

Novena
for the Beatitude
of the Servant of God
Alfonz Paulen

**Novena For the Beatitude
of the servant of GOD
Alfonz Paulen**

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INTRODUCTION

What is a novena

A novena is a prayer that is prayed for nine consecutive days without interruption.

When to pray the novena

The prayer of the novena is especially effective if it is combined with faith in God's help to overcome periods of suffering, illness, anxiety, moral decline, family problems, marital crisis, unemployment or other problems. By praying the novena, we can also prepare for an anniversary or a holiday. We want to ask the Lord for daily help in small and large problems, but above all we want to give thanks for the countless graces that we constantly receive from God. Finally, in this way we will also fulfill the words of the Apostle Paul: "Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God" (Philippians 4:6).

Recommendations

The Church teaches that the spiritual life and the exercises of piety are closely linked to the sacramental life and are all the more effective and fruitful if they are lived in God's grace. Therefore, it is recommended to approach the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the novena, in which we ask God for forgiveness for our own sins by which we have harmed Christ and his Church, to participate daily (if possible) in Holy Mass and to receive the Eucharist, which is the source and summit of the entire Christian life.

In addition, on each day of the novena it is recommended to:

1. Celebrate and give thanks to the Most Holy Trinity, to God the Father for the gift of creation, to God the Son for the gift of redemption, to God the Holy Spirit for the work of sanctification.
2. Forgive always and to everyone.

3. Practice personal prayer, prayer in the family and in community with commitment and consistency.

4. Perform works of love.

5. Surrender to the will of God.

By following these counsels, working daily on the path of our own conversion, which will bring about a real change in our lives, we will be witnesses of the generous grace of God that the Lord has prepared for us. "Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16).

Reflecting on the life of the Servant of God Alfonz Paulen, let us ask for the grace to cleanse ourselves of earthly vanities in order to create space for God's grace, because "He must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30).

I. Opening prayer

Sequence to the Holy Spirit

Come, Holy Spirit, creative,
come and visit your faithful ones;
fill our hearts with grace,
which you created in wisdom.

You are called the Comforter,
a gift from God given to us from heaven,
source alive, love, fire in it
and spiritual anointing.

You, giver of the sevenfold gifts,
the finger of God in the works of creation;
You, the promise of the Father,
You give speech, the word of the Lord.

Enlighten us, strengthen our spirit,
Pour fiery love into our hearts;
when the body falls into weakness,
straighten him by the power of grace.

Protect us from the enemy,
Give us your peace at all times;

may we always, under your guidance,
avoid harmful influences.

Teach us to know the Father
and to love his Son
and in you, the Spirit of both,
let us believe always, in all days.
Amen.

II. Prayer for the beatification of the Servant of God, Priest Alfonz Paulen

Almighty God, in your infinite mercy
you chose the priest Alfonz,
devoted to you and your Church,
to zealously instill in the hearts of his
parishioners
the principles of the Gospel, especially love for
the poor,
to save spiritual vocations
and to spread devotion to the Virgin Mary.
He proved his loyalty to Christ and the Church
in times of persecution,
and thus became like your beloved Son,
who suffered for us and died on the wood of the
cross.

Through his intercession,
grant us the graces we ask of you,
and if it is your will,
grant that your servant Alfonz
may be declared blessed

as a model of fidelity and patient endurance
of life's difficulties.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Day 1

A PRAYED CHILD

I. Opening prayer

From the Holy Scripture

“O Lord of hosts, if only you will look on the misery of your servant, and remember me, and not forget your servant, but will give to your servant a male child, then I will set him before you as a nazirite until the day of his death. (...) In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, 'I have asked him of the Lord'” (1 Samuel 1:11-20).

From the life of Alfonz, the Servant of God

Mother Anna Paulenová made a pilgrimage to Mariazell on foot. The journey took about fourteen days. Before the gracious statue of the Virgin Mary, she begged for the gift of a child, saying: "Lord, if after this pilgrimage I conceive a child and it is a son, may he become a priest." The Lord accepted the noble prayer combined with the

sacrifice and shaped the heart of little Alfonz from childhood.

Prayer

God, our Creator, we give you thanks for the gift of life. Through the intercession of Alfonz, the servant of God, we entrust to you all childless marriages, and if it is your will, grant them a new offspring. At the same time, we ask you for parents, that, following the example of Anna in the Old Testament and Anna, mother of Alfonz, they may have the courage to present their children to you, that you may consecrate them to yourself. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

II. Prayer for the beatification of the Servant of God, Priest Alfonz Paulen

Day 2

MARY, ALWAYS PRESENT

I. Opening prayer

From the Holy Scripture

“Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, ‘Woman, here is your son.’ Then he said to the disciple, ‘Here is your mother.’ And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home” (John 19:25-27).

From the life of Alfonz, the Servant of God

The Paulen family lived and worked near the pilgrimage church in Topolčany, where the gracious statue of the Virgin Mary of the Seven Sorrows is located. They often went on pilgrimage here to thank the Most Holy Virgin and ask her for help. Mary had been present in Alfonz's life since childhood. He met her as the suffering one, Our

Lady of the Seven Sorrows. The strong bond with the Mother of God began in the daily prayer of the rosary. Parishioners often saw him with the rosary in his hand. Mary is a guarantee for everyone who entrusts themselves to her and takes refuge under her protection, because she points to Christ. "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). Not my will, but yours be done. Amen.

Prayer

Almighty and merciful God, through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary, turn away from us all adversities, so that we may do your will without internal or external obstacles. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

II. Prayer for the beatification of the Servant of God, Priest Alfonz Paulen

Day 3

CHILDHOOD AND STUDIES

I. Opening prayer

From the Holy Scripture

“After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. (...) Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favor” (Luke 2:46-52).

From the life of Alfonz, the Servant of God

The life of the family in which the servant of God Alfonz Paulen grew up was very trying. When he was five years old, his father died of the Spanish flu shortly after returning from the First World War and his sister Jolanka died as well. The management of the household and the upbringing of the boys fell on the shoulders of their mother.

Mother Anna wanted to ensure Alfonz a good education, so she sent him to study at the grammar school in Kláštor pod Znievom. Here he studied diligently and fulfilled his duties.

Prayer

God, in you the family community has its origin and firm foundation; graciously hear our prayers and help us to grow in mutual love and in family virtues, following the example of the Holy Family, so that we may attain eternal reward in our heavenly home. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

II. Prayer for the beatification of the Servant of God, Priest Alfonz Paulen

Day 4

PRIESTHOOD

I. Opening prayer

From the Holy Scripture

"Just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28).

From the life of Alfonz, the Servant of God

At the end of his studies at the grammar school, young Alfonz asked himself what the Lord expected of him. He never doubted his priestly vocation, rather he asked himself whether he would not serve God better if he became a Jesuit. Since persecution of religious was imminent, after consulting with more experienced people, he decided to remain a diocesan priest. Every vocation means service. Whether it is the priesthood, the religious state, or marriage. There are always two options to choose from: to serve God and his neighbors or to serve himself and take care of himself. Alfonz Paulen chose the service of

God and the Church. Because he did not look at himself and threw himself completely into service, the faithful loved him and the memory of his love is passed down from generation to generation.

Prayer

Lord and our God, you govern the Christian people through your priests; help them to faithfully fulfill the mission to which you have called them, so that by their priestly ministry and life they may glorify you in your Son. Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

II. Prayer for the beatification of the Servant of God, Priest Alfonz Paulen

Day 5

SERVICE TO PARISHIONERS AND POVERTY

I. Opening prayer

From the Holy Scripture

“If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.” (...) “Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God” (Matthew 19:21-24).

From the life of Alfonz, the Servant of God

Alfonz set to work with great love and pastoral commitment. He was a zealous chaplain and later a parish priest. His main focus was Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament, to whom he entrusted all his parishioners. He was characterized by sensitivity to the needs of the poor. He himself

lived in poverty and did not collect money for himself, as evidenced by his modest clothing or housing. He supported needy families as best he could. Alfonz was aware that any attachment to earthly goods was futile. He longed for one only, to be perfect in love.

Prayer

Almighty God, you who have a loving concern for every creature, awaken in us a charitable love for our brothers and sisters in need, and teach us to share fraternally all that we have. Through Christ our Lord.

II. Prayer for the beatification of the Servant of God, Priest Alfonz Paulen

Day 6

PERSECUTION OF THE CHURCH

I. Opening prayer

From the Holy Scripture

“Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you” (Matthew 5:11-12).

From the life of Alfonz, the Servant of God

The servant of God Alfonz experienced persecution for his faith in his own body. The walls of the parish of Šenkvice could tell how many times members of the State Security came to him and tortured him, whether physically or mentally. However, his parishioners had no idea about anything. After his death, a certain priest admitted how many hours he had sat at the grave of Father Alfonz, to learn from him how to accept and endure wrongs, how to forgive and be merciful.

Jesus gives us the answer. His unjust torture and death bring redemption to many.

Prayer

Loving God, you want us to love all people and show sincere love even to those who wrong us; help us to act in the spirit of the new commandment of love, so that we may know how to repay evil with good and help our neighbors to bear their daily cross. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

II. Prayer for the beatification of the Servant of God, Priest Alfonz Paulen

Day 7

DETENTIONED AND TORTURED

I. Opening prayer

From the Holy Scripture

“But before all this occurs, they will arrest you and persecute you; they will hand you over to synagogues and prisons, and you will be brought before kings and governors because of my name. This will give you an opportunity to testify. So make up your minds not to prepare your defense in advance; for I will give you words and a wisdom that none of your opponents will be able to withstand or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents and brothers, by relatives and friends; and they will put some of you to death. You will be hated by all because of my name. But not a hair of your head will perish. By your endurance you will gain your souls” (Luke 21:12-19).

From the life of Alfonz, the Servant of God

On September 19, 1951, men dressed in black leather coats and armed with automatic weapons came to the parish church to arrest Alfonz Paulen. At that time, Father Alfonz was with a family planning a pilgrimage to Marianka. A little parishioner ran up to him and begged him not to return home to the parish church. Since Alfonz knew that he had nowhere to hide from the State Security, he went. He justified this by saying that he had done nothing wrong to anyone. This was followed by detention, a cruel investigation and imprisonment. By a verdict of June 21, 1952, Alfonz Paulen was sentenced to eleven years in prison for high treason, forfeiture of property and loss of civil rights for ten years.

Prayer

Almighty and eternal God, in your unsearchable providence you make the Church a participant in the sufferings of your Son; strengthen, we beseech you, your faithful who are persecuted for their faith in you, that by their patience and love they may be a living proof of the truth of your promises. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

II. Prayer for the beatification of the Servant of God, Priest Alfonz Paulen

Day 8

HERO OF LOVE

I. Opening prayer

From the Holy Scripture

“Because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus, and will bring us with you into his presence. Yes, everything is for your sake, so that grace, as it extends to more and more people, may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God. So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal weight of glory beyond all measure, because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen; for what can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal” (2 Corinthians 4:14-18).

From the life of Alfonz, the Servant of God

Alfonz endured the days in custody patiently. In the letters he wrote to his mother, he always

greeted his relatives and parishioners. He also accepted his illness with equanimity and prayed for the strength to bear the pain. Mons. Justín Beňuška, who was assigned to him on his last night, writes: "He suffered greatly, but overcame the pain (...) In the meantime, we prayed shorter sighs. He confessed." Alfonz felt that the end was approaching. He was ready to go to the house of the Father. He forgave everyone. In his last hours, he even desired to perfect his fidelity to Christ and whispered to Don Titus Zeman: "As a priest, I have thought about joining the Jesuits more than once. However, after suffering so much in prison with the Salesians, I ask for acceptance into your company. I want to die as a Salesian, as a son of Don Bosco, under the protection of Our Lady Help of Christians." His last will reflects the purity and love of his soul and his desire to follow Christ even more closely.

Prayer

God, there is no secret from you, for you see into everyone's heart and know every movement of our will; we beg you to fill us with the Holy Spirit and

purify the mind of our heart, so that we may love you perfectly and serve you worthily in our brothers and sisters. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

II. Prayer for the beatification of the Servant of God, Priest Alfonz Paulen

Day 9

ACCEPT, LORD, THE SACRIFICE OF MY LIFE

I. Opening prayer

From the Holy Scripture

"We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies" (2 Corinthians 4:8-10).

From the life of Alfonz, the Servant of God

The sight of the cross, on which a white scarf is blowing, reminds us that human suffering is only temporary. After a difficult time of trial, victory comes. That final victory is being born for heaven. This was also the case in the life of Father Alfonz, when on April 10, 1954, in the late afternoon, on the eve of Palm Sunday, he gave his soul to the Lord. He knew that he was going to the Father, and this gave him immense hope. Since none of

his closest relatives could accompany Alfonz, Jesus, Mary and Joseph took their place. After all, it was they to whom he fled every day.

Prayer

Gracious Father, you created us in your image and gave your Son to die for us; grant us the grace to watch and pray at all times, that we may depart from this world cleansed from our sins and rest joyfully in the arms of your mercy. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

II. Prayer for the beatification of the Servant of God, Priest Alfonz Paulen

