

Christmas NOVENA

Saint Alphonsus Liguori

ADAPTED BY
DAVID WERTHMANN, C.Ss.R.



Liguori

ONE LIGUORI DRIVE
LIGUORI MO 63057-9999

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Introduction



Saint Alphonsus Liguori wrote a number of Novenas for use during the seasons of Advent and Christmas. His intention was that we should use the meditations written for each day of the novena as a form of spiritual reading or as quiet periods of meditative prayer to prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ on Christmas. The goal is to guide us in using our religious imaginations so that we may have a meaningful and deeply personal appreciation of the mystery of the Incarnation.

This novena is meant to engage the whole person: physically, emotionally, intellectually, spiritually, and socially. Reciting the chaplet vocally at the beginning of each session can bring the corporal dimension of our lives into our prayer. The daily meditations engage our imagination and reasoning powers. The Affections and Prayers address our emotions. It is generally intended that a novena

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session should take place against a backdrop of silence so that our hearts can listen to the Holy Spirit's voice in the empty spaces beneath the words of the meditation. Finally, praying the novena with a group calls in the social dimension of our lives.

How to Use This Novena



The novena is meant to go from December 16-24, the nine days before Christmas, and can be done either privately or as a group. The general tone for the novena is set by a short chaplet to be recited at the beginning of each day's session. This string of prayers consists of nine brief invocations to Jesus, describing him under some aspect of the mystery of the Incarnation, and followed by the response: "Have mercy on us." Each response is then followed by a vocal or silent recitation of the well-known Catholic prayers: the "Our Father," a "Hail Mary," and a "Glory Be." This repetition of prayers helps to prevent the mind from wandering and prepares the heart for what

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is to come. The general purpose of the chaplet is to create an atmosphere of prayer so that the various meditations can unfold.

The meditation for each day concentrates on some particular aspect of the Incarnation and is followed by a series of fervent expressions of love and devotion called “Affections and Prayers.” There are no other closing prayers, because in that way the novena is open-ended and flows right into the celebration of Christmas itself. Since each day of the novena focuses on a different aspect of the mystery of the Incarnation, one can say that through this little devotion, our celebration of Christmas has already begun.

Chaplet to be recited before every meditation



Leader: O Jesus, who was born in a cave and laid upon straw in a manger, have mercy on us.

Response: *Have mercy on us.*

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Our Father...; Hail Mary...; Glory be...

Leader: O Jesus, who was presented and offered by Mary in the Temple, and who was also sacrificed for us on the cross, have mercy on us.

Response: Have mercy on us.

Our Father...; Hail Mary...; Glory be...

Leader: O Jesus, who was persecuted by Herod and forced to flee into Egypt, have mercy on us.

Response: Have mercy on us.

Our Father...; Hail Mary...; Glory be...

Leader: O Jesus, who lived in Egypt for seven years, poor, unknown, and despised, have mercy on us.

Response: Have mercy on us.

Our Father...; Hail Mary...; Glory be...

Leader: O Jesus, who returned to your own country to one day be crucified between two thieves, have mercy on us.

Response: Have mercy on us.

Our Father...; Hail Mary...; Glory be...

Leader: O Jesus, who at age twelve remained in
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the Temple to debate with the doctors, and after three days was found by your mother, Mary, have mercy on us.

Response: Have mercy on us.

Our Father...; Hail Mary...; Glory be...

Leader: O Jesus, who lived hidden from the world for so many years in the workshop at Nazareth, serving Mary and Joseph, have mercy on us.

Response: Have mercy on us.

Our Father...; Hail Mary...; Glory be...

Leader: O Jesus, who went about preaching and teaching the way of salvation for three years before your passion and death, have mercy on us.

Response: Have mercy on us.

Our Father...; Hail Mary...; Glory be...

Leader: O Jesus, who died on a cross for love of us, have mercy on us.

Response: Have mercy on us.

Our Father... Hail Mary...; Glory be...

Meditation One



DECEMBER 16

*The love that God has shown to us
in becoming human.*

Think about the great love God has shown us by becoming human in order to obtain eternal life for us.

Our first parents, Adam and Eve, rebelled against God and were driven out of paradise. As a result, they and all of us, their descendants, were condemned to everlasting death. But the Son of God, grieving because humanity was lost, took upon himself our human flesh. Then, in order to save us from death, he died on a cross, condemned as a criminal.

We might imagine God the Father saying to his Son, “My child, consider the hardships you will have to undergo while on earth. You will be born in a cold cave, with no place to be laid except in the trough where animals come to feed. As an infant, you will have to flee to Egypt to escape the hands of Herod. After returning, you will have

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