

Novena to Saint Paul Apostle

Please join the parish in praying the August novena using the daily petitions provided.

DAY ONE

Special request: An increase of faith and our urgent human needs.

St. Paul knew people in Rome and he mentions them in his Letter to the Romans. At the time of the writing of this epistle, he had not yet visited the city. This Letter was an introduction to people who had heard of Paul but by and large had not met him personally. He used this inspired letter to explain his faith and to strengthen the belief of the Christians in Rome. Reading this Letter can also make us wiser today than we were yesterday and wiser still tomorrow.

St. Paul's Prayers and Thoughts: Romans 1:8-11 "First of all, I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ for all of you, because of your faith that is being proclaimed throughout the world. God is my witness – Whom I serve with my spirit by proclaiming the good news of his Son – that I continually mention you in my prayers and ask that somehow by God's will I'll finally manage to come to you and to share with you some spiritual gift in order to strengthen you, that is so we may be mutually encouraged by one another's faith, both yours and mine."

Romans: 15:13 "May God, the source of hope, fill you with all joy and peace through your belief in Him, so that you will overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Romans 15:30-33 "I beg you, my brothers, by our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of the Spirit, to join me in my struggle so that I may be delivered from unbelievers ... and that my service in Jerusalem will be acceptable to the saints so that God willing, I'll come to you full of joy and find rest with you. May God who gives peace be with you all. Amen."

Prayer

St. Paul from your place in heaven we ask you continually to pray for us in the manner you prayed for the Romans. May our faith and love of the Gospel bring light into our families, parishes, community and the entire world. May our witness even be a cause for increasing the joy of the angels and saints who surround you. We, however, are surrounded by unbelievers

and are assailed on every side. May you come to us with some spiritual gift in order to strengthen us. May we on earth encourage one another in the faith. May we be strong even though we feel so weak and inadequate. So often we know the right thing to do but find ourselves doing just the opposite (Rom 7:20) yet you assure us that ultimately nothing can separate us from Christ (Rom 8:35). When you were in this world you sought to address the human as well as the spiritual needs of people. You aided the poor of Jerusalem in powerful and practical ways knowing the physical aid you brought them would make it easier for them to have faith and trust in the God of love. With confidence, we ask you to help us with our urgent natural obligations and our needs of food, shelter, clothing and health. More than that, however, we ask you to draw us closer to Jesus, crucified and risen who is the way, truth and life for the world. In this way, we will be filled with peace, joy and that hope that comes from God, which the world can never understand or destroy. Amen.

Our Father ...

Hail Mary ...

Glory Be ...

DAY 2

Special request: Achieving and maintaining peace in our families and communities.

Paul wrote the Epistle to the Ephesians to help them focus on heavenly matters and at the same time he addressed practical ways for a person to grow in the love of God and neighbor. While in Ephesus Paul performed many miracles, won many converts, overcame demons, and caused the pagans to riot as they saw the source of their temple income begin to dry up.

St. Paul's Prayers and Thoughts:

Ephesians 1:16-19 "I give unceasing thanks and mention you in my prayers that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation by which you'll come to a knowledge of Him. May the eyes of your hearts be enlightened so you'll come to know what the hope is to which He calls you, how rich the glorious heritage which will be shared among the saints, and how extraordinary is his great power for us who believe."

Ephesians 3:13-19 "Therefore I ask you not to lose heart because of the afflictions I'm suffering on your behalf – this is your glory." "Because of this I bend my knees to the Father. From him every family in the heavens and on earth is named, so that from the riches of his glory He may grant you inner strength and power through His Spirit. May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith, firmly rooted and established in love, so that with all the saints you may be able to understand the breath, the height, and the depth, and know Christ's love which surpasses all knowledge so that you may be filled with God's fullness. Now to Him, Who is able to do so much more than we can ask for or imagine, by the power of the work in us, to Him be glory in the Church in Christ Jesus for all generations forever and ever, Amen."

Prayer

St. Paul, as you stand before the Father and the Lord Jesus in eternity, pray for us unceasingly just as you prayed for the Ephesians when you were on Earth. Pray that we gain wisdom and knowledge. Enlighten the eyes of our hearts so we can see the world as God sees it. As you bend your knees before the Father in heaven, pray for our families here on earth that we may live in harmony as we grow in the humility, gentleness, patience and the love (Eph 4:1) that comes from the Holy Spirit. If we are angry let it be without sin and never let the sun go down on our anger (Eph 4:26). St Paul, beloved apostle pray that we be delivered from "all bitterness, wrath, angry shouting slander and malice" (Eph 4:31) If we are frightened by the powers of darkness and sin help us put on the armor of Christ (Eph 6:14-17). When we are afflicted may we unite our sufferings to Christ just as you did but, if it is God's will, deliver us quickly from our sorrows so that they might never crush us, who are so weak, and we might sing the praises of God for his mercy towards us. Help us to be rooted and established in love so that we can gain some understanding of the height, breath and depth of Christ's love for us that surpasses our imagination. When we feel alone, misunderstood and even abandoned it will be this knowledge that will give us inner strength and power so that we might walk in love (Eph 5:2) all the days of our lives. Amen.

Our Father ...

Hail Mary ...

Glory Be ...

DAY 3

Special request: Leading lives of joy and generosity while receiving the help we need.

Paul loved the Philippians and they supported him in his mission. In his letter to them we see the joy that Paul had in serving the Lord and his desire that others might share in his delight. Even though he was under arrest at the time of his writing the letter even his chains could not dampen his enthusiasm for the Gospel.

St. Paul's Prayers and Thoughts:

Philippians 1: 3-11 "I give thanks to my God every time I think of you. Whenever I pray for you I pray joyfully, because of your partnership in the good news from the first day to the present. Of this I am convinced, that the one who began the good work in you will bring it to completion on the Day of Jesus Christ. It is right that I should feel this way about you because I have you in my heart, and because you all share my grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the good news. For God is my witness that I long for all of you with the affection of Jesus Christ. My prayer is that your love will increase more and more with knowledge and every manner of insight so that you will be able to discover what's best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of the righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God."

Prayer

Beloved St. Paul, help us live our lives with such integrity, purity and innocence that you will rejoice before the throne of God as you remember us in your prayers. Deepen our love, broaden our knowledge and sharpen our insight. May your prayers aid us in the work God has begun in us so that we may grow in grace day by day and share with our fellow believers a partnership in spreading the news of God's love on Earth. When we feel trapped by the hardships and limitations this life imposes upon us, may we remember how you handled your own imprisonment and suffering. Help us to face the difficult challenges in our lives with a sense of divine confidence. We understand that all true righteousness comes from Jesus, our Lord and Savior. On the bases of His power we hope to be found blameless on the day we meet Christ in eternity for our own judgment. We know that you have an affection for us similar to the one you had for the Philippians. Help us return your love and live in the intense way that you did serving God and

neighbor. May you rejoice in us as we live and act with one mind and spirit (Phil 2:2). We stand in the midst of a twisted and perverted generation (Phil 2:14-15) but by the grace of the Christ, whom you served so well, we are confident that we will be able to live our lives in such a way that we will be like stars in the midst of the darkness. When you were hungry and imprisoned, the Philippians came to your aid (Phil 4:12-14). You in turn prayed that all of their needs would be filled from the fullness of the riches of Christ (Phil 4:19). May we learn to help those in need around us and may you petition the Lord of life to send people into our midst to help us with our spiritual and physical needs. Pour out the riches of Christ upon us so that we may share them with others. Amen

Our Father ...

Hail Mary ...

Glory be ...

DAY 4

Special request: Persevering in prayer in times of struggle and hardship.

Paul had never been to Colossae but had heard about the faith community there and rejoiced in its growth. However, it was experiencing controversies and disputes about the true meaning of the Gospel. In response to these difficulties he wrote this inspired letter.

St. Paul's Prayers and Thoughts:

Colossians 1:3-14 "When we pray for you we give thanks through the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ because we've heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and your love for all the saints which comes from the hope stored up for you in heaven ...

Therefore, from the day we heard of you we haven't ceased praying for you. May God fill you with the knowledge of His will through wisdom and all manner of spiritual understanding that you might conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Lord and fully pleasing to him—fruitful in every type of good work and increasing in knowledge of God. We pray that you will be strengthened with all the power of His glorious might so that your steadfastness and patience will be perfected and you may joyfully give thanks to the Father Who made you worthy to share in the portion of the saints in light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and has brought us into the kingdom of his Son by whom we are redeemed and our sins forgiven."

Prayer

St. Paul, please never cease praying for us, who are in such dire need. Through your intercession may we grow in wisdom and all manner of spiritual understanding so that we may conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the Lord. Multiply our good works and help us be steadfast in our resolve to live and love the way the Lord has taught us. More than anything else we, too, want to share in the light of the saints both now in this darkened world and eventually with you in eternity. May we not be misled by empty philosophies or mere human traditions (Col 2:8). May we avoid being confused by spurious visionaries but cling to sound doctrine (Col 2:18). May we be free from a scrupulosity that would fill our lives with endless rules and regulations and rob us of joy (Col 2:21-23). However, let us recognize the evil of sin and avoid fornication, evil desires, malice, greed, wrath, obscene language and slander. (Col 3:5 & 8). May we be clothed in compassion, humility, patience, gentleness and the capacity to forgive others and bear with one another (Col 3:12). Above all else through your intercession may we be clothed in love. Help us, persevere in prayer with a sense of thanksgiving even in hard times. When you were chained and imprisoned you were able to bless your persecutors and sing the praises of God. From your prison cell you were able to teach people how to be truly free. Give us this freedom and aid us in those everyday struggles that might wear us down. Help us so that we will be in a position to help others. Amen.

Our Father ...

Hail Mary ...

Glory Be ...

DAY 5

Special request: Finding and maintaining gainful employment and comforting us in time of grief.

The First Letter to the Thessalonians is the earliest inspired writing of the New Testament. It dates from around the year 50AD. The events surrounding the letter can be found in Acts 16:6 to 18:5. The letter is very moving and St. Paul's affectionate nature is apparent throughout. He loved and was loved by the believing community in Thessalonica.

St. Paul's Prayers and Thoughts:

1 Thessalonians 1:2 "We always give thanks to God for all of you and mention you in our prayers, constantly calling to mind before our God and Father your active faith, your loving labors and your steadfast hope in the Lord Jesus."

1 Thessalonians 5:23 "May the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your spirit, soul and body be kept sound and blameless for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls us is faithful and He will do it! Brothers pray for us too!"

2 Thessalonians 1:11-12 "We pray always that this will come to pass for you, that God will consider you worthy of his call, and that by his power He will fulfill every desire for goodness and every work of faith, so that the name of the Lord Jesus will be glorified in you, and you in it, in accordance with the grace of our God and Lord Jesus Christ."

Prayer

Beloved Apostle Paul may our faith, labor and hope be a cause for you to give thanks to God in eternity. Like the Thessalonians, we desperately need your prayers so that we can be kept sound in body, soul and spirit and face the day of the Lord with a clean conscience. We know that God will always remain faithful but we fear our own weakness and inconstancy. You rejoiced because the Thessalonians accepted you as a brother and adopted you as one of their own and you in turn were as gentle with them as a mother nursing her infant (1 Thes. 2:7). We sincerely invite you into our families and our lives so that you can nurture us with the Gospel. You urged the Thessalonians to live quiet lives of productive labor supporting themselves and their families (1 Thes 4:11-21). Help us do the same. When unemployed, help us find work. When working help us share what we can with others. Assist us and our family members in overcoming the vice of laziness (1 Thes. 5: 14) and every other evil that tempts us. Help us especially carry out the works of faith so that God can be made manifest in our lives. St. Paul pray for us that we may prove worthy of the call God has given us even in times of sorrow and grief. When we are heartbroken because we have lost someone in death, pray for us and console us with the truth of the resurrection just as you comforted the Thessalonians when you were on earth (1 Thes. 4:13-18). This consolation will help us be constant in hope and steadfast in our faith. This is the faith that gives us a peace that the world can never understand or grasp. Through our faith in the resurrected Lord Jesus we hope one day to be with you in eternity praising the God who loves us beyond anything we can imagine. Amen

Our Father ...
Hail Mary ...
Glory be ...

DAY 6

Special request: A prayer for political leaders to be just and Church leaders to be holy.

Some scholars affirm that the letter to Timothy was written after Paul's death and is not authentically Pauline. Others however believe that it was written between the writing of One and Two Corinthians. The intent of the letter is clear. The author wanted to strengthen the Church in its structure and its charity and this was something that St. Paul always strove to do.

St. Paul's Prayers and Thoughts:

1 Timothy 2:1-2 "First of all I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgiving be made for all men – for the kings and all those in positions of authority—that we may lead a peaceful quiet life, holy and respectable in every way."

Prayer

St. Paul, you taught, strengthened and encouraged Timothy by word and example. You formed him into an effective leader and servant of the Church. Your wisdom was an indispensable aid to him as you supported him in his vocation. You reminded him of his primary duty to be a person of prayer. His prayer was not only to be for the flock he tended but for all of humanity and especially the leaders and those in authority in this world. Only through such a life of prayer can we hope to experience the peace we all long for. St. Paul, pray with us for the political leaders whose power and responsibility is so great. Pray for the diplomats so that they can find ways to resolve conflict without war. Pray for the leaders of democracies so that they can act in the long term interest of their people rather than think only of short term political gain. Pray for the dictators of the world so their hearts of stone will be softened and they will learn how to share power with their people and pave the way for more humane ways of organizing society. We pray with you, St. Paul, that theocracies may allow minority religions to exist in peace and have authentic freedom to worship and speech. We pray that political leaders will fight corruption, check crime, and provide genuine security for their lands. We understand that a stable just society is the responsibility of every person and ultimately must be supported by a sense

of justice that is truly Godly and life affirming. You reminded Timothy that the love of money is the root of so much evil in the world (1 Tim 6:10) and you urged those who were wealthy to use their riches to perform good deeds (1 Tim 6:12-19). St. Paul, help us use our influence and resources well and wisely. However, often we do not have the temptations that come from having excessive wealth but are struggling to just get by from day to day. Aid us in our struggles so we will not succumb to temptation and despair. St. Paul, pray to the Lord to send into our midst religious sisters and brothers, deacons, priests and bishops who like Timothy will be above reproach, temperate, sensible, peaceful, gentle, sober, sound in doctrine and humble (1 Tim 3:1-6). Pray with us St. Paul, that our Church may truly be holy and our civil society truly just. Amen.

Our Father ...
Hail Mary ...
Glory Be ...

DAY 7

Special request: Prayer for freedom in the midst of an unjust oppressive world.

The Letter to Philemon is a short but moving piece. Paul while in prison meets a runaway slave who has converted to the faith. Although he is serving Paul in critical ways, Paul sends him back to his master Philemon recommending he be treated as a brother in Christ.

St. Paul's Prayers and Thoughts:

Philemon 1:3 I always give thanks to God when I mention you in my prayers, for I hear the faith and love you have for the Lord Jesus in all the Saints, and I pray that the fellowship in the faith may serve to lead you to a deeper understanding of all the good that we have in Christ. Your love has been a great joy and comfort to me because the hearts of the saints have been refreshed through you, my brother.

Prayer

St Paul in your heavenly glory you are completely free. Chains can never bind you. Pray, however, for our freedom. First of all pray that we be delivered from the slavery of sin and vice. Next we ask you to intercede for so that we might obtain the freedom that comes from faith, hope, charity, courage, prudence, temperance and a knowledge of justice. Finally, give us a prayer life that embraces the entire world and goes beyond our own

immediate needs. Unite our prayers with yours, as together, we plead for an enslaved and struggling humanity. St. Paul, remember those who are forced into literal slave labor of one form or another. Pray with us for those who are sexually exploited and abused and moved like commodities around the nation and the world to fulfill the evil desires of men. Paul you labored with your hands so as not to be a burden to anyone, but remember in your prayers those individuals working long hours in unsafe factories, sweatshops and mines around the world just to survive. Pray, St. Paul that the migrant workers be treated fairly and with respect as they move from place to place to support their families. May we pray for those unjustly imprisoned, victims of war, crime, civil strife and racism. St. Paul, pray with us for victims of famine, pestilence, floods, fires and other natural disasters. In a special way St. Paul remember all the parents of this world who are at this moment are watching their children die of illness and starvation. We know that Jesus our Divine Master hears the cry of the poor and the desperate prayers coming from billions of people around the world. In love we want to offer our prayers along with yours, St. Paul, to the Savior who sets us free. In doing this we are confident that the Father and Son together will send the Holy Spirit into our lives to meet the challenges that we face which are important to us but in the greater scheme of things are relatively minor. Amen.

Our Father ...

Hail Mary ...

Glory Be ...

DAY 8

Special request: Prayer for a generous spirit and unity of heart.

In Luke's Acts of the Apostles we clearly see how much the Christian community loved Paul and how deep his affection was for people Luke the beloved physician captures this reality in the farewell passage at Miletus:

Luke's Account:

Acts 20:31 "So stay awake; remember that for three years, both day and night, I didn't cease exhorting each one of you with tears. And now I commend you to God and His word of grace which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all His holy ones. In every possible way I have shown you that we must help the weak by working hard like this, mindful of the word of the Lord Jesus Himself, 'It's more blessed to give

then to receive.' After saying this he got on his knees and prayed with them all. They all wept a great deal and embraced Paul and kissed him because they were especially pained by what he said about never seeing his face again."

Prayer

St. Paul, while on earth you were forced to say goodbye to those you loved. Now you live in the kingdom where love is the only reality and you have no more tears to shed. We ask you to be lovingly united to us who are in the midst of the battle for salvation in a world filled with personal sin, vice and social injustice. We need your strength and wisdom to guide us and we are confident that you will continually intercede for us so that our great pilgrimage on earth may be successfully concluded one day before the throne of God. Help the Church today to be united in spirit and affection. May we who worship together live in harmony and recognize, as you did, that everyone has unique roles to play in building up the kingdom of God on earth. May our parishes, dioceses, religious communities, and the universal Church be united in heart as well as doctrine so that the non-believers will say, "See how they love one another." In your life you faced conflicts, disagreements and misunderstandings with your fellow saints here on Earth. Now all of you are worshipping together before the throne of God. Help us, see the goodness and grace that fills the believers around us and teach us to reverence one another so that we will truly be prepared to live with one another in eternity. St. Paul, you who now contemplate the face of God, Father, Son and Spirit, teach us to see that face reflected in our fellow human beings who were created in God's image and likeness. Help us see beyond the disfigurement caused by sin and with the eyes of faith see in those around us and ourselves the handiwork of God. St. Paul you were a great sinner but the blinding, eye opening light of Jesus transformed you into a great saint. Intercede for us so that we too may become the children of God we are truly called to be. May God the Father see and love in us what he sees and loves in his Son and may we be filled with the Holy Spirit that transforms us into one body on earth. Amen.

Our Father ...

Hail Mary ...

Glory Be ...

DAY 9

Special request: Devout reception of the Eucharist.

St. Paul converted the Corinthians by preaching Christ Crucified. It was a large and wealthy city that was known for its promiscuous way of life. The people had indulged in every pleasure and were not satisfied. When Paul came to them preaching love they were ready to hear the Good News.

St. Paul's Prayers and Thoughts:

1 Corinthians 11:23-34 "For I received from the Lord what I handed down to you, that on the night he was betrayed the Lord took bread and after blessing it he broke it and said, "this is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me! In the same way he took the cup after he had eaten and said, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me!" For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the death of the Lord, until he comes.

Therefore, if anyone eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily, he'll be answerable to the body and blood of the Lord. Each of you should first examine yourself and then eat the bread and drink from the cup, for whoever eats and drinks without recognizing the body and drinks judgment to himself. That is why so many of you are weak and ill, and considerable number have died....."

1 Cor 13:4-7 "Love is patient, love is kind, it isn't jealous, doesn't boast, isn't arrogant. Love is not dishonorable, isn't selfish, isn't irritable, doesn't keep a record of past wrongs. Love doesn't rejoice at injustice but rejoices in the truth. Love endures all things, love has complete faith and steadfast hope, love bears with everything."

Prayer

St. Paul you reminded the Corinthians of the reality of the Eucharist and all that it truly is. You urged them to remember that they should examine themselves carefully and then approach the reception of the body and blood of the Lord with the greatest reverence possible. Help our parishes and religious communities always come together in love. Pray that we be patient with one another and endure each other's shortcomings. But most of all help us approach the agape meal, the Mass with a sense of awe knowing that as we eat Christ's body we are gaining eternal life (Jn 6:47-58) and if we fail to recognize what we are doing we will be eating and drinking our own condemnation. We rely on the forgiveness of Christ that comes from the sacrament of reconciliation and also the plea for mercy that

is an essential part of the Eucharistic Celebration from "Lord Have Mercy" to "Lord I am not worthy." We trust, however, in the Lord our Savior whose word is able to heal us. In the celebration of the liturgy, St. Paul, we invite you and all the angels and the saints to join us. As we approach the altar we will remember that this great gift of the Eucharist was handed down to us through the Apostles and their successors We pray that the priests and bishops of the Church will be holy in their service to us and that all of us together will one day join with the Lamb of God and all the saints in that feast that will never end. Amen.

Our Father ...
Hail Mary ...
Glory Be ...