

NOVENA TO THE HOLY SPIRIT

with St. Alphonsus

Adapted by David Werthmann



Liguori

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The Patron of Confessors

Saint Alphonsus Liguori (1696–1787) was born into a family of Italian nobility. He earned law degrees in civil and canon law by age sixteen. Upon recognizing corruption within the legal system, he became a priest and founded the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, commonly known as the Redemptorists, in 1732. The mission of his priests and brothers is to serve people who are “poor and most abandoned.” In 1762, he was appointed a bishop. He was ninety when he died in 1787. Pope Gregory XVI canonized him in 1839, and Pope Pius IX named him a doctor of the Church in 1871. Saint Alphonsus’ feast day is August 1.

Alphonsus, who wrote extensively on issues of spirituality and morality, is the patron of confessors. This novena is adapted from one of the many devotionals he wrote for Redemptorist priests and brothers, but it is relevant for everyone. In this shortened version, some of the images have been updated to make them easier to understand for modern readers.

The Holy Spirit

Among all Christian doctrines, the Trinity is perhaps the most difficult to comprehend. It declares that God is a single being yet three distinct persons. We also believe that God is eternal and existed before the creation of the universe. Saint John defines God simply as “love” (see 1 John 4:8, 16). As we know, love must be shared and expressed or it doesn’t exist. So if “God love” existed before creation, it had to have someone to love or it could not have existed. Thus, the Christian tradition maintains that, as love, God exists in a single living being and within the dynamic of perfect, intimate love flowing among the three persons who comprise the one being we call Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is a mystery that is beyond our limited human comprehension, and we will go crazy if we try to figure it out! Yet it is what we profess.

After Jesus appeared to his disciples several times to witness that he truly had risen from the dead, he then prepared to ascend into heaven, and he promised that his Spirit would remain with us here on earth

at all times: “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always” (John 14:16). That “Advocate” is the Holy Spirit whom Jesus sent to be the presence of God always among us. The Holy Spirit constantly nudges us along to do the right thing in our lives.

I hope this booklet can help deepen your awareness of the Holy Spirit’s impact in your life and in our world. Most of all, may it help you grow in your love for God.

DAVID WERTHMANN

Opening Prayer

O Holy Spirit, I believe that you are eternally one with the Father and the Son. I now ask you to help me to grow in holiness by entering my heart to enlighten it and soften it. You overshadowed the Virgin Mary when she conceived. Then, on the first Pentecost you gave the apostles courage and zeal to carry out our Lord's mission throughout the whole world. Now I pray: Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful ones and enkindle in us the fire of your love. Amen.

Litany to the Holy Spirit

Spirit of God, who inflames our hearts,
hear my prayer.

Spirit of God, who enlightens our souls,
hear my prayer.

Spirit of God, fountain of all graces,
hear my prayer.

Spirit of love, who remains with us always,
hear my prayer.

Spirit of love, who calms our restlessness,
hear my prayer.

Spirit of love, who binds us to the Father
and the Son,
hear my prayer.

Spirit of strength, who helps us grow in virtue,
hear my prayer.

Spirit of presence, through whom God dwells
in our hearts,
hear my prayer.

Treasure of love, who contains all goodness,
hear my prayer.

*Now proceed to one of the nine meditations
on the following pages.*