

# *November Novena*

November is the month when Catholics traditionally remember loved ones who have died and offer services and support to those who have been bereaved.

This November, we are particularly aware of the millions of people who have died from Covid-19 and those whose bereavements have been particularly painful since they were unable to be with their loved one when they died.

The Novena can be prayed at any time during November but might be especially appropriate this year leading up to the Feast of Christ the King when we have the Gospel in which Jesus says to those who have lived good lives: 'Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take for your heritage the kingdom prepared for you since the foundation of the world'. We know that few of us die ready to hear those words – but, equally, few of us have done enough evil to hear Christ tell us to go away. Most of us will continue our journey towards perfection – sustained by the prayers of all the saints (canonised and un-canonised) and those we have left behind whose love extends beyond death.

Our prayer, then, is that those who have died will be borne on the wings of our prayers to the moment when they are ready to enter fully into their eternal home.

In the Novena, we have included War dead as the first intention as November also includes Remembrance Sunday and Armistice Day. If you are praying the Novena and 11 November is within your dates, we suggest that you use this intention then and adjust the others as appropriate. Alternatively, you may wish to pray the Novena leading up to Christ the King and dates have been given for that.

This Novena was prepared by members of the Spirituality Committee on behalf of the Liturgy Office. [www.liturgyoffice.org.uk](http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk)

# Day 1

(or 13 November)

## *for those who have died in war – military and civilian*

### Opening Prayer

Hear my cry, O God;

listen to my prayer.

Let those who have died in war abide in your tent for ever,

find refuge under the shelter of your wings.

(cf Psalm 61)

### Scripture

In days to come...

the Lord shall judge between the nations,

and shall arbitrate for many peoples;

they shall beat their swords into ploughshares,

and their spears into pruning-hooks;

nation shall not lift up sword against nation,

neither shall they learn war any more.

Isaiah 2: 2-4

### Short reflection

The cost of war is incalculable. Those who serve in the military are all too aware of the deaths and mutilations inflicted by weapons of war. Civilians are today often primary casualties in wars fought using bombs and acts of terrorism. As we remember those how have died, we commit ourselves to praying for the day when war will be no more.

A minute of silence.

### Intercessions

We pray for all those who have died as a consequence of war –

*(especially Nxxxx – the name(s) of people known to you)*

and those who mourn them.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for those who work for peace – politicians, charity workers and campaign groups.

May their efforts be blessed by the Prince of Peace.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

### Closing Prayer

God of tenderness,

we trust to your promise that you yourself will be with those how have died

and with those who mourn

and will wipe every tear from their eyes;

that death will be no more;

and mourning and crying and pain will be no more.

cf Revelation 21: 3-4

Trusting in your mercy and love, we pray:

**Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,**

**and let perpetual light shine upon them.**

**May they rest in peace.**

**Amen.**

## Day 2

(or 14 November)

### *for deaths associated with the Covid pandemic*

#### Opening Prayer

Hear my cry, O God;

listen to my prayer.

Let those who have died during the Covid pandemic abide in your tent for ever,  
find refuge under the shelter of your wings.

(cf Psalm 61)

#### Scripture

As a father has compassion for his children,  
so the Lord has compassion for those who fear him.

For he knows how we were made;  
he remembers that we are dust.

As for mortals, their days are like grass;  
they flourish like a flower of the field;  
for the wind passes over it, and it is gone,  
and its place knows it no more.

But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting  
on those who fear him.

Psalm 103: 14-18

#### Short reflection

2020 has seen thousands of deaths from the pandemic. Because of the need to limit the spread, many died in hospital with loved ones unable to be by their sides. Medical staff often held their hands as they died – sorrowful that they could not save them. The world is suffering a massive, collective grief – made harder by those who are still in denial about what has befallen the world and the impact it has had on individuals, families and communities.

A minute of silence.

#### Intercessions

We pray for those who have died as a consequence of the Covid pandemic  
(*especially Nxxxx – name(s) of people for whom you wish to pray*)  
and their family and friends who mourn them.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for medical and care staff who care for the sick,  
for chaplains and others supporting patients and carers,  
for researchers,  
for public health workers and all key workers.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

#### Closing Prayer

God of tenderness,

we trust to your promise that you yourself will be with those who have died  
and with those who mourn  
and will wipe every tear from their eyes;  
that death will be no more;  
and mourning and crying and pain will be no more.

cf Revelation 21: 3-4

Trusting in your mercy and love, we pray:

**Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon them.**

**May they rest in peace.**

**Amen.**

## Day 3

(or 15 November)

*for babies who have died before, during or shortly after birth.*

### Opening Prayer

Hear my cry, O God;

listen to my prayer.

Let those who have died in the womb, during or shortly after birth abide in your tent for ever,  
find refuge under the shelter of your wings.

(cf Psalm 61)

### Scripture

Thus says the Lord:

A voice is heard in Ramah,

lamentation and bitter weeping.

Rachel is weeping for her children;

she refuses to be comforted for her children,

because they are no more.

Jeremiah 31:15

### Short reflection

Many people, particularly of older generations, fear for children who die before or around the time of birth and who have not been baptised. Many of these parents also lived at a time when such deaths were more common and parents were encouraged to “put it behind them” and move on, stifling their natural response to grieve – often for many years.

The Church acknowledges these little ones as children of God and commends them to the tender mercy of Christ.

A minute of silence.

### Intercessions

We pray for the little ones whose lives have been so short,

*(for Nxxxx name(s) of babies you know or have heard of)*

and for their families who mourn them.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for hospital staff who care for mothers and unborn and new-born babies.

We pray for counsellors and all who support parents and siblings

in times of anxiety, fear and loss.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

### Closing Prayer

God of tenderness,

we trust to your promise that you yourself will be with those who have died

and with those who mourn

and will wipe every tear from their eyes;

that death will be no more;

and mourning and crying and pain will be no more.

cf Revelation 21: 3-4

Trusting in your mercy and love, we pray:

**Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,**

**and let perpetual light shine upon them.**

**May they rest in peace.**

**Amen.**

## Day 4

(or 16 November)

### *for those who have died in childhood or adolescence*

#### Opening Prayer

Hear my cry, O God;

listen to my prayer.

Let those who have died in childhood and adolescence abide in your tent for ever,  
find refuge under the shelter of your wings.

(cf Psalm 61)

#### Scripture

Little children were being brought to Jesus in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them; but Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.' And he laid his hands on them and went on his way.

Matthew 19: 13-15

#### Short reflection

The death of a child or adolescent brings with it a sense of lost potential – all the hopes and dreams the parents, teachers and others – and the child or young person themselves – seem to have been crushed. The holes in the lives of those left behind can never be filled.

A minute of silence.

#### Intercessions

We pray for those who have died in childhood and adolescence –

*(especially Nxxxx – name of a child or adolescent you know)*

their families, their friends and their teachers and school and college mates.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for paediatric doctors, nurses and hospital and home educators,  
for those who support the young people, their families and friends.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

#### Closing Prayer

God of tenderness,

we trust to your promise that you yourself will be with those who have died  
and with those who mourn  
and will wipe every tear from their eyes;  
that death will be no more;  
and mourning and crying and pain will be no more.

cf Revelation 21: 3-4

Trusting in your mercy and love, we pray:

**Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon them.**

**May they rest in peace.**

**Amen.**

## Day 5

(or 17 November)

### *for those who have died by suicide*

#### Opening Prayer

Hear my cry, O God;

listen to my prayer.

Let those who have died by suicide abide in your tent for ever,

find refuge under the shelter of your wings.

(cf Psalm 61)

#### Scripture

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.

Lord, hear my voice!

Let your ears be attentive

to the voice of my supplications!

If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities,

Lord, who could stand?

But there is forgiveness with you,

so that you may be revered.

from Psalm 130

#### Short reflection

Few of us can imagine the anguish that leads someone to take their own life – to believe that others would be better off without them – even when those who love them assure them that they are loved and needed. Their deaths cause anguish and regrets – as all the what ifs and if onlys compound the already painful bereavement journey.

A minute of silence.

#### Intercessions

We pray for those who have died by suicide –

*(especially Nxxxx – name of someone you know)*

their families, their friends and all affected by their deaths.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for Samaritans and other helpline and support services that work to prevent suicide,

and those who support the loved ones in its aftermath.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

#### Closing Prayer

God of tenderness,

we trust to your promise that you yourself will be with those who have died

and with those who mourn

and will wipe every tear from their eyes;

that death will be no more;

and mourning and crying and pain will be no more.

cf Revelation 21: 3-4

Trusting in your mercy and love, we pray:

**Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,**

**and let perpetual light shine upon them.**

**May they rest in peace.**

**Amen.**

## Day 6

(or 18 November)

### *for those who have died through an act of murder or violence*

#### Opening Prayer

Hear my cry, O God;

listen to my prayer.

Let those who have died through murder or act of violence abide in your tent for ever,

find refuge under the shelter of your wings.

(cf Psalm 61)

#### Scripture

They took Jesus; and carrying the cross by himself, he went out to what is called The Place of the Skull, which in Hebrew is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, with Jesus between them.

from John 19

#### Short reflection

Death by murder or an act of violence causes the victim to suffer physical and mental agonies – of wounds inflicted to their body and mind. They are denied any chance of making peace with loved ones – and their loved ones of making peace with them. Those left behind are traumatised by inquests and trials – and the imaginings of what the victim endured in those last moments of their life.

A minute of silence.

#### Intercessions

We pray for those who have died as an act of murder or violence –

*(especially Nxxxx – name of someone you know)*

their families, their friends and all affected by their deaths.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for the police, ambulance crews and other first responders who face the reality of human violence.

We pray also for those involved in the judicial system as they seek to bring justice for the one who died.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

#### Closing Prayer

God of tenderness,

we trust to your promise that you yourself will be with those who have died

and with those who mourn

and will wipe every tear from their eyes;

that death will be no more;

and mourning and crying and pain will be no more.

cf Revelation 21: 3-4

Trusting in your mercy and love, we pray:

**Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,**

**and let perpetual light shine upon them.**

**May they rest in peace.**

**Amen.**

## Day 7

(or 19 November)

### *for those who have died from illness of body or mind*

#### Opening Prayer

Hear my cry, O God;  
listen to my prayer.

Let those who have died from illness of body or mind abide in your tent for ever,  
find refuge under the shelter of your wings.

(cf Psalm 61)

#### Scripture

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley,  
I fear no evil;  
for you are with me;  
your rod and your staff— they comfort me.

You prepare a table before me  
in the presence of my enemies;  
you anoint my head with oil;  
my cup overflows.

Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me  
all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord  
my whole life long.

Psalm 22(23)

#### Short reflection

Many people die from illnesses that afflict the body – cancers, diseases of bodily organs, infections, and disorders that affect the brain – or simply a combination of all of these as the body ages and becomes frail. These are hard to face – for the person affected and their family and friends – but they may offer a chance to prepare for death – moving beyond fear and resentment to acceptance and readiness to let go of this life and enter the next.

A minute of silence.

#### Intercessions

We pray for those who have died from an illness of body or mind –  
(especially *Nxxxx* – *name of someone you know*)  
for their families, their friends and all affected by their deaths.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for doctors and nurses responsible for diagnosing and treating illness,  
for hospital chaplains and all who support people during their last illness.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

#### Closing Prayer

God of tenderness,  
we trust to your promise that you yourself will be with those who have died  
and with those who mourn  
and will wipe every tear from their eyes;  
that death will be no more;  
and mourning and crying and pain will be no more.

cf Revelation 21: 3-4

Trusting in your mercy and love, we pray:  
**Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,  
and let perpetual light shine upon them.  
May they rest in peace.  
Amen.**



## Day 8

(or 20 November)

### *for those whose death is sudden – accident or natural disaster*

#### Opening Prayer

Hear my cry, O God;

listen to my prayer.

Let those who have died suddenly from accident or sudden illness abide in your tent for ever,  
find refuge under the shelter of your wings.

(cf Psalm 61)

#### Scripture

Jesus said, 'Those eighteen who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them—do you think that they were worse offenders than all the others living in Jerusalem? No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all perish just as they did.'

Luke 13: 4-5

#### Short reflection

Accidents happen but it is in human nature to look for why – or to identify who was at fault. All sudden death means that the person who is dying cannot make their peace with family and friends and may have only seconds to try to make their peace with God. Similarly, their family and friends do not have chance to say or do the things that they promised themselves they would. There is much unfinished business all round.

A minute of silence.

#### Intercessions

We pray for those who have died suddenly – through accident or a sudden illness –  
(especially Nxxxx – name of someone you know)  
for their families, their friends and all affected by their deaths.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for emergency services and all who respond when someone is involved in an accident.  
We pray for doctors and nurses in Accident and Emergency and critical care,  
for hospital chaplains and all who support family and friends after the sudden death of a loved one.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

#### Closing Prayer

God of tenderness,

we trust to your promise that you yourself will be with those who have died

and with those who mourn

and will wipe every tear from their eyes;

that death will be no more;

and mourning and crying and pain will be no more.

cf Revelation 21: 3-4

Trusting in your mercy and love, we pray:

**Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,**

**and let perpetual light shine upon them.**

**May they rest in peace.**

**Amen.**

## Day 9

(or 21 November)

*for those who die as a result of poverty – hunger – preventable disease.*

### Opening Prayer

Hear my cry, O God;

listen to my prayer.

Let those who have died as a consequence of poverty, hunger or preventable diseases abide in your tent for ever,  
find refuge under the shelter of your wings. (cf Psalm 61)

### Scripture

The Lord said, ‘I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?’ Then he will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ Matthew 25: 41-45

### Short reflection

Throughout the world, people die as a result of poverty, malnutrition and preventable diseases. Some are just one of so many that their death is met with resignation or is barely noticed – yet each is creation of God – a unique and irreplaceable human being.

A minute of silence.

### Intercessions

We pray for those who have died as a consequence of poverty, hunger or preventable diseases –

*(especially Nxxxx – name of someone you know)*

for their families, their friends and all affected by their deaths.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

We pray for medical and charity workers who strive to bring dignity to those in poverty and at risk of malnutrition or preventable diseases.

We pray also for politicians and those who work to build a world in which all have access to the basics for human life.

**Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.**

### Closing Prayer

God of tenderness,

we trust to your promise that you yourself will be with those who have died

and with those who mourn

and will wipe every tear from their eyes;

that death will be no more;

and mourning and crying and pain will be no more. cf Revelation 21: 3-4

Trusting in your mercy and love, we pray:

**Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,**

**and let perpetual light shine upon them.**

**May they rest in peace.**

**Amen.**