

NOVENA - in a time of Pandemic

In the history of Man his great enemies have been characterised by the unforgettable images of the Bible in St. John's vision in the Book of the Revelation – the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, the four riders on white, red, black, and pale horses symbolizing plague, war, famine, and death.

WAR: For most of us, in the West, we have lived in a time of unbroken peace in our own lands.

FAMINE: Our burgeoning wealth has meant that we have the problem of obesity rather than starvation.

PLAGUE: Our medical services and drugs have protected us from the worst excesses of infection and premature death.

DEATH - alone we cannot avoid but that has come, for the most part, singly at the end of lives which have enjoyed increasing longevity.

Today Man once again faces an existential crisis from an unseen enemy, plague. Our lives, our economic security, our societies, our future hang in the balance. In such a moment, as believers, we must discern our part in this extraordinary moment of our history and discern what God is doing in this profound moment of judgement. Much of what we say and do will not be understood by our communities which have long drifted from any acknowledgement of the Divine. This is not a reason to be in dereliction of our sacred duty.

Being Lent, we are already in a time of Repentance, Fasting, Prayer and Almsgiving. As believers we can, whatever the restrictions of our daily movements and meeting nevertheless bind together in prayer.

This Novena is intended to give us a common daily focus as we intercede for the nations, our own land, our local communities, our families and ourselves. In the face of disaster the Gospel alone brings hope. Therefore, little brothers and sisters of Jesus, Let us Pray.

Day 1

2 Kings 18 & 19 (Isaiah 36)

At the turn of the eighth century BC, the brutal Assyrian warlord, Sennacherib, and his mighty army, laid waste the middle east and much of the Holy Land of Israel. He destroyed forty cities of Judah and besieged Jerusalem. He mocked the God of Israel as incapable of saving His people. Faced by total war, famine and disease the King of Judah turns to the prophet Isaiah who foretells the destruction of the Assyrian army. Maintaining faithful prayer the besieged of Jerusalem wake to find the besieging might of Assyria vanished and the corpses of thousands of enemy troops lying beneath the walls, dead of the Plague. God delivers His people from the might and derision of the enemy.

Let us pray:

Father of mercies and God of hope, our forefathers have stood many times in the breach before the powers of the Evil One and the contempt of the ungodly. Grant us grace, O Lord, to trust in your promises and the power of your salvation. Deliver your people from the hand of the enemy and destroy the power of all who would do us harm. Through Christ Our Lord.....

Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy

Hail Mary/Our Father/Glory be. Holy Archangel Michael defend us.

DAY 2

Revelation 6

In the terrifying account of the vision of St. John, the four horsemen of plague, war, famine and death are unleashed upon an impenitent world. We long for the world to turn to the One who is the Lion of Judah and the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, and offer our prayers today for the reconversion of our land, our continent and our world.

Let us pray:

Father of Heaven whose love profound, a ransom for our souls has found.
Beneath thy throne we sinners bend. To us your pardoning grace extend.
For the gift of true repentance, for mercy on your people, for the turning away of the plague and for a return to the Faith, we pray.

Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison, Kyrie Eleison.

Hail Mary/Our Father/ Glory be.... Holy Archangel Michael defend us.

DAY 3

Numbers 21 v 6 - 9

On the long march of forty years in the Wilderness, the people of God often showed their ingratitude to God and their rejections of His leadership. In this passage they are afflicted by a plague of poisonous snakes. Moses is, strangely, instructed to make a bronze snake and put it on a pole. All who look to this sign are saved. It is a prefigurement of the Cross of Christ – as Jesus Himself notes. Where the ancient serpent, the enemy of Man, seems to triumph – in Jesus' death on Calvary, therein is hidden the mystery and triumph of our redemption in the Resurrection from the dead.

Let us pray:

Jesus, Lord, we look to you alone for salvation. In your Cross we acknowledge the final victory over death and the victory over all the assaults of the Evil One.

Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy

Hail Mary/Our Father/Glory be.....Holy Archangel Michael defend us.

DAY 4

PSALM 102 - Hear my prayer O Lord

This great Psalm takes us into the heart of our physical suffering, sickness and mortality. It reminds us of our utter fragility and dependence on God.

But it does not end in despair. It ends in Faith and Hope and the blessing of the future beyond this time of grievous trial.

Let us pray:

Lord, my days are in your hands. Grant that I may love you above all things then do with me what you will - that my life may give witness to your love and mercy, through Christ Our Lord. Amen

Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison, Kyrie Eleison

Hail Mary/Our Father/Glory be..... Holy Archangel Michael defend us.

DAY 5

Matthew 2 v 16 – 18

Every year we read with horror of the ‘cull’ of children by the wicked king, Herod. We call it the Massacre of the Innocents and their feast day is hidden in the days after Christ’s own Nativity. In our own lifetime the world has seen a terrible and voluntary destruction of its own children in the abortion clinics - state approved and designated, perversely, as works of charity. Every year the World Health Organisation estimates 40-50 million deaths of the unborn. In the Christian heartlands, the toll has been huge as the nations have abandoned Christ. Today we tremble before the possibility of a few hundred thousand of us elderly dying here but most remain silent in the face of this great and continuing wickedness and assault on our children.

God will have mercy on the merciful.

Let us pray for national and universal repentance for this great sin, the closure of the slaughterhouses of the innocent and a return to the teaching of the Sanctity of Life.

Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy

Hail Mary/Our Father/Glory be.....Holy Archangel Michael defend us.

DAY 6

Luke 7 v 1 – 22

We are restricted in our movements. Our ability to get together for worship is severely curtailed. We cannot meet in our usual ways and places yet we seek to care for one another and to bring the needs of all, especially the sick and the dying, to the Lord. Here, in the faith of the Centurion, we are reminded of that sacred duty of love in prayer. Here, in the response of Christ, we see that geography is no boundary to His mercy and healing.

Let us pray:

Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof but only say the word and your servant will be healed.

Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison, Kyrie Eleison

Hail Mary/Our Father/Glory be.....Holy Archangel Michael defend us.

DAY 7

I Kings 19

In the wake of the great victory over the pagan prophets of Baal, the prophet Elijah is on the run for his life, pursued by the forces of the State. He 'self-isolates' in the Wilderness where he is utterly depressed and wants to die. Woken and fed by an angel, he is sent to the great encounter with God who will call him to raise up his successor and anoint the future before he is called home.

Let us pray:

Lord, when we are lonely and we despair, take us aside with you and grant us that vision of the future which is your purpose for your people and the courage and energy and determination to seek you always and to carry it out. May we pass on, to the generations to come, the gift of faithfulness and the means to build up your Church.

Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy

Hail Mary/Our Father/ Glory be.....Holy Archangel Michael pray for us.

DAY 8

JOHN 19 v 26 -27

In the midst of all adversity, at the foot of the Cross, we hear the words of Jesus. To His beloved Disciple – 'Behold your mother'

To His Blessed Mother – 'Behold your son'.

We are, in the shadow of the Cross, entrusted to the love and prayers of Mary, the Mother of Jesus. In her is foreshadowed the Church. In her we see the first and greatest of the Saints of God by whose prayers we are daily surrounded.

We call on the armies of Heaven to defend us on every side and restore us, His penitent people, to faithfulness and love of God.

Let us pray:

Jesus, Son of God, Son of Mary, Hear our prayer. Saints of God pray for us.

Kyrie Eleison, Christe Eleison, Kyrie Eleison

Hail Mary/Our Father/Glory be.....Holy Archangel Michael defend us.

DAY 9

ACTS 3 v 1 – 10

The crippled man sits at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple seeking alms. Peter and John stop and Peter says, 'I have no money - but what I have I give you.' Peter gives him the healing gift of the power of Jesus. He no longer needs to beg because he has been restored by the name and mercy of Jesus. This is the great and only gift that we have to offer to our longing and crippled world.

Let us pray:

Lord God of Hosts, in your Son Jesus Christ is alone the hope of the world. May we who know Him and love Him, serve Him by giving Him to the world in all we say and do and are. May the world, for which He died, be healed and restored and leap for joy once more at the Gate Beautiful and in the Temple of the Lord, for His Name's sake.

Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy

Hail Mary/Our Father/Glory be.....Holy Archangel Michael defend us.

Lord we offer you this Novena with our solemn repentance for our sins, with fasting and with alms for those in need. Hear our prayers and deliver your people. Restore your Church that we may once more walk into the House of God together with songs of joy and gladness for Jesus' sake. Amen.