

Novena to the Holy Spirit



BY SAINT ALPHONSUS LIGUORI

Litany of the Holy Spirit

Lord, have mercy on us. **Lord, have mercy on us.**
Christ, have mercy on us. **Christ, have mercy on us.**
Lord, have mercy on us. **Lord, have mercy on us.**

Father all-powerful,
Have mercy on us.
Jesus, Eternal Son of the Father, Redeemer of the world,
Save us.
Spirit of the Father and the Son, boundless life of both,
Sanctify us.
Holy Trinity,
Hear us.
Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
Enter our hearts.
Holy Spirit, who are equal to the Father and the Son,
Enter our hearts.

Promise of God the Father, **have mercy on us.**
Ray of heavenly light, **have mercy on us.**
Author of all good, **have mercy on us.**
Source of heavenly water, **have mercy on us.**
Consuming fire, **have mercy on us.**
Ardent charity, **have mercy on us.**
Spiritual unction, **have mercy on us.**
Spirit of love and truth, **have mercy on us.**
Spirit of wisdom and understanding, **have mercy on us.**
Spirit of counsel and fortitude, **have mercy on us.**
Spirit of knowledge and piety, **have mercy on us.**
Spirit of the fear of the Lord, **have mercy on us.**
Spirit of grace and prayer, **have mercy on us.**
Spirit of peace and meekness, **have mercy on us.**
Spirit of modesty and innocence, **have mercy on us.**
Holy Spirit, the Comforter, **have mercy on us.**
Holy Spirit, the Sanctifier, **have mercy on us.**
Holy Spirit, who governs the Church, **have mercy on us.**
Gift of God, the Most High, **have mercy on us.**
Spirit who fills the universe, **have mercy on us.**
Spirit of the adoption of the children of God, **have mercy on us.**

Holy Spirit, **inspire us with horror of sin.**
Holy Spirit, **come and renew the face of the earth.**
Holy Spirit, **shed your light in our souls.**

Holy Spirit, **engrave your law in our hearts.**
Holy Spirit, **inflamm us with the flame of your love.**
Holy Spirit, **open to us the treasures of your graces.**
Holy Spirit, **teach us to pray well.**
Holy Spirit, **enlighten us with your heavenly inspirations.**
Holy Spirit, **lead us in the way of salvation.**
Holy Spirit, **grant us the only necessary knowledge.**
Holy Spirit, **inspire in us the practice of good.**
Holy Spirit, **grant us the merits of all virtues.**
Holy Spirit, **make us persevere in justice.**
Holy Spirit, **be our everlasting reward.**

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
Send us your Holy Spirit.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
Pour down into our souls the gifts of the Holy Spirit.
Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world,
Grant us the Spirit of wisdom and piety.
Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful,
And enkindle in them the fire of your love.

Let us pray. Grant, O merciful Father, that your Divine Spirit may enlighten, inflame and purify us, that he may penetrate us with his heavenly dew and make us fruitful in good works, through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. **R. Amen.**

Day One Love Is a Fire That Inflames the Heart

GOD HAD ORDERED, in the ancient law, that there should be a fire kept continually burning on His altar: "The fire on the altar shall always burn" (Leviticus 6:12). Saint Gregory says that the altars of God are our hearts, where He desires that the fire of His divine love should always be burning; and therefore the eternal Father, not satisfied with having given us His Son Jesus Christ to save us by His death, would also give us the Holy Spirit, that He might dwell in our souls and keep them constantly on fire with love.

And Jesus Himself declared that He had come into the world on purpose to inflame our hearts with this holy fire, and that He desired nothing more than to see it kindled: "I am come to cast fire on the earth: and what will I, but that it be kindled?" (Luke 12:49). Forgetting, therefore, the injuries and ingratitude He received from men on this earth, when He had ascended into heaven He sent down upon us the Holy Spirit.

Oh, most loving Redeemer, Thou dost, then, love us as well in Thy sufferings and ignominies as in Thy kingdom of glory! This is why the Holy Spirit chose to appear in the upper room under the form of tongues of fire: "And there appeared to them parted tongues as it were of fire" (Acts 2:3). And therefore the Church teaches us to pray: "May the Holy Spirit, we beseech Thee, O Lord, inflame us

with that fire which our Jesus Christ came to cast upon the earth, and which He ardently desired should be enkindled."

This was the holy fire which has inflamed the saints to do such great things for God, to love their enemies, to desire contempt, to deprive themselves of all earthly goods, and to embrace with delight even torments and death. Love cannot remain idle and never says, "This is enough." The soul that loves God, the more she does for her beloved the more she desires to do, in order to please Him and to attract to herself His affections. This holy fire is enkindled by mental prayer. If, therefore, we desire to burn with love for God, let us love prayer; that is the blessed furnace in which this divine ardor is enkindled.

Pray the Litany of the Holy Spirit

Day Two **Love Is a Light That Enlightens the Soul**

ONE of the greatest evils which the sin of Adam has produced in us is that darkening of our reason by means of the passions which cloud our mind. Oh, how miserable is that soul which allows itself to be ruled by any passion! Passion is, as it were, a vapor, a veil which prevents our seeing the truth. How can he fly from evil who does not know what is evil?

Besides, this darkness increases in proportion as our sins increase. But the Holy Spirit, Who is called "most blessed light," is He Who not only inflames our hearts to love Him through His divine splendor, but also dispels our darkness and shows us the vanity of earthly things, the value of eternal goods, the importance of salvation, the worth of grace, the goodness of God, the infinite love which He deserves and the immense love which He bears us. "The sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

A man who is absorbed in the pleasures of the world knows little of these truths and therefore, unfortunate that he is, loves what he ought to hate and hates what he ought to love. Saint Mary Magdalene of Pazzi exclaimed: "Oh, love not known! Oh, love not loved!" And Saint Teresa said that God is not loved because He is not known. Therefore the saints were always seeking light from God: "Send forth Thy light; illuminate my darkness; open Thou my eyes." Yes, because without light we cannot avoid precipices nor find God.

Pray the Litany of the Holy Spirit

Day Three **Love Is a Fountain That Satisfies**

LOVE is also called "a living fountain, fire, and charity." Our blessed Redeemer said to the Samaritan woman: "He that shall drink of the water that I will give him, shall not thirst for ever" (John 4:13). Love is the water which satisfies our thirst; he who loves God really with his whole heart neither seeks nor desires anything else, because in God he finds every good. Therefore, satisfied with God, he often joyfully exclaims, "My God and my all!" My God, Thou art my whole good. But the Almighty complains that many souls go about seeking for fleeting and miserable pleasures from creatures and leave Him, Who is the infinite good and fountain of all joy: "They have

forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and have dug to themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jeremiah 2:13).

Therefore God, Who loves us and desires to see us happy, cries out and makes known to all: "If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink" (John 7:37). He who desires to be happy, let him come to Me; and I will give him the Holy Spirit, Who will make him blessed both in this life and the next. "He that believeth in Me" (He goes on to say), "as the scripture saith, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). He, therefore, who believes in Jesus Christ and loves Him shall be enriched with so much grace that from his heart (the heart, that is the will, is the belly of the soul) shall flow many fountains of holy virtues, which shall not only serve to preserve His own life, but also to give life to others. And this water is the Holy Spirit, the substantial love which Jesus Christ promised to send us from heaven after His ascension: "Now this He said of the Spirit which they should receive, who believed in Him: for as yet the Spirit was not given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39). The key which opens the channels of this blessed water is holy prayer, which obtains every good for us in virtue of the promise, "Ask, and you shall receive." We are blind, poor, and weak; but prayer obtains for us light, strength, and abundance of grace. Theodoret said: "Prayer, though but one, can do all things." He who prays receives all he wants. God desires to give us His graces; but He will have us pray for them.

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Day Four **Love Is a Dew Which Fertilizes**

THUS does Holy Church teach us to pray: "May the infusion of the Holy Spirit cleanse our hearts, and fertilize them by the interior sprinkling of His dew." Love fertilizes the good desires, the holy purposes, and the good works of our souls; these are the flowers and fruits which the grace of the Holy Spirit produces. Love is called dew, because it cools the heart of bad passions and of temptations. Therefore the Holy Spirit is called refreshment and pleasing coolness in the heat. This dew descends into our hearts in time of prayer.

A quarter of an hour's prayer is sufficient to appease every passion of hatred or of inordinate love, however ardent it may be: "He brought me into the cellar of wine, He set in order charity in me" (Canticles 2:4). Holy meditation is the cellar where love is set in order, so that we love our neighbor as ourselves and God above everything. He who loves God loves prayer. He who does not love prayer will find it morally impossible to overcome his passions.

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Day Five **Love Is a Repose That Refreshes**

LOVE is also called "in labor rest, in mourning comfort." Love is repose that refreshes, because the principal office of love is to unite the will of the lover to that of the beloved one. To a soul that loves God, in every affront it receives, in every sorrow it endures, in every loss which happens to it, the knowledge that it is the will of its beloved for it to suffer these trials is enough to comfort it. It finds peace and contentment in all tribulations merely by saying, This is the will of my God. This is that peace which surpasses all the pleasures of sense, "the peace of God, which surpasseth all

understanding" (Philippians 4:7). Saint Mary Magdalene of Pazzi merely by saying "The will of God" was always filled with joy.

In this life everyone must carry his cross. But as Saint Teresa says, the cross is heavy for him who drags it, not for him who embraces it. Thus our Lord knows well how to strike and how to heal: "He woundeth, and cureth" as Job said (5:18). The Holy Spirit, by His sweet unction, renders even ignominies and torments sweet and pleasant: "Yea, Father; for so hath it seemed good in thy sight" (Matthew 11:26). Thus ought we to say in all adversities that happen to us: "So be it done, Lord, because so hath it pleased Thee." And when the fear of any temporal evil that may befall us alarms us, let us always say: "Do what Thou wilt, my God; whatever Thou dost, I accept it all." And it is a very good thing to offer oneself thus constantly during the day to God, as Saint Teresa did.

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Day Six **Love Is the Virtue Which Gives Us Strength**

"LOVE is strong as death" (Canticles 8:6). As there is no created strength which can resist death, so there is no difficulty for a loving soul which love cannot overcome. When there is a question of pleasing its beloved, love conquers all, losses, contempt, and sorrow. "Nothing is so hard, but that the fire of love can conquer it." This is the most certain mark with which to know if a soul really loves God, if it is as faithful in love when things are adverse as when they are prosperous. Saint Francis de Sales said that "God is quite as amiable when He chastises as when He consoles us, because He does all for love."

Indeed, when He strikes us most in this life, then it is that He loves us most. Saint John Chrysostom esteemed Saint Paul in chains more fortunate than Saint Paul caught up into the third heaven. Hence the holy martyrs in the midst of their torments rejoiced and thanked the Lord, as for the greatest favor that could fall to their lot, that of having to suffer for His love. And other saints, where there were no tyrants to afflict them, became their own executioners by the penances which they inflicted upon themselves in order to please God. Saint Augustine says that "For that which men love, either no labor is felt, or the labor itself is loved."

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Day Seven **Love Causes God to Dwell in Our Souls**

THE HOLY SPIRIT is called "Sweet Guest of the soul." This was the great promise made by Jesus Christ to those who love Him, when He said: "If you love Me, keep My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Paraclete, that He may abide with you forever. The Spirit of truth . . . shall abide with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:5-17). For the Holy Spirit never forsakes a soul if He is not driven away from it; He does not forsake, unless He be first forsaken. God, then, dwells in a soul that loves Him. But He declares that he is not satisfied if we do not love Him with our whole heart. Saint Augustine tells us that the Roman Senate would not admit Jesus Christ into the number of their gods because they said that He was a proud god, Who would have none other beloved but Himself. And so it is. He will have no rivals in the heart that loves Him; and when He sees that He is not the only object loved, He is jealous (so to speak).

Saint James writes of those creatures who divide up with Him the heart which He desires to have all to Himself: "Do you think that the scripture saith in vain: To envy doth the Spirit covet which dwelleth in you" (James 4:5). In short, as Saint Jerome says, Jesus is jealous, "Zelotypus est Jesus." Therefore the heavenly spouse praises that soul which, like the turtledove, lives in solitude and hidden from the world (Canticles 1:9). Because He does not choose that the world should take a part of that love which He desires to have all to Himself, therefore He also praises His spouse by calling her "a garden enclosed" (Canticles 4:12), a garden closed against all earthly love. Do we doubt that Jesus deserves our whole love? "He gave Himself wholly to you," says Saint John Chrysostom, "He left nothing for Himself." He has given you all His blood and His life; there is nothing left to give.

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Day Eight **Love Is a Bond Which Binds**

AS THE HOLY SPIRIT, Who is uncreated love, is the indissoluble bond which binds the Father to the eternal Word, so He also unites the soul with God. "Charity is a virtue," says Saint Augustine, "uniting us with God." Hence, full of joy, Saint Laurence Justinian exclaims: Love, your bond has such strength that it is able to bind even God and unite Him to our souls. The bonds of the world are bonds of death; but the bonds of God are bonds of life and salvation (Ecclesiastes 6:31), because the bonds of God by means of love unite us to God, Who is our true and only life.

Before the coming of Jesus Christ, men fled from God and being attached to the earth refused to unite themselves to their Creator. But a loving God has drawn them to Himself by the bonds of love as He promised through the prophet Osee: "I will draw them with the cords of Adam, with the bands of love" (11:4). These bands are the benefits, the lights, the calls to His love, the promises of paradise which He makes to us, the gift which He has bestowed upon us of Jesus Christ in the Sacrifice of the Cross and in the Sacrament of the Altar, and finally, the Gift of His Holy Spirit.

Therefore the prophet exclaims, "Loose the bonds from off thy neck, O captive daughter of Sion" (Isaiah 52:2). Oh my soul, you who are created for heaven, loose yourself from the bonds of earth, and unite yourself to God by the bonds of holy love: "Have charity, which is the bond of perfection" (Colossians 3:14). Love is a bond which unites with herself all other virtues and makes the soul perfect. "Love, and do what thou wilt," said Saint Augustine. Love God, and do what you wish, because he who loves God tries to avoid causing any displeasure to his beloved and seeks in all things to please Him.

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Day Nine **Love Is a Treasure Containing Every Good**

LOVE is that treasure of which the Gospel says that we must leave all to obtain it, because love makes us partakers of the friendship of God, "an infinite treasure to men! which they that use, become the friends of God" (Wisdom 7:14). "Oh man," says Saint Augustine, "why, then, do you go about seeking for good things? Seek that one good alone in which all other good things are

contained." But we cannot find God, Who is this sovereign good, if we do not forsake the things of the earth. Saint Teresa writes, "Detach your heart from creatures, and you will find God." He who finds God finds all that he can desire: "Delight in the Lord, and He will give thee the requests of thy heart" (Psalm 36: 4). The human heart is constantly seeking after good things that may make it happy; but if it seeks them from creatures, however much it may acquire, it will never be satisfied; if it seeks God alone, God will satisfy all its desires. Who are the happiest people in this world, if not the saints? And why? Because they desire and seek only God.

A tyrant offered gold and gems to Saint Clement, in order to persuade him to renounce Jesus Christ. The saint exclaimed with a sigh, "Is God to be put into competition with a little dirt? Blessed is he who knows this treasure of divine love, and strives to obtain it. He who obtains it will of his own accord divest himself of everything else, that he may have nothing else but God." "When the house is on fire," says Saint Francis de Sales, "all the goods are thrown out of the windows." And Father Paul Segneri the Younger, a great servant of God, used to say that love is a thief which robs us of all earthly affections, so that we can say, "And what else do I desire but Thee alone, my Lord?"

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Pentecost, Jean Restout, 1732