

When she was a little better she resumed her prayers with renewed vigor. However on telling others of her visions and spiritual experiences she was dissuaded from persuading them. Certain clergy felt they were just delusions of the devil. As a result, for many years Teresa lost the confidence to pursue her prayers and her spiritual life was almost put on hold. However, when Teresa was 41, she met a Priest who convinced her to go back to her prayers and implore God to come back. Initially, she had some difficulty sitting through prayers. She wryly remarked the end of the hour's prayer couldn't come soon enough. However, in the course of time, she became absorbed in deep contemplation in which she felt an ever growing sense of oneness with God. At times she felt overwhelmed with divine love. The experiences were so transforming, she at times felt the illumining grace of God would wash her soul away. She was so filled with divine contemplation it is said at times her body would spontaneously levitate. Teresa, however was not keen on these public displays of "miracles". When she felt it happening she would ask other nuns to sit on her to prevent her floating away.

Teresa was not a just a quiet, placid saint. She had an endearing, natural quality; her life energy attracted and inspired many who were close. They admired her for both her outer charm and inner serenity. But at the same time her religious ecstasies also caused jealousy and suspicions. Unfortunately she was born into the period of the Spanish inquisition, during this time any deviation from the orthodox religious experience came under the strict observation and scrutiny. On one occasion Teresa complained to God about her mistreatment from so many different people. God replied to her saying "That is how I always treat my friends" with good humour St Teresa replied "That must be why you have so few friends". St Teresa struggled because there were few who could understand or appreciate her inner ecstasies. However on the one hand she felt these experiences to be more real than ordinary events.

At the age of 43 St Teresa decided she wanted to found a new order recommitting to the values of poverty and simplicity. She wanted to move away from her present convent which made a life of prayer more difficult. Initially her aims were greeted with widespread opposition from within the town of Avila. However, with the support of some Priests, the opposition waned and she was allowed to set up her first convent. St Teresa proved to be an influential leader and founder. She guided the nuns not just through strict disciplines, but also through the power of love, and common sense. Her way was not the way of rigid asceticism and self denial. Although she underwent many tribulations herself, to others she stressed the importance of experiencing God's love. As she herself says: *"You know, I no longer govern in the way I used to. Love does everything. I am not sure if that is because no one gives me cause to reprove her, or because I have discovered that things go better in that way."*

*"The important thing is not to think much but to love much and so do that which best stirs you to love. Love is not great delight but desire to please God in everything."*

St Teresa devoted much of the rest of her life to travelling around Spain setting up new convents based along the ancient monastic traditions. Her travels and work were not always greeted with enthusiasm, many resented her reforms and the implied criticism of existing religious orders. She often met with criticism including the papal nuncio who used the rather descriptive phrase "a restless disobedient gadabout who has gone about teaching as though she were a professor" St Teresa also had to frequently contend with difficult living conditions and her frail health. However she never let these obstacles dissuade her from her life's task. She eventually died on October 4 at the age of 67. A fellow sister describes the hours just before the death of St Teresa.

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## ***Novena to Saint Teresa of Avila*** **Recited from October 6th through October 14th**

**Feast Day: October 15th**



**Patronage of:**  
**Bodily ills, headaches, lacemakers, loss of parents,**  
**people in need of grace, people in religious orders,**  
**people ridiculed for their piety,**  
**Požega, Croatia, sick people, and Spain**

# Novena to Saint Teresa of Avila

While in the seminary, Alphonsus Ligouri grew attached to St. Teresa, prayed to her as to an older sister or a mother; and tried to imitate her to the point of pledging himself, as she had done, to do nothing unless it were for the glory of God. She became his Maestra, his teacher of prayer; in life she became his “seconda mamma” (second mother) after the Blessed Mother. From then on all of his letters carried the motto: “Long live Jesus, Mary, Joseph and Teresa” - excerpt from Theodule Rey’Mermet’s St. Alphonsus Ligouri: Tireless Worker for the Most Abandoned.

**From the spiritual diary St. Alphonsus always carried with him, we have this beautiful novena:**

## Day 1:

O most amiable Lord Jesus Christ! We thank Thee for the great gift of faith and of devotion to the Holy Sacrament, which Thou didst grant to Thy beloved Teresa; we pray Thee, by Thy merits and by those of Thy faithful spouse, to grant us the gift of a lively faith, and of a fervent devotion toward the most Holy Sacrament of the altar; where Thou, O infinite Majesty! hast obliged Thyself to abide with us even to the end of the world, and wherein Thou didst so lovingly give Thy whole Self to us.

Say one Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be.

**V.** St. Teresa, pray for us:

**R.** That we may become worthy of the promises of Jesus Christ.

**Let us pray:** Graciously hear us, O God of our salvation! that as we rejoice in the commemoration of the blessed virgin Teresa, so we may be nourished by her heavenly doctrine, and draw from thence the fervour of a tender devotion; through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

## Day 2

O most merciful Lord Jesus Christ! we thank Thee for the great gift of hope which Thou didst grant to Thy beloved Teresa; we pray Thee, by Thy merits, and by those of Thy holy spouse, to give us a great confidence in Thy goodness, by reason of Thy Precious Blood, which Thou hast shed to its last drop for our salvation.

Say one Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be.

**V.** St. Teresa, pray for us:

**R.** That we may become worthy of the promises of Jesus Christ.

St Teresa (Teresa de Cepeda y Ahumada) was born in Avila, Spain on 28th March 1515. Her parents were both pious Catholics and in some ways inspired their daughter to take up a life of prayer. As a young child Teresa showed signs of a deeply religious nature; she would often retreat into silence for prayer and would enjoy giving alms to the poor. She was very close to her Mother, who provided a warm counterbalance, to the strictness of her father. However in her teens, Teresa’s mother passed away, leaving the young Teresa distraught at the void she felt. The young St Teresa tells of her despair and how she turned instinctively to the Virgin Mary for comfort.

*“I threw myself down in despair before an image of the Mother of God. With many tears, I implored the Holy Virgin to become my mother now. Uttered with the simplicity of a child, this prayer was heard. From that hour on, I never prayed to the Virgin in vain.”*

During her later teen years Avila lost some of her early piety and religious zeal. She recounted how she became interested in worldly matters and enjoyed the company of a wide circle of friends. She had a natural charm and found it easy to make friends. In return she enjoyed the compliments and friendships of others. However, she was not at peace, considering herself to be a miserable sinner; later she would look back in guilt at her early life. However this sense of being a “miserable sinner” was probably the result of a harsh self-judgment, encouraged by her fathers exacting religious standards. At the age of 16, her father decided to send Teresa to a convent school to be educated. This re ignited in Avila an interest in following a spiritual life and after some deliberation resolved to become a nun of the Carmelite Order. At the time the convent rules were not very strict; it was probably more relaxed than living with her father. At the time the convent accepted many people into the order, often for financial reasons. The convent became overcrowded and people were often judged not on the basis of spiritual intensity but on material possessions. In this climate Teresa struggled to find time for quiet reflection; although she did start teaching people on the virtues of mental prayer.

Shortly after becoming a nun, Avila experienced a severe illness (malaria), which left her in great pain for a long period. At one point it was feared that her illness was so severe that she would not be able to recover. However during this period of intense physical pain, she began to increasingly experience divine visions and an inner sense of peace. These inner experiences of joy and peace seemed to transcend the intense physical pain of the body. She describes in her own words her state of mind during these trials and tribulations.

## Day 9

Lastly, O dearest Lord Jesus Christ! we thank Thee for the gift of the precious death which Thou didst grant to Thy beloved Teresa, making her sweetly to die of love; we pray Thee, by Thy merits, and by those of Thy most affectionate spouse, to grant us a good death; and if we do not die of love, yet, that we may at least die burning of love for Thee, that so dying, we may be able to go and love Thee for evermore with a more perfect love in heaven. Amen.

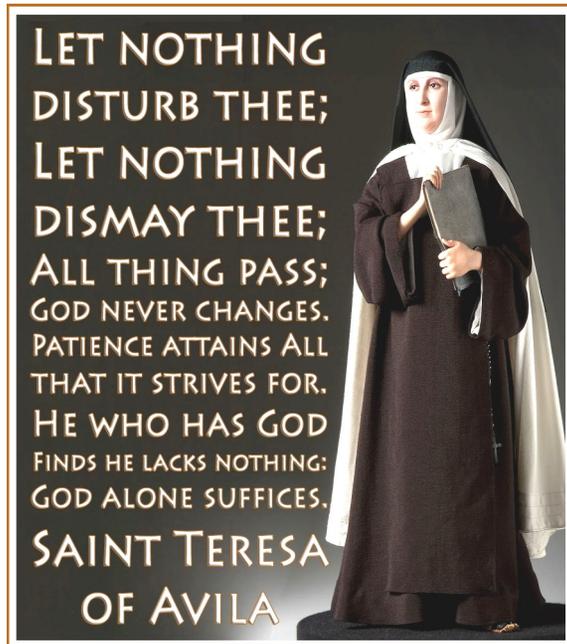
Say one Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be.

**V.** St. Teresa, pray for us:

**R.** That we may become worthy of the promises of Jesus Christ.

**Let us pray:** Graciously hear us, O God of our salvation! that as we rejoice in the commemoration of the blessed virgin Teresa, so we may be nourished by her heavenly doctrine, and draw from thence the fervour of a tender devotion; through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

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**Let us pray:** Graciously hear us, O God of our salvation! that as we rejoice in the commemoration of the blessed virgin Teresa, so we may be nourished by her heavenly doctrine, and draw from thence the fervour of a tender devotion; through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

## Day 3

O most loving Lord Jesus Christ! we thank Thee for the great gift of love which Thou didst grant to Thy beloved Teresa; we pray Thee, by Thy merits, and by those of Thy most loving spouse, to give us the great, the crowning gift of Thy perfect love.

Say one Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be.

**V.** St. Teresa, pray for us:

**R.** That we may become worthy of the promises of Jesus Christ.

**Let us pray:** Graciously hear us, O God of our salvation! that as we rejoice in the commemoration of the blessed virgin Teresa, so we may be nourished by her heavenly doctrine, and draw from thence the fervour of a tender devotion; through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

## Day 4

O most sweet Lord Jesus Christ! we thank Thee for the gift of great desire and resolution which Thou didst grant to Thy beloved Teresa, that she might love Thee perfectly; we pray Thee, by Thy merits, and by those of Thy most generous spouse, to give us a true desire, and a true resolution of pleasing Thee the utmost of our power. Amen.

Say one Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be.

**V.** St. Teresa, pray for us:

**R.** That we may become worthy of the promises of Jesus Christ.

**Let us pray:** Graciously hear us, O God of our salvation! that as we rejoice in the commemoration of the blessed virgin Teresa, so we may be nourished by her heavenly doctrine, and draw from thence the fervour of a tender devotion; through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

## Day 5

O most kind Lord Jesus Christ! we thank Thee for the great gift of humility which Thou didst grant to Thy beloved Teresa; we pray Thee, by Thy merits, and by those of Thy most humble spouse, to grant us the grace of a true humility, which may make us ever find our joy in humiliation, and prefer contempt before every honor.

Say one Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be.

**V.** St. Teresa, pray for us:

**R.** That we may become worthy of the promises of Jesus Christ.

**Let us pray:** Graciously hear us, O God of our salvation! that as we rejoice in the commemoration of the blessed virgin Teresa, so we may be nourished by her heavenly doctrine, and draw from thence the fervour of a tender devotion; through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

## Day 6

O most bountiful Lord Jesus Christ! we thank Thee for the gift of devotion towards Thy sweet mother, Mary and her holy spouse, Joseph, which Thou didst grant to Thy beloved Teresa; we pray Thee, by Thy merits, and by those of Thy most dear spouse, to give us the grace of a special and tender devotion towards Thy most holy mother, Mary, and towards Thy beloved foster-father, Joseph. Amen.

Say one Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be.

**V.** St. Teresa, pray for us:

**R.** That we may become worthy of the promises of Jesus Christ.

**Let us pray:** Graciously hear us, O God of our salvation! that as we rejoice in the commemoration of the blessed virgin Teresa, so we may be nourished by her heavenly doctrine, and draw from thence the fervour of a tender devotion; through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

## Day 7

O most loving Lord Jesus Christ! we thank Thee for the wonderful gift of the wound in the heart which Thou didst grant to Thy beloved Teresa; we pray Thee, by Thy merits, and by those of Thy seraphic spouse, to grant us also a like wound of love, that, henceforth, we may love Thee and give our mind to the love of nothing but Thee. Amen.

Say one Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be.

**V.** St. Teresa, pray for us:

**R.** That we may become worthy of the promises of Jesus Christ.

**Let us pray:** Graciously hear us, O God of our salvation! that as we rejoice in the commemoration of the blessed virgin Teresa, so we may be nourished by her heavenly doctrine, and draw from thence the fervour of a tender devotion; through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.

## Day 8

O most beloved Lord Jesus Christ! we thank Thee for the eminent gift of the desire for death which Thou didst grant to Thy beloved Teresa; we pray Thee, by Thy merits, and by those of Thy most constant spouse, to grant us the grace of desiring death, in order to go and possess Thee eternally in the country of the blessed. Amen.

Say one Our Father, Hail Mary and Glory be.

**V.** St. Teresa, pray for us:

**R.** That we may become worthy of the promises of Jesus Christ.

**Let us pray:** Graciously hear us, O God of our salvation! that as we rejoice in the commemoration of the blessed virgin Teresa, so we may be nourished by her heavenly doctrine, and draw from thence the fervour of a tender devotion; through our Lord Jesus Christ, Thy Son, Who liveth and reigneth with Thee in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen.