

A NOVENA FOR THE VERMONT ELECTION

adapted from praymorenovenas.com

WHAT IS A NOVENA?

The word “novena” comes from the Latin word for nine (“novem”). Typically, a novena refers to nine successive days of prayer, asking God for a specific intention. A novena often invokes a saint’s intercession. Novenas also often begin or end on days of importance either in the Church or within wider society. Novenas are ancient devotions that help us become more intentional and persistent in prayer.

Although a novena is traditionally prayed over nine successive days, other arrangements for the novena may be observed, such as saying the prayers of the novena on a single day nine consecutive months, or even multiplying the number of days the prayers are prayed, often by a factor of 9.

The importance of the number nine associated with the praying of a novena can be traced back to Scripture. In the Acts of the Apostles, Jesus gathers his disciples and exhorts them to pray after his Ascension. Tradition holds that that Apostles followed this command; they, gathered with the Blessed Virgin Mary, prayed together during the nine days between the Ascension and the Descent of the Holy Spirit (Pentecost). Another connection people make with the significance of the number nine in a novena is that Mary bore Jesus in her womb for nine months before Jesus was born. The parallel between these two images is striking. Jesus spends nine months in Mary’s womb before coming forth to fulfill his mission on earth, and Mary and the Apostles spend nine days in prayer before going forth to spread the Gospel after Pentecost. May these images prompt us to begin the work of building the Kingdom of God in prayer.

THE NOVENA FOR THE ELECTION

Begin the Novena for the Election on Monday, October 31 and conclude it on Tuesday, November 8. It can be prayed at any time. The structure of the Novena:

- Sign of the Cross
- Asking the Intercession of a particular Saint [see below]
- Saying the Novena Prayer [see below]
- Concluding with the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be.
- Sign of the Cross

SEEKING THE INTERCESSION OF THE SAINTS

Day 1 (October 31): St. Jude, patron saint of impossible causes: join us in praying for this election and for the defeat of Proposal 5 / Article 22.

Day 2 (November 1): St. Frances Cabrini, you who tirelessly built the Kingdom of God in America: join us in praying for this election and for the defeat of Proposal 5 / Article 22.

Day 3 (November 2): St. Thomas More, martyred for your uncompromising faith: join us in praying for this election and for the defeat of Proposal 5 / Article 22.

Day 4 (November 3): St. Jose Sanchez del Rio, martyred for your child-like yet fearless faith in Christ the King: join us in praying for this election and for the defeat of Proposal 5 / Article 22.

Day 5 (November 4): St. Kateri Tekakwitha, who fled to Canada in order to freely practice your faith: join us in praying for this election and for the defeat of Proposal 5 / Article 22.

Day 6 (November 5): St. Damien de Veuster of Molokai, selfless servant of the lepers of Hawaii: join us in praying for this election and for the defeat of Proposal 5 / Article 22.

Day 7 (November 6): St. John Neumann, founder of the diocesan Catholic school system in America: join us in praying for this election and for the defeat of Proposal 5 / Article 22.

Day 8 (November 7): St. Rita, patroness of hopeless causes: join us in praying for the defeat of Proposal 5 / Article 22.

Day 9 (November 8): Mother Mary, Immaculate Conception: Patroness of the Americas and Patroness of the Diocese of Burlington: join us in praying for this election and for the defeat of Proposal 5 / Article 22.

THE NOVENA PRAYER

Heavenly Father, nothing can overcome your greatness. But we are weak and need a deeper gift of hope as we come to our election time and the future of our country and state. Help us remember that political power can never replace the mission of the Church to preach the Gospel to all nations.

Send your Holy Spirit upon us to help us form our consciences according to the Gospel so that we may both vote and act for the Kingdom of God.

As we wrestle with the complexities of political life, let us never forget the preeminence of the need to protect the child in the womb and the mother who carries the child.

In our respect for all human life, let us pray as well for those who are poor, weak, or marginalized, those who are immigrants and refugees, all those affected by war, those who are ill, those struggling financially, and all who suffer from the failings of the political systems of this world.

Give us the courage to always be detached from our political loyalties and be first a faithful follower of Jesus, the true King. And when it comes time for us to contribute to the political realm by our vote, help us to cast our vote in a way that is pleasing to you.

For these elections in our nation, O God, please bless us with the best possible outcome in this fallen world at all levels of government.

Finally, just as you brought our salvation from the horrible death of your Son, we pray that from the political work in our country, you will bring about great good for your people.

We make this prayer, with the help of the Holy Spirit, through your Son, Christ our Lord. Amen.