnate life. Let us consider the glorious soul and Holy Body that He had taken, worshiping them deeply.

His soul was pure and had the beatific vision of God. The Body of the Divine Child was a masterpiece of the hand of God. It was not like ours, an obstacle to the soul; it was, on the contrary, a new element of holiness. He wanted him to be small and weak like that of all children, and subjected to all the discomforts of childhood, to become more like us and participate in our humiliations. The Holy Spirit formed that little body with such delicacy and such capacity to feel, that it could suffer even excessively to accomplish the great work of our Redemption.

The Divine Blood that began to circulate through His veins from the moment of His Incarnation, is the one that washes all the stains of the guilty world. Let us ask him to wash our sins in the Sacrament of Penance, so that the day of His happy Christmas He will find us purified, forgiven and ready to receive him with love and spiritual benefit.

4TH CONSIDERATION

19TH DECEMBER

From the breast of His Mother, the Child Jesus began to put into practice His eternal submission to God, which continued without interruption throughout His life. He worshipped His Eternal Father, loved Him, submitted to His Will; accepted with resignation all the weakness, humiliation and inconveniences. Let us contemplate the Child Jesus in the womb of Mary.

The Divine Child wants to teach us what God deserves from His creature and to atone for our pride, the origin of all our sins, and make us feel all the criminality and disorder of this pride. Let us die to ourselves and may God be everything to us.

5TH CONSIDERATION

20TH DECEMBER

We have already seen the life of the Child Jesus in the womb of his most pure Mother. Let us also see today the life that Mary lived during the same period of time. Mary did not cease to aspire to the moment in which she would enjoy the face of God incarnate.

She was about to see the human face that was to illuminate the world for all eternity, his eyes, whose rays were to spread happiness forever to millions of the chosen ones. Mary would see that face every day, every hour, every moment, for many years. How ardently she longed for the day where she could kiss and contemplate the Holy Face of God with all the freedom of maternal love.

Let us not be content with admiring Jesus dwelling in Mary, but let us realise that He also dwells in us. Yes, Jesus is continually born in us and through His grace, the good works that we are capable of accomplishing. The soul that is in grace is a perpetual womb of Mary, an endless interior Bethlehem. After communion, Jesus dwells in us, for a few moments, really and substantially, as God and as a man, because the same Child who was in Mary is also in the Blessed Sacrament.

6TH CONSIDERATION

21ST DECEMBER

Jesus was begotten in Nazareth and in all probability, He should have been born there. But God had arranged otherwise. Prophets had announced that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem of Judah, city of David.

The emperor Augusto gave an order to all the subjects of the Roman Empire that they were to be registered in the land of their native birthplace. Mary and Joseph as descendants of David, were obliged to go to Bethlehem.

The Child Jesus wants to teach us something essential to our spiritual life: Whoever has surrendered to God, no longer belongs to oneself, nor should want anything, except that which God wants for him, blindly following Him even in external things. We will have occasion to observe this inviolable fidelity in the whole life of Jesus Christ; in this the saints have endeavored to imitate him, completely renouncing their own will.

7TH CONSIDERATION

22ND DECEMBER

Let us contemplate the journey of Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, carrying the not yet born, the Creator of the universe, God made man. Let us contemplate the humility and obedience of that Divine Child who, although of a Jewish race and having loved his people for centuries with an inexplicable predilection, thus obeys a foreign prince.

Will the humility of Jesus teach us to love that beautiful virtue? Ah ... may the moment come when the desired one of the nations appears, because everything cries out for that happy event. The world plunged in darkness cries out for Jesus, the deliverer.

The longing of Joseph, the expectation of Mary, are things that human language cannot explain. Let us remember that the Child Jesus is heading towards us, just the same as He headed towards Bethlehem; let us eagerly hasten his arrival, let us purify our souls to be his dwelling place, and our hearts to be his earthly mansion. May our acts of mortification and detachment prepare the way of the Lord and make our paths straight.

8TH CONSIDERATION

23RD DECEMBER

Joseph and Mary arrive in Bethlehem seeking lodging at the inns, but they do not find any, either because they are all occupied or because they are rejected on account of their poverty. However, nothing can disturb the interior peace of the ones whose hearts are fixed on God.

If Joseph experienced sadness when he was rejected house after house, whilst he thought about Mary and the Child, he also smiled with holy tranquility when he set his eyes on his chaste wife. Oh! Divine Child of Bethlehem! These days that so many people have passed in celebrations and diversions, or resting comfortably in wealthy mansions, has been for Your parents a day of fatigue and degradations of every sort. The spirit of Bethlehem is that of a world that has forgotten God. How many times our world has been likewise! God comes to us many times in life, but we do not know His face and we do not recognize Him, until He turns His back on us and walks away, after our refusal to acknowledge Him.

The sun sets on December 24 in Bethlehem, men rudely reject the Lord in the streets and close their doors when they see His Mother. Night has come and the stars are appearing one after another, a few more hours and the Eternal Word will appear.

9TH CONSIDERATION

24TH DECEMBER

The night has come, being rejected by men and seeing themselves without shelter, Mary and Joseph have left the inhospitable town and they have found refuge in a grotto at the foot of the hill. The Queen of Angels was being followed by the donkey she had ridden on during the trip and in the cave they found a docile ox probably left there by one of the pilgrims who came looking for lodging in the town.

The Divine Child, unknown by His rational creatures has to turn to the irrational so that with their warm breath they heat the frozen atmosphere on that night of winter, demonstrating in this manner the humble attitude, respect and adoration that Bethlehem had denied Him.

The lantern that Joseph was holding weakly illuminated the poor enclosure full of straw, Mary is in adoration in the middle of the grotto, and thus the hours of that night full of mysteries pass silently.

But midnight has arrived and suddenly we see in the previously empty manger, the expected Divine Child, predicted and desired for four thousand years with such ineffable yearnings. His most holy Mother prostrates herself in a profound attitude of adoration, impossible to fathom. Joseph also approaches and pays the homage with which he inaugurates his mysterious duty as adopted father of the redeemer of mankind.

The multitude of angels that descend from Heaven to contemplate that wonder let their joy explode with their harmonies of the Glory in Excelsis. Summoned by them, the shepherds come in numbers from all over the region to worship the newborn, presenting their humble offerings.

The mysterious star of Jacob already shines in the East, and sets into motion the splendid caravan of the Magi heading to Bethlehem, which will arrive in a few days to place at the feet of the Divine Child, the gold, incense and myrrh, which are the symbols of charity, prayer and mortification. Oh adorable Child! All of us who have made this novena in order to prepare ourselves for the day of Your birth, we want to offer our humble adoration, do not reject it: come to our souls, come to our hearts full of love. Ignite in our hearts the devotion to your Holy infancy, not limited to the time of your Nativity but always and everlasting; devotion that when faithfully practiced and zealously propagated leads us to eternal life, freeing us from sin and sowing in us all the Christian virtues.