



Eighth Day: A Broken Heart

Scripture: When the soldiers came to Jesus, they saw he was already dead, and so instead of breaking his legs one of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance; and immediately there came out blood and water (In. 19:33-34).

Meditation: Take a moment to look at the crucifix. Reflect on what a confusing sign it is. It represents a monstrous event, reminding us of the depths of evil of which we humans are capable, now as then. It represents a 'moment of supreme grace, revealing to us as nothing else does the love of God for his people. From Jesus' broken heart there came out blood and water: image of the new life that would flow from his death.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, as we contemplate the scene of your crucifixion, we become aware of the perversity of the human heart, including our own. But much more than that, we see in the Cross the wonderful love of your heart, which overcomes all evil and triumphs even over death itself. Touch us with your love, so that we can bring your life and hope to all we meet.

The Novena Prayer.

Ninth Day: The Sacred Heart

Scripture: I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ (Eph. 3:17-18).

Meditation: If you have prayed through these days of our novena, you may have glimpsed in some small way how great beyond measure is Jesus' love for us: wide enough to welcome the whole world; long enough to seek out the straying sinner; high enough to reach to the Father in prayer; deep enough to root out death itself. On this great feast, think back briefly over the themes of our novena and stand in awe before such great love.

Prayer: O Sacred Heart of Jesus, your love is beyond all our reckoning and all our reasoning. We can never understand it or make sense of it. It can only be perceived by those who become like little children, those whose hearts are ready to trust and are open to wonder. Give me such a heart, Lord. Reveal your love to me, not just today but always.

The Novena Prayer.

Lord Jesus Christ, Your Heart was moved with love for the men and women who came for help in their need. You healed the sick, you fed the hungry, you forgave sinners, you cried over Jerusalem. Above all, you showed to those who were prepared to listen, the way to true life, for you are the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Lord, your Heart is still moved today by your people and their many needs.

Open our hearts to hear your word, to accept your love, and to respond to your call. In particular, I beg you to grant me the favour I ask during this novena (make your request silently), provided that it will contribute to my own eternal good and to the building up of your Kingdom of justice, peace and love here on earth.

Most Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in you.

First Day: A Welcoming Heart

Scripture: 'Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened and I will give you rest. (Mt. 11:28-29).

Meditation: Pause for a moment and call to mind some place in the past where you knew you were always welcome. Where you could turn up and people were always happy to see you. Where you could be yourself. Where you felt

comfortable, accepted, totally at ease. Then you will have some idea of how Jesus welcomes you in this time of prayer. Relax in his warm welcome for a moment.

Prayer: Jesus, you come among us as a friend and you want us to enjoy your friendship. You know that we're far from perfect, and that at times we can be grumpy, fearful, and unkind or mean- spirited. But you love us as we are, and you welcome us in all our moods. Here I am, Lord, just as I am.

The Novena Prayer.

Second Day: A Generous Heart

Scripture: 'If you then, imperfect as you are, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give to those who ask him' (Mt. 11).

Meditation: We tend to be generous with those we love. The more we love another, the more generous we're likely to be. A mother doesn't skimp in giving her child all that is needed for his/her wellbeing and comfort. Friends find joy in giving each other gifts. God is all love. His generosity is limited only by our reluctance to receive.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, when we reflect on your life on earth we see countless signs of your boundless generosity. You reached out to the sick and the bereaved, you welcomed the poor, you gave hope to those who were looking for

meaning, and you gave your life to save an undeserving people. Help me to see your loving presence in my life, Lord, and to be grateful for all I have received.

The Novena Prayer.

Third Day: An Attractive Heart

Scripture: Great numbers who had heard of all he was doing came to Jesus. And he asked his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, to keep him from being crushed (Mk. 3:9).

Meditation: What was it about Jesus that attracted such great crowds? Was it his warm, approachable, winning personality? Was it the many miracles he worked? Was it his message of hope and consolation, spoken to a dispirited people? Or was it the integrity of his life, which made his message appear both credible and possible? All of these, probably. What is it about Jesus that attracts you?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, during your time on earth great crowds felt drawn to you, eager to meet you, to hear your word, to feel your healing touch. Still today, two thousand years later, we come to you for comfort, for healing and for wisdom. Keep us by your side always. May we never be parted from you.

The Novena Prayer.

Fourth Day: A Forgiving Heart
Scripture: 'I tell you that there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety- nine righteous persons who do not need to repent' (Lk. 15:7).

Meditation: One of the most painful things that can happen us in life is when we fall out with someone we love. Sometimes it's only a small disagreement, but sometimes the hurts go deep and resentments block the road to forgiveness. Jesus reveals to us a God who holds no grudges, demands no punishment, but whose greatest joy is in forgiving. Why then do we hesitate?

Prayer: Loving Jesus, you came among us to remove the barriers that separate us from one another and that lead us away from you. Help us to accept your forgiveness, not only for the wrongs we have done, but also for the sinful attitudes we harbour in our hearts. Teach us to forgive others in the same generous way you forgive us.

The Novena Prayer.

Fifth Day: A Compassionate Heart

Scripture: Jesus was greatly distressed, and with a profound sigh he said, 'Where have you put Lazarus?' They said, 'Lord, come and see'. Jesus wept (In. 11:33-34).

Meditation: We all know what it's like to share in another's experience. At a wedding

reception, we feel the joy of the happy couple. At the bed of a sick friend, we feel the anxiety and fear they experience. Compassion is one of the greatest gifts we have: it binds us together in a caring community. Jesus knew compassion. He has compassion for you and for me.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, because you are one of us you know the human heart with all its joys and fears, its hopes and its disappointments. You understand the mysterious ways of our own hearts. Help us, in all the ups and downs of life, to be aware of your compassion and to find strength in your presence.

The Novena Prayer.

Sixth Day: A Prayerful Heart

Scripture: In the morning, long before dawn, Jesus got up and left the house and went off to a lonely place and prayed there (Mk. 1:35).

Meditation: Like any good Jew, prayer and worship were an integral part of Jesus' life. As well as the formal prayers he learned as a child, Jesus felt the need for a more intimate, personal way of being with his Father. Even at his busiest, he made room for time alone with God - time to reflect, to express his hopes and fears, to hear the Father's voice. Prayer was the

source of Jesus' strength. In it we find strength too.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, in the quiet of the morning you sought out places where you could be alone with your Father. In a busy world, it is difficult for us to find the time or place to be alone, to share with God the intimacies of our hearts, to hear his quiet voice. Help us to find even a few minutes each day to rest in his presence.

The Novena Prayer.

Seventh Day: A Serving Heart

Scripture: 'The Son of man came not to be served but to serve' (Mt. 20:28).

Meditation: For Jesus, true leadership is all about service, especially of those most in need. At the last supper, he shocked his disciples by washing their feet. Before Pilate, he declared himself to be a king but without palace or army. Authority is for the benefit of others, not our own advantage. We are most like him in times of humble service.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you come among us as one who serves. Help us to model our lives on you. Remove from our hearts all traces of arrogance and pride, so that we can be sensitive to the situation of others and responsive to their needs.

The Novena Prayer.