

Novena Meditations with Saint Carlo Acutis

Paige Byrne Shortal



Catholic. Pastoral. Trusted.

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Who Is Saint Carlo Acutis?

Carlo Acutis was born in London, England, on May 3, 1991, to parents Andrea Acutis and Antonia Salzano. The family moved to Italy when Carlo was a baby, and he grew up in Milan. Although his family wasn't particularly religious, Carlo attended daily Mass, prayed the rosary, and made holy hours before the Blessed Sacrament from a young age. He also liked soccer, hanging out with his friends at school, and computers.

The World Wide Web was introduced when Carlo was a child. He taught himself coding and developed a website that became a tool for religious instruction in parishes all over the world. This website—**carloacutis.com**—is still active. He cataloged more than 150 miracles, presenting them in many languages. His intention was to help people realize that Christ is truly present in the Eucharist and to encourage people to go to Mass. For this reason, St. Carlo Acutis is sometimes referred to as “God’s influencer.”

Diagnosed with leukemia as a teenager, Carlo died on October 12, 2006, when he was only fifteen years old. His body was placed in a glass tomb in Assisi, where thousands come to pray. He is wearing a tracksuit jacket, jeans, and Nike sneakers.

Carlo was beatified by Pope Francis on October 10, 2020. His canonization date was scheduled for April 27, 2025. However, when Pope Francis died on April 21, 2025, the canonization had to be postponed. On September 7, 2025, Saint Carlo Acutis was canonized by Pope Leo XIV.

“[Carlo Acutis] understood the needs of his time because he saw the face of Christ in the weakest. His witness indicates to today’s young people that true happiness is found by putting God in first place and serving him in our brothers and sisters, especially the least.”

Pope Francis, Angelus, October 11, 2020

What Is a Novena?

Just before his ascension into heaven, Jesus instructed the apostles to remain in Jerusalem and “wait for ‘the promise of the Father’ about which you have heard me speak”(Acts 1:4). That promise was the Holy Spirit. After Jesus was “lifted up, and a cloud took him from their sight” (Acts 1:9), the apostles did as they were instructed and returned to Jerusalem. There, along with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, and about 120 other men and women, they went to an upper room and devoted themselves to prayer, waiting for the promised Spirit. They prayed for nine days, and, on the tenth day, the feast of Pentecost, the promise of God was fulfilled as the Spirit descended upon them all. This was the first novena.

The word *novena* is from the Latin, meaning “ninefold.” Typically, a novena is prayed for nine consecutive days, but it can also be prayed for nine consecutive weeks on the same day each week.

Making a novena helps you persevere in prayer. It's a kind of "holy streak," motivating you to keep a promise. "Don't break the streak" is a familiar refrain to fans of Duolingo or Wordle or those who are trying to form good habits like regular exercise, journaling, or visiting a loved one once a week.

Often, one prays a novena with particular intentions. These nine days or moments of prayer with St. Carlo Acutis are offered with two groups of people in mind: young people and those who are praying for a young person. Young people are beset with many concerns and sometimes very serious problems. Saint Carlo Acutis was one such young person. Praying with him, asking for his intercession with a particular issue, may be a source of comfort and may lead to the change you are hoping for.

Parents, grandparents, godparents, and anyone who loves a young person know what it is to worry. Prayer is a better use of your time and energy than worry, for as much as you love this young person in whom you see so much

promise and potential, God loves that precious person even more.

To pray a novena, it's best to decide on a particular time of day and, if possible, a particular place where you won't be interrupted. If you are journaling, keep your notebook, laptop, or phone (silenced please!) nearby. Get quiet. Settle down. Each time you pray one of the meditations, begin with the sign of the cross, a moment of silence, and the opening prayer (page 9). Then turn to that day's meditation. Give yourself a little time to think about what you have read, then end with an Our Father, a Hail Mary, and a Glory Be (pages 28-29). After you have prayed all nine meditations, end the novena with the closing prayer (page 30).

Pray for perseverance and don't break the streak!

Opening Prayer

(pray before each meditation)

Good and gracious God, thank you for giving us St. Carlo Acutis, a model of life for young people and a messenger of love for all.

Saint Carlo fell in love with Jesus, and the Eucharist was his “highway to heaven.”

He prayed to Mary, his beloved heavenly mother, and, with her rosary, he honored her.

Saint Carlo saw Jesus in everyone—his parents, friends, strangers, and, especially, the poor.

I pray that I, too, may see Jesus in everyone, and that they may see him in me.

Grant me also, through St. Carlo’s intercession, the needs I present before you.

(Mention your needs and intentions here.)

May the example of St. Carlo inspire me to walk in the way of love, and may I someday join him and all the saints in singing your praise for all eternity. Amen.

(Now proceed to the daily meditation.)