

The Catholic Women's League Novena of Hope

The month of October is a time to celebrate the praying of the Rosary - a special time to ask Our Blessed Mother for help and guidance. This novena, which begins on the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary and ends with the Feast of St. Teresa of Jesus, invokes Our Blessed Mother and seven women – both religious and lay, both saints and servants of God - who have been extraordinary mentors for the Catholic women of Canada. They have provided us with great examples through their spiritual works; through their love and leadership in bringing the Word of God to Canada; through their courageous work among all the peoples of Canada including the indigenous and the vulnerable - from the very young to the very old; and through their establishment of communities and institutions that serve as the bedrock for our country today. Their work inspires great hope, and so it is through the intercession of our Blessed Mother and these other spiritual mentors that we ask for the help of Our Lord to increase our hope and, with it, our faith and love to fortify us in our daily lives.



Day 1: On this Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, let us thank Our Blessed Mother for showing us how to pray and rejoice.

The Sign of the Cross. Let us pray with Our Lady:

“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for He has looked with favor on His humble servant.

From this day all generations will call me blessed, the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is His Name.

He has mercy on those who fear Him in every generation. He has shown the strength of his arm,
He has scattered the proud in their conceit. He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the humble.

He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty.

He has come to the help of His servant Israel for He has remembered his promise of mercy,
the promise He made to our fathers, to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall
be. Amen, Alleluia.”

The “Hail Mary”

O Dear Mother, may we follow your example and say a jubilant “yes” to God’s will for us. We ask this
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *The Sign of the Cross.*



Day 2: Let us pray for humility and for all those beautiful souls who live good and humble lives in the world around us.

The Sign of the Cross. Let us pray using the words of Saint Marie de l’Incarnation (1599 – 1672), foundress of the Ursuline sisters in Canada:

“If a soul is beautiful, good, or holy, it is with the beauty, the goodness and the holiness of God. Knowing that these attributes belong wholly to Him, the soul desires that He alone should have the honour of them, wishing no honour or praise for herself from any creature. Her only fear is lest vain complacency should open the door of the inner temple to the enemy, who would soon despoil her of her gifts. The Almighty has placed His treasures in the very frailest of earthen vessels: the vessel may at any moment be broken

and the contents lost. O my great God! grant me humility, and help me to serve Thee as Thou commandest.”

The “Hail Mary”

O Saint Marie de l’Incarnation, you were a wife, a mother, a teacher, a lexicographer of indigenous languages, a businesswoman, and a mystic. You built the first Ursuline convent in Quebec, and then rebuilt it when it was destroyed by fire in 1650. In these days of so many challenges, inspire in us your faith, your humility, and your courage to live lives of service and prayer. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *The Sign of the Cross.*



Day 3: Let us pray for purity of intention in serving one another without distinction, and we remember especially all those who work unselfishly with children and young adults as educators - both parents and teachers, both in homes and in schools.

The Sign of the Cross. Let us pray using the words of Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys (1620 – 1700), founder of the first school in Montreal and foundress of the Sisters of Notre Dame:

“Teaching is the work most suited to draw down the graces of God if it is done with purity of intention, without distinction between the poor and the rich, between relatives and friends and strangers, between the pretty and the ugly, the gentle and the grumblers, looking upon them all as drops of Our Lord’s blood.”

The “Hail Mary”

O Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys, patron against poverty and the loss of parents, you convinced your bishop that your congregation should not be cloistered, but instead serve as an active teaching order—an unusual idea in your day. Help us to reach out energetically to all who need our love. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *The Sign of the Cross.*



Day 4: Let us pray for the wisdom and strength to do what God wants of us in our daily lives, especially by loving all that God has created.

The Sign of the Cross. Let us, with Saint Kateri Tekakwitha - the Lily of the Mohawks (1656 – 1680), reflect upon this simple question:

“Who will teach me what is most pleasing to God, that I may do it?”

The “Hail Mary”

O Saint Kateri Tekakwitha, patron of indigenous peoples, orphans, and the environment, at the age of four, you lost your parents in the smallpox epidemic that you survived but left you disfigured with weakened health and eyesight. Though persecuted for following your mother’s Catholic faith, you persevered and moved to a Catholic community in Canada. You would walk in the woods alone to speak to God and in your devotion you made crosses out of sticks and hung them from trees as prayer stations. May your example remind us of the value of devotional prayers like the Rosary and the importance of reigniting our wonder in the awesome beauty of God’s created world. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *The Sign of the Cross.*



Day 5: Let us pray for the faith that sows hope and perseverance, and remember especially all those who work with the poor and the sick.

The Sign of the Cross. Let us pray using the words Saint Marie Marguerite D'Youville (1701 – 1771) wrote in a letter to her niece Josephine Gamelin in 1727: "O Lord, my poverty is extreme. I have no worldly goods to give away, but I shall give myself, my time, and my work. I shall sow but a little, it is true, but your mercy will make of that little an infinite harvest."

The "Hail Mary"

O Saint Marie Marguerite D'Youville, by the age of 29, you had experienced great poverty and suffered the loss of your father, your husband, and four of your six children. Despite this, you undertook many charitable works, raised your two sons who would become priests, and welcomed a blind woman into your home. On New Year's Eve, 1737, you and three other young women who shared your love for the poor consecrated yourselves to God. Thus you became the foundress of the Sisters of Charity of Montreal (the Grey Nuns) and soon became director of an impoverished hospital. With your sisters, you rebuilt the hospital to care for the poor and sick and in 1765, when a fire destroyed the building, you oversaw its reconstruction. Help us to enkindle hope in the ill and despondent through extending our loving help and support. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *The Sign of the Cross.*



Day 6: Let us pray for the healing of body and spirit, and remember especially all the first responders who sacrifice themselves for others.

The Sign of the Cross. Inspired by the example of Mother Delphine Fontbonne (1813 - 1856), the foundress of the Congregation of the Sisters of St. Joseph in Canada, who died as a result of serving the people of Toronto during the typhus epidemic, let us pray for healing and contemplate the similar story of Bishop Michael Power. Like Mother Delphine, Bishop Power contracted typhus in 1847 while he was ministering to the Irish in Toronto's fever sheds. During the recent renovations to St. Michael's Cathedral, over two dozen seriously ill people acquired stones collected near Power's crypt. Of those who held these stones while praying for intercession, at least two have testified to unexplained cures. Let us pray for the strength to be healed, the strength to help others to heal, and the strength to accept God's will for us.

The "Hail Mary"

O Mother Delphine Fontbonne, you established the first English Canadian foundation of your congregation in Toronto in 1851, and went on to establish the Hamilton congregation in 1852. Having contracted typhus in late 1855, you ministered to a distraught woman and attended the profession and reception of six Sisters in your final days. In the four years before your death in early 1856, you established an orphanage, schools, a motherhouse, a novitiate, an academy and boarding school, as well as the House of Providence. Inspired by your example, help us to heal ourselves and others. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *The Sign of the Cross.*



Day 7: Let us pray that we can love without counting the cost.

The Sign of the Cross. Let us pray the prayer of Servant of God Catherine Doherty (1896-1985), founder of Madonna House in Combermere:

"Little — be always little! Be simple, poor, childlike.

Preach the Gospel with your life — *without compromise!* Listen to the Spirit. He will lead you..

Do little things exceedingly well for love of Me.

Love... love... love, never counting the cost

Go into the marketplace and stay with Me. Pray, fast. Pray always, fast.
Be hidden. Be a light to your neighbour's feet. Go without fear into the depth of men's hearts. I shall be with you. Pray always.
I will be your rest."

The "Hail Mary"

During the Great War, Catherine, you served as a nurse on the front. As the daughter and wife of Russian aristocrats, you barely escaped during the Revolution; nearly starved to death as a refugee in Finland; made your way to England to become a Catholic in 1919; and immigrated to Canada in 1921. Dissatisfied with your now-prosperous life, you began to feel a deeper call: "Arise — go... sell all you possess... take up your cross and follow Me." In 1932, you decided to live among Toronto's poor and established Friendship House, a place for Catholic education, fellowship, and food. You also established the interracial Friendship House in Harlem in 1937. A decade later, you and your husband moved to Combermere, Ontario, where you started a rural apostolate called Madonna House that now has missionary field-houses throughout the world. Help us to follow the Madonna House mission, living out our Baptismal promises by listening to the Spirit, and making sure that even the little things we do in our daily lives are done for the love of God. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *The Sign of the Cross.*



Day 8: Let us pray for the nourishment of family life so that parents and children, through their relationships with one another, illuminate the world with the Light of Christ.

The Sign of the Cross. Let us pray using the words of Pauline Vanier (1898 – 1991):

"The realm of justice and gentleness should prevail. The true Christian spirit looks upon all spiritual values, of whatever source, as part of the divine treasure entrusted to mankind by the Creator....Faith, far from being outmoded or old-fashioned, imparts a beauty, a richness, and a radiance that can be found in no other source."

The "Hail Mary"

Mrs. Vanier, as a diplomat's wife, you ran a welcoming home and championed dozens of social causes. You were heroic when you escaped wartime France with your four children in the family car: with the Germans overtaking the country and the roads being machine-gunned, an enemy airplane crashed in front of you. Fearlessly, you risked your safety to try to save the pilot. When your husband returned to France as Canada's ambassador in August 1944, Paris was deemed too dangerous for women civilians so you persuaded the Canadian Red Cross to allow you to be their representative. Once in Paris, you helped the many returning refugees find much-needed information and homes. As viceregal wife, you tirelessly visited schools, hospitals, prisons, and factories. In 1964 you and her husband convened the first Canadian Conference of the Family which united leaders from seventeen different religious communities and led to the creation of the Vanier Institute of the Family. Let us pray that we always remember to treasure and protect the gift of our families, recognizing them as the foundation for the domestic church. And let us pray that our homes are welcoming and safe havens from which we can go out to love and serve others in the world around us. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *The Sign of the Cross.*



Day 9: On this Feast of St. Teresa of Jesus, let us pray for peace and for all those who shepherd us toward peace.

The Sign of the Cross. Let us recite the prayer of St. Teresa of Jesus (1515 – 1582):

“Let nothing disturb you,
Let nothing frighten you,
All things are passing away:
God never changes.
Patience obtains all things.
Whoever has God lacks nothing;
God alone suffices.”

The “Hail Mary”

O Saint Teresa, patron of the sick and protector of those trying to lead a life of holiness, we implore your aid in turbulent times. Your life exemplified a way to nourish the interior life through prayer, and it provided a model for good and intelligent leadership through your reform of the Carmelite order. Help us to find peace and patience in our own lives, and instill in us the wisdom and passion to imitate Christ through humble lives of prayer and action. We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. *The Sign of the Cross.*

Prayer of Saint Marie de l’Incarnation: <https://catholicsaints.info/the-life-of-the-venerable-mother-mary-of-the-incarnation>
Prayer of Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys: quoted in *Sisterhood of Saints: Daily Guidance and Inspiration*
Prayer of Saint Kateri: <http://www.alleluiaaudiobooks.com/kateri-tekakwitha-quotes>
Prayer of Saint Marguerite D’Youville: <https://sgm.qc.ca/en/saint-marguerite-dyouville/>
Prayer of Catherine Doherty: <https://www.madonnahouse.org>
Words of Pauline Vanier: <http://www.ccheritage.ca/biographies/paulinevanier>
Other prayers: T. Murphy