

Novena in Honor of God the Holy Spirit

Prayers and Daily Meditations from:

The Paraclete: A Manual of Instruction and Devotion

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Seventh day of the novena

1. *"Bend thou what is rigid."*

Sin darkens the mind, hardens the heart, and renders the will stiff and stubborn so as to refuse to submit to God's holy will and yield to the guidance of His Divine Spirit. Obstinacy is, therefore, a common ingredient of every sin. But obstinacy sometimes reaches such a degree as to constitute a special sin. Of this sin, the Jews as a nation were guilty in a particular manner, which made St. Stephen say to them: "With a stiff neck and uncircumcised heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Ghost. As your fathers did, so do you also." This sin of obstinately is usually fatal; for it is one of the sins directly opposed to the Holy Ghost.

Are you stubborn and obstinate? You may not have gone quite so far as to resist the Holy Ghost entirely. But are there not a number of small infidelities of which you are guilty, almost every day, though small they should not be called; called; for it is no small matter to resist the Holy Ghost, and you do resist Him each time you fall into deliberate venial sins.

Are you not stubborn and obstinate, when you refuse to correct certain faults and when you are displeased at being reprimanded even by those who have a right to do so? Does not this clearly show that your heart is still attached to sin?

Are you not stubborn and obstinate when you display a certain coldness and harshness in the intercourse with your fellowmen, when you refuse to be reconciled to them, when you are hard and over-exacting with regard to those who owe you anything?

Examine yourself well, and do not refuse to acknowledge that, in many ways, your will has become stubborn and obstinate. Then beg and implore the Divine Spirit to render your will pliable to the influence of His Divine grace.

Ask Him to give you the grace so to hate sin as to avoid every deliberate venial sin and correct yourself of your failings and shortcomings. Ask him to make you docile and obedient so as to put no obstacles to the workings of His Divine grace, but always follow His inspirations. Ask him to make you meek and humble, kind, and gentle, loving and forgiving. Thus will the Holy Ghost bend in your regard that which is rigid and render it yielding to his loving influence.

2. *"Warm Thou what is cold."*

Selfishness is a dangerous and insidious vice; and yet, like obstinacy, it enters, in some degree or another, into every sin. He who is selfish, thinks only of himself, loves only himself, works only for himself, and since all his motives are concentrated upon self, there is no room left either for God or for his fellow-men.

Selfishness, therefore, dries up the very root and source of true charity, which is the love of God and of one's neighbor. And is not every sin opposed to charity? But selfishness always becomes at times a special sin, and a sin, which unfortunately is not uncommon.

But what is the effect of selfishness upon the human heart? Love enlarges the heart and renders sensible to the claims of God and man. Selfishness narrows the heart and makes it insensible to divine and human claims. Love sets the heart all on fire and makes its gentle influence to be felt all around. Selfishness, dries up all gentle feelings, makes the heart cold, and diffuses an atmosphere of icy chill. Love brings with it its own reward, for it fills the heart with joy and gladness. Selfishness brings in its train its own punishment; for it causes misery and wretchedness. Love is the very life of the human heart. Selfishness is its death. In fact, the selfish are said to have no heart.

Are you not selfish in many ways? When will you cease to be so? Call upon the Divine Spirit of Love to breathe upon your cold heart, and to melt that icy crust of selfishness. Thus He will warm that which is cold and make you aglow with the fire of His own Divine Love.

3. *"Guide Thou what is erring."*

Sin causes man to turn aside from God and turn to creatures. The sinner forgets that God alone is his true end and destiny, and fixes all his attention upon creatures as though he were made for them. He loses sight of heaven, his true home, and attaches himself to the things of this earth, as though he would live forever on this earth. He becomes indifferent about the eternal interests of his immortal soul and labors only for the perishable goods of this world. All such have gone astray altogether.

You may have not turned aside from God entirely, and yet be as an erring sheep that has gone astray. To allow too much liberty to your thoughts and desires, not to keep a proper check on your imaginations and passions, not to watch sufficiently over your senses and appetites, to think too much of the necessities of your perishable body, to be engrossed too much with the cares of this world, to allow your heart to be attached to trifles: all this turns aside, distracts you and hinders your progress on the way to heaven.

Then pray to the Divine Spirit to lead you into the right path that leads straight to your heavenly country. Ask Him for the grace to have your eyes always fixed on God, your first beginning and last end, and to do all your actions with a pure motive of pleasing God and saving your immortal soul.

Be guided in all things by the Holy Ghost. Devotedly obey God's Holy Church and faithfully submit to all lawful authority. Thus He guides externally. Be careful to hear and obey the inspirations of Divine grace, by which He guides you internally. Thus the Divine Spirit will guide in you that which is erring. And if He be your guide, you will never stray from the right path, but infallibly reach your final end and destiny.