

WHY NOT JOIN IN THE FIRST AND GREATEST NOVENA FROM ASCENSION THURSDAY (OR NOW THE 7TH SUNDAY OF EASTER) TO PENTECOST SUNDAY?

The Catholic practice of novenas has its origin in the first 'novena' – the nine days of prayer between Ascension Thursday and Pentecost Sunday, described in the Acts of the Apostles, when the disciples, Our Lady and the family of Jesus gathered, as requested to do so, to wait in the upper room and to pray for the coming of the Holy Spirit. (Nove is the Latin for 9).

1. One possible novena involves praying the great 9th century hymn 'Come Holy Ghost Creator Come' each morning and evening.

*Come, Holy Ghost, creator, come,
From thy bright heav'nly throne.
Come take possession of our souls,
And make them all thy own.
Thou who art called the Paraclete,
Best gift of God above,
The living spring, the living fire,
Sweet unction and true love.
Thou who art sevenfold in thy grace,
Finger of God's right hand
His promise teaching little ones to speak and understand.
O guide our minds with thy blessed light,
With love our hearts inflame;
And with thy strength, which never decays
Confirm our mortal frame.
Far from us drive our deadly foe;
True peace unto us bring;
And through all perils lead us safe
Beneath thy sacred wing.
Through thee may we the Father know,
Through thee the eternal Son,
And thee the Spirit of them both,
Thrice-blessed Three in One.
All glory to the Father be,
With his coequal Son;
The same to thee, great Paraclete,
While endless ages run.*

'Come, Holy Ghost, Creator, Come' is an anonymous 19th Century translation of the 9th century Latin hymn, 'Veni Creator Spiritus', attributed to Rabanus Maurus (766-856), a German Benedictine monk.

2. Another possible novena involves praying the Basque Jesuit Jose Pagola's Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Come Holy Spirit. Stir up our weak, small, vacillating faith. Teach all your sons and daughters, whether inside or outside your church, to live trusting in the unfathomable love that our Father has for his children. If the faith is extinguished in our hearts, it will soon die out also in our communities and churches.

Come Holy Spirit. Let Jesus be the centre of our church. Let nothing or no one take his place or overshadow him. Do not be with us without drawing us to your gospel and making us your followers. Let us not forget your Word, or your commandment of love. Let the world not forget you.

Come Holy Spirit. Open our ears to listen to your appeals - those which reach us today from questions raised, sufferings, conflicts, and disputes of the men and women of our times. Keep us open to receive your power to generate the new faith which this new society needs. May we live in your church more aware of what is emerging and what is dying out, with our hearts sustained by hope and not undermined by nostalgia.

Come Holy Spirit and purify the heart of your church. Let truth prevail among us. Teach us to become aware of our sins and limitations. Remind us that we are like the rest: fragile, mediocre, and sinful. Free us from our arrogance and false complacency. Let us learn to live among the people with more truth and humility.

Come Holy Spirit. Teach us to see life, the world, and above all the people anew. Let us learn to see, as Jesus saw, those who suffer, those who weep, those who fall, those who live alone and forgotten. If we can change the way we look at the world and people, we will also change the heart and the face of the church. The disciples of Jesus will then reflect better the closeness, the understanding and solidarity he showed to those most in need. We will be more like our Master and Lord.

Come Holy Spirit. Make of us a church with open doors, a compassionate heart and contagious hope. Let nothing or nobody distract or lead us astray from the project of Jesus: building up a world that is more just and dignified, more loving and happy, and opening up ways to the kingdom of God.