

## Devotions/Novena

My dear friends in Christ,

Prayer is one of the means that bring hope and strength to the children of God. It is a participation in the life of God, and we need prayers now more than ever. This month, I would like to draw our attention to one of the hallmarks of our faith: devotions and novenas. Devotion is the disposition to give willingly, promptly, and earnestly to the worship and service of God. This attitude of the will shows itself by our readiness to honor God and to fulfill his will. In other words, a person's devotion is grounded in a great love for God.

In our parish, we dedicate first Fridays and Saturdays of each month as days of special devotions to the Sacred Heart of Jesus and Immaculate Heart of Mary. Why these days?

### **First Fridays Devotions**

The feast day honoring the Sacred Heart of Jesus occurs officially on the Friday following the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost. Friday was so chosen because it is intended as a continuation of the event of Good Friday, the day on which Our Savior, Jesus Christ through his death on the cross brought us salvation. It commemorates salvation itself. It celebrates the truth that God is love and he desires all people to discover him through Christ and respond to his love.

We can elicit such a response more readily by contemplating the sufferings of Jesus Christ for us. The pierced Heart on the Cross is a symbol of this suffering and redemptive love. From it flowed "blood and water, the fountain of sacramental life in the Church."

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Jesus appeared to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque and revealed to her that the first Friday of each month be consecrated to the devotion to and adoration of His most Sacred Heart. Through St Margaret Mary, Our Savior says to us: ***"I promise you, in the excessive mercy of My Heart, that My all powerful love will grant to all those who receive Holy Communion on the First Friday for nine consecutive months, the grace of final repentance; they shall not die in My disgrace nor without receiving the sacraments; My divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in that last moment."***

The devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, is nothing more than an exercise of love toward our loving Savior. Please join us for 12:00 pm Mass on First Fridays.

### **First Five Saturdays Devotion**

Saturdays stand out among those days dedicated to the Virgin Mary. These are designated as memorials of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This memorial began in the ninth century. However, separating from its historical origins, today the memorial rightly emphasizes certain values to which our spiritual life is more sensitive: it is a remembrance of the maternal example and discipleship of the Blessed Virgin Mary who, strengthened by faith and hope, on that great Saturday on which Our Lord lay in the tomb, was the only one of the disciples to hold vigil in expectation of the Lord's resurrection; it is a prelude and introduction to the celebration of Sunday, the weekly memorial of the Resurrection of Christ; it is a sign that the Virgin Mary is continuously present and operative in the life of the Church.

The practice of the Five First Saturdays devotion was requested by Our Lady through Sr. Lucia on December 10, 1925, at Fatima. ***"I promise to assist at the hour of death, with the graces necessary for salvation, all who, on the First Saturday of five consecutive months, confess their sins, receive Holy Communion, recite five decades of the Rosary, and keep me company for 15 minutes meditating on the mysteries of the Rosary, with the purpose of making reparation to my Immaculate Heart."***

Our Blessed Mother Mary is simply requesting you to pray and spend time with her every first Saturday. How do you respond? Join us on first Saturdays: **8:00 am Confessions, 8:30 am Rosary, 9:00 am Mass in the Church.**

### **Novena During the Month of October**

Each week during the month of October, we will publish a novena to pray and honor our Blessed Mother. I ask every parishioner to immerse yourself and family in daily novena prayer during this month of October. From October 2-10, our parish novena is in honor of **"The Divine Maternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary."** See the next page in the bulletin for the novena prayer. Please join in praying the following novena.

In Christ,

--Fr. Anthony Ahamefule