

## WHAT IS A NOVENA?

A **novena** (from the Latin: “novem,” nine), as it is proposed by the Catholic Church, consists of **praying on nine successive days** to God, usually to entrust a specific intention or to ask for a particular grace. This very popular **traditional form of prayer** is highly encouraged by the Church.

### Why Should You Pray a Novena?

#### Why Pray for Nine Days?

Today, the nine days that make up a novena are generally associated with the nine days that separate the feast of Ascension from the feast of Pentecost. In the Bible, this period for the disciples and Jesus’ mother was a period of waiting, lived in prayer where at the end they received the Holy Spirit. *“They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.”* (Acts 1:14). This shows that we too can use **the time of a novena as a period of waiting for a particular grace.**

### Is a Novena the most Efficient Form of Prayer?

By nature a novena is not more efficient, as such, than any other form of prayer. What it does is that it gives us more “quality time” to pray. When you have a profound desire to open your heart completely to God and live in His divine presence, by abandoning yourself into His hands, it gives Him the opportunity to take action and make your desires compatible with His. Your prayer becomes “efficient” because you have become much closer to God and have discovered the true joy that can only come from Him.

Praying a novena is a privileged way of praying because it allows you to take your time in prayer. You take the time to let go of your troubles and lay them before Jesus’ feet. With devotion you **entrust a particular intention**, and at the same time you prepare your heart to receive His grace and welcome the Holy Spirit to help you discern.

The novena may be accompanied by the daily participation at Mass.