

LITURGICAL LIVING

Series 14: November 26-December 2

What's the Deal with Novenas?

A **novena** is an ancient devotion where you pray a specific prayer for a specific intention for 9 straight days. This tradition goes back to the Apostles as they prayed in the upper room for the 9 days between Jesus's Ascension into Heaven and the arrival of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

There are three essential elements of a Novena:

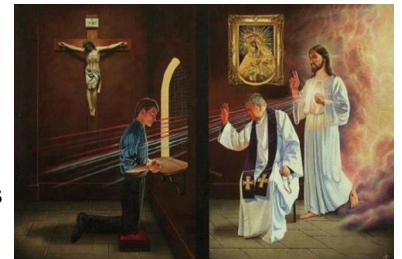
1. They are **specific**. They tell God our needs without telling Him how we want them answered.
2. The prayers include **trust and confidence**.
3. **Repetition**. The prayers are repeated daily for 9 days which fosters relationship with God and learning to listen to Him.

You can pray many different Novenas for many different things. <https://www.praymorenovenas.com/novenas> is my go to place for Novenas. There are so many options and there is a Christmas Novena (that's not really a Novena) starting on November 30th! See the next page for details on that!

Reconciliation

First Reconciliation is happening in St. Peter on Wednesday the 29th. Let's pray for these children as they receive this beautiful sacrament for the first time! I can't say enough about how much I have grown to appreciate confession through my faith journey. Remember, during a confession, Christ is sacramentally present in the confession via the priest's person! Catholic World Mission does an excellent job describing confession and its importance pretty well in "[5 Reasons to go to Confession](#)."

Speaking of Reconciliation, Fr. Craig will be increasing opportunities for Reconciliation. He will be available to hear confessions BEFORE and AFTER each Mass! I have always been impressed and very thankful that he does this during Advent and Lent! Please take advantage of this extra time and get to confession during Advent! See the [confession calendar](#) for other times as well!



Catholic New Year and Patron Saint of the Year

The beginning of the Catholic liturgical year is the first Sunday of Advent. So the Catholic New Year's Day is not January 1st, it is December 3rd this year!

The readings for the Mass of the first Sunday of Advent are about staying awake and vigilant. So, what could be better than throwing a little Catholic New Years party?! You can plan this party with a kid or adult focus or both! Have fun with it!

A good practice to consider as you start the liturgical year is to consider a patron Saint of the year. Did any Saints you learned about or pray with this year stick out to you? Praying at the relics of St. Therese and her parents (St. Louis and Zelig Martin), I definitely felt a connection to St. Zelig. I will be praying for her intercession more as I raise my children to be saints as she did!

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St. Andrew and the Christmas Novena

St. Andrew the Apostle's feast day is intertwined with the beginning of Advent and the new liturgical year. He was a Galilean fisherman and a disciple of St. John the Baptist. He immediately began to follow Jesus after Jesus told him to "Come and see." He did just that. Afterwards, he went off to tell his brother Simon that he had found the Messiah and in that first meeting Jesus changed Simon's name to Peter. After Jesus' Ascension, he went on to preach the Good News in Romania, Ukraine, Russia, Istanbul, and Greece. He was martyred 60 AD and requested to be crucified in an "X" shape because he was unworthy to die in the same manner of Christ. While St. Andrew did many great things, it can be argued that his greatest contribution to the faith was bringing his brother Simon (Peter) to meet Jesus. This makes his feast day a good day to consider God's plan for our lives and how our actions, even the little things, have the ability to make large impacts on those around us through the Grace of God.

St. Andrew is the patron of many things but he is very well loved in Scotland! Their flag actually includes an image of his cross. Their tradition is to celebrate with traditional food and music which includes haggis and bagpipes... Haggis is not going to be on our menu but we will find another way to celebrate him!

A Few Ideas on Celebrating St. Andrew

- Learn about Scotland! Read books, color the flag, download some printables, listen to bagpipes, learn about Scottish geography and history, etc.!
- Talk about how St. Andrew was a "[fisher of men](#)" and discuss ways we can share God's love with others.
- Play "fishing" games and pretend to be fishermen on the Sea of Galilee.
- Make [Scottish shortbread](#)! And/or Bake a [Saint Andrew Cake](#)!

The Christmas Novena

St. Andrew is also associated with the Christmas Anticipation Prayer, also known as the St. Andrew Christmas Novena. It is a little confusing because it is not really a Novena and it really doesn't have anything to do with St. Andrew. But it is a beautiful tradition to try this Advent. ***It is piously believed that whoever recites the St. Andrew Christmas novena prayer FIFTEEN times each day from the feast of St. Andrew (November 30th) until Christmas Eve will obtain the favor requested.***

It is helpful to write out the family intentions for this Novena to help remember and pray more delicately to your intention! And if you forget or miss a day, fear not. You can try to make it up the next day or just keep going. It is really about your intention to pray and grow in relationship with God. Also, there are literal apps for your phone that can sound alarms to remind you to pray this Novena! There is one called: St. Andrew Novena. I will be downloading this to help keep us on track (or try to!).

Christmas Novena: Pray this novena for 25 days. Start on November 30.

1. Make the Sign of the Cross.

2. Say the St. Andrew Christmas Novena prayer.

Hail and blessed be the hour and moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in the piercing cold. In that hour vouchsafe, I beseech Thee, O my God, to hear my prayer and grant my desires through the merits of Our Savior Jesus Christ, and of His blessed Mother. Amen.

3. Name any intentions or other prayers you wish to share with God. Maybe consider your response to Jesus's call to follow Him; just as he called on Andrew and Peter, he also calls on us to let go and surrender.

4. Conclude with the Sign of the Cross.

5. If you're praying this novena in the traditional fashion ...Repeat the above steps 14x a day

6. Continue praying the novena daily through Christmas Eve!

You got this! May peace be with you this Advent. God bless!