

May 22, 2023

Good Morning!

Novena to the Holy Spirit - Day 4; Gift of Fortitude

1. Today's Readings: [Monday of the Seventh Week of Easter | USCCB](#)

2. The RE Corner with Jan Heithaus: St. Rita of Cascia is the patron saint of impossible causes, sterility, abuse victims, loneliness, marriage difficulties, parenthood, widows, the sick, and bodily ills and wounds. She is also one of the Church's incorruptible saints. A saint worth knowing and asking for help.

3. Meditation on St. Rita:

~"Rita became holy because she made choices that reflected her baptism and her growth as a disciple of Jesus. Her overarching, lifelong choice was to cooperate generously with God's grace, but many small choices were needed to make that happen. Few of those choices were made in ideal circumstances—not even when Rita became an Augustinian nun." *Source: franciscanmedia.org*

St. Rita of Cascia, Pray for Us!

St. Joseph, Pray for Us!

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NOVENA TO THE HOLY SPIRIT FOR THE SEVEN GIFTS

The novena in honor of the Holy Spirit is the oldest of all novenas. Our Lord Jesus sent His apostles back to Jerusalem to await the coming of the Holy Spirit on the first Pentecost. It is still the only novena officially prescribed by the Church. Addressed to the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, it is a powerful plea for the light and strength and love so sorely needed by Christians.

HOW TO PRAY THE NOVENA

The particular prayer and meditation are said each day and followed by: **Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be 7x, Act of Consecration** and the **Prayer for the Seven Gifts**.

ACT OF CONSECRATION TO THE HOLY GHOST

On my knees before the great multitude of heavenly witnesses I offer myself, soul and body to You, Eternal Spirit of God. I adore the brightness of Your purity the unerring keenness of Your justice and the might of Your love. You are the Strength and Light of my soul. In You I live and move and am. I desire never to grieve You by unfaithfulness to grace and I pray with all my heart to be kept from the smallest sin against You. Mercifully guard my every thought and grant that I may always watch for Your light: and listen to Your voice and follow Your gracious inspirations. I cling to You and give myself to You and ask You by Your compassion to watch over me in my weakness. Holding the pierced Feet of Jesus and looking at His Five Wounds and trusting in His Precious Blood and adoring His opened Side and stricken Heart I implore You, Adorable Spirit, Helper of my infirmity, so to keep me in Your grace that I may never sin against You. Give me grace O Holy Spirit, Spirit of the Father and the Son to say to You always and everywhere "Speak Lord for Your servant is listening." Amen.

PRAYER FOR THE SEVEN GIFTS OF THE HOLY GHOST

O Lord Jesus Christ Who, before ascending into heaven did promise to send the Holy Spirit to finish Your work in the souls of Your Apostles and Disciples deign to grant the same Holy Spirit to me that He may perfect in my soul the work of Your grace and Your love. Grant me the Spirit of Wisdom that I may despise the perishable things of this world and aspire only after the things that are eternal; the Spirit of Understanding to enlighten my mind with the light of Your divine truth, the Spirit of Counsel that I may ever choose the surest way of pleasing God and gaining heaven, the Spirit of Fortitude; that I may bear my cross with You and that I may overcome with courage all the obstacles that oppose my salvation; the Spirit of Knowledge that I may know God, know myself, and grow perfect in the science of the Saints, the Spirit of Piety that I may find the service of God sweet and amiable, the Spirit of Fear that I may be filled with a loving reverence towards God and may dread in any way to displease Him. Mark me, dear Lord with the sign of Your true disciples / and animate me in all things with Your Spirit. Amen.



4th DAY OF THE NOVENA

*Thou in toil art comfort sweet,
Pleasant coolness in the heat,
solace in the midst of woe.*

The Gift of Fortitude

By the gift of Fortitude the soul is strengthened against natural fear, and supported to the end in the performance of duty. Fortitude imparts to the will an impulse and energy which move it to undertake without hesitancy the most arduous tasks, to face dangers, to trample under foot human respect, and to endure without complaint the slow martyrdom of even lifelong tribulation. "He that shall persevere unto the end, he shall be saved."

Prayer

Come, O Blessed Spirit of Fortitude, uphold my soul in time of trouble and adversity, sustain my efforts after holiness, strengthen my weakness, give me courage against all the assaults of my enemies, that I may never be overcome and separated from Thee, my God and greatest Good. Amen.

(Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be 7x, Act of Consecration, Prayer of Seven Gifts)

St. Rita of Cascia: Patron Saint of the Impossible

May 22 is the feast day of St. Rita, an Augustinian nun from 14th-century Cascia, Italy. She is the patroness of impossible causes and hopeless circumstances because of her difficult and disappointing life.

Through her trials God used her in remarkable ways. Now she assists from heaven those who plead for her intercession for their own seemingly impossible and hopeless circumstances.

THE LIFE OF ST. RITA OF CASCIA

From an early age St. Rita desired to become a nun, but her parents insisted that she marry. Out of obedience to her parents' wishes, St. Rita entered an arranged marriage at the age of twelve. Adding to her disappointment, her husband was cruel and harsh; she spent eighteen years in a very difficult relationship. Her husband eventually became physically abusive, yet Rita met his cruelty with kindness and patience. After many years of prayer, patience, and trust in God, she eventually won her husband over to greater civility and kindness. She also bore two sons whom she loved deeply.

In the 14th century, Italy was rampant with warring families caught in a vicious circle of assassinations and bloody vendettas (think Romeo and Juliet). St. Rita's family was caught up in this strife that was so entrenched in society at that time. Her husband was murdered as a result of the infamous rivalry between the aristocratic families of the Guelphs and the Ghibellines. St. Rita mourned her husband's death and interceded for his soul with great earnest.

Rita's two young sons, in keeping with the vice of the day, talked of avenging their father's death. She did all she could to guide her children into forgiveness, but was unable to dissuade them from their evil intentions of violence and revenge. Prayer was her only hope. She pleaded with God that he would prevent the evil swelling up in the hearts of her sons, or allow them to die before they had the chance to commit a mortal sin and be separated from God forever in hell.

God granted her prayers. Both of her sons fell sick and died within a year, and in a state of grace; God intervened and prevented them from following the evil path of their father.

After the death of her husband and her two sons, St. Rita was all alone in the world. She again sought to enter the convent, as had been her desire from childhood. However, she was turned away because of her family's association with the civil strife; some of the sisters living in the convent were family relations of the men who were responsible for killing her husband. To maintain peace in the convent, she was denied entry.

St. Rita, again facing crushing disappointment and yet another impossible situation, had recourse to prayer and the intercession of the saints. St. Rita's sincerity and spirit of charity and forgiveness prevailed, and she was eventually granted entry into the convent. She became known as a holy and prayerful nun, often meditating on the sufferings of the crucified Christ.



St. Rita receives a stigmata

One day, while praying before a crucifix, St. Rita received a visible wound on her forehead. This was a mystical yet visible mark (stigmata) of Jesus' wound from the crown of thorns, symbolizing St. Rita's unity with Christ in his sufferings. She also enjoyed many mystical experiences with Christ during the forty years she lived in the convent. She died on May 22 when she was in her seventies.

LESSONS FROM THE LIFE OF ST. RITA

St. Rita certainly had a difficult life, yet her heartbreaking circumstances drove her to prayer and helped her to become a holy woman. She began her work of intercession for sinners while she lived, starting with those closest to her heart. Through her love and prayers she won the grace of conversion for her husband and both of her sons.

Although her life was filled with sorrows and disappointments, Rita persevered through her trials and was consoled by closely uniting herself with the sufferings of

Christ. And he did not abandon her; rather he granted her profound and intimate graces. Now a saint in heaven, she helps those who are in great need, just as she once was in her earthly life.

St. Rita of Cascia is the patron saint of impossible causes, sterility, abuse victims, loneliness, marriage difficulties, parenthood, widows, the sick, and bodily ills and wounds. She is also one of the Church's incorruptible saints; her body is venerated at the basilica named for her in Cascia, Italy.

If you are facing a difficult or impossible life circumstance, you can have recourse to prayer after the example of St. Rita. Below is a prayer to St. Rita as well as a novena (to be prayed over the course of nine days for a special intention).

PRAYER TO ST. RITA

O Holy Patroness of those in need, St. Rita, whose pleadings before thy Divine Lord are almost irresistible, who for thy lavishness in granting favors hast been called the Advocate of the Hopeless and even of the Impossible; St. Rita, so humble, so pure, so mortified, so patient and of such compassionate love for thy Crucified Jesus that thou couldst obtain from Him whatsoever thou ask, on account of which all confidently have recourse to thee expecting, if not always relief, at least comfort; be propitious to our petition, showing thy power with God on behalf of thy suppliant; be lavish to us, as thou hast been in so many wonderful cases, for the greater glory of God, for the spreading of thine own devotion, and for the consolation of those who trust in thee.

We promise, if our petition is granted, to glorify thee by making known thy favor, to bless and sing thy praises forever. Relying then upon thy merits and power before the Sacred Heart of Jesus, we pray thee grant that [here mention your request].

By the singular merits of thy childhood,

Obtain for us our request.

By thy perfect union with the Divine Will,

Obtain for us our request.

By thy heroic sufferings during thy married life,

Etc. [repeat Obtain for us our request after each line]

By the consolation thou didst experience at the conversion of thy husband,

By the sacrifice of thy children rather than see them grievously offend God,

By the miraculous entrance into the convent,

By thy severe penances and thrice daily bloody scourgings,

By the suffering caused by the wound thou didst receive from the thorn of thy Crucified Savior,

By the Divine love which consumed thy heart,

By that remarkable devotion to the Blessed Sacrament, on which alone thou didst exist for four years,

By the happiness with which thou didst part from thy trials to join thy Divine Spouse,

By the perfect example thou gave to people of every state of life.

Pray for us, O holy St. Rita, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

LET US PRAY.

O God, Who in Thine infinite tenderness hast vouchsafed to regard the prayer of Thy servant, Blessed Rita, and dost grant to her supplication that which is impossible to human foresight, skill and efforts, in reward of her compassionate love and firm reliance on Thy promise, have pity on our adversity and succor us in our calamities, that the unbeliever may know Thou art the recompense of the humble, the defense of the helpless, and the strength of those who trust in Thee, through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen

Source: catholiccompany.com