



CELEBRATE
LIFE
NOVENA

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On June 24, 2022, the Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, ruling that the Constitution of the United States does not confer a right to abortion. This landmark decision (known as the Dobbs Decision) undid a great evil that had persisted since 1973, which allowed the killing of over 63 million babies through legal abortion in the US. It is estimated that over 5,000 babies are saved every month since the Dobbs Decision. As we mark June 24th as Celebrate Life Day, we remember that abortion is far from abolished. Since the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, abortion access and laws vary by state. Although most abortions are now banned in 14 states, many other states have enacted new laws to protect and expand access to abortion. While we thank God for a great victory for the pro-life movement, we must continue to advocate for the preborn and pray for vulnerable lives in our communities, country, and world until abortion is not only illegal but unthinkable.

Sister Lucia dos Santos, one of the three children who witnessed the Marian apparitions at Fatima, predicted that the final battle between Christ and Satan would be over marriage and the family. We have witnessed a rapid disintegration of the state of marriage and family over the last fifty years with increases in divorce rates and families turning away from the faith. St. John Paul II said, "As the family goes, so goes the nation and so goes the whole world in which we live." As we commemorate Celebrate Life Day, we pray for the preborn and vulnerable. We also pray for families and that their faith communities surround them in love.

This Novena begins on June 16th and culminates on June 24th with Celebrate Life Day. Each day contains a reflection on what Saint Teresa of Calcutta described as "loving until it hurts." These reflections on Gospel passages should strengthen our resolve to follow their example by saying yes to God and celebrating life. Through this novena, each of us is called to be what Saint John Paul II referred to as "a genuine witness" to inspire and embody a culture of life through obedience to God's plan and support of families.



DAY 1: JUNE 16 • OUR LORD, JESUS CHRIST

As Catholics, we believe “human life must be respected and protected absolutely from the moment of conception. From the first moment of their existence, a human being must be recognized as having the rights of a person—among which is the inviolable right of every innocent being to life.”¹

“And they were bringing children to him, that he might touch them; and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it he was indignant, and said to them, ‘Let the children come to me, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.’ And he took them in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands upon them.” (Mark 10:13-16)

Gentle and innocent Jesus, welcoming these children into your arms, you remind me that all life is precious. You never refuse anyone who seeks you, embracing me to your merciful heart even when I come to you weighed down by my sins. I am never inconvenient to you, Lord, and no one is excluded from your love and mercy.

Son of God, source of love, you know how it feels to be unwanted and despised. Be my strength to stand strong for the vulnerable. Redeemer, you gave up your life for love of us, help me diminish my own wants and desires for love of you. You said yes to saving us, despite the agony you endured for our salvation. Help me to give until it hurts, as you did from the cross. In bearing witness to you, may I come to a better understanding of the selflessness of love.

Innocent and Gentle Jesus, you said yes to saving me, I say yes to you!
I say yes to life!

Hail Mary...

DAY 2: JUNE 17 • **Mary, Mother of God**

Among the most common reasons for women choosing abortion, 40% feel they are financially unprepared to care for a child and 34% feel it is the wrong time for an unplanned pregnancy.²

"In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, 'Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with you!' But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and considering in her mind what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.'" (Luke 1: 26-31)

Holy and loving mother Mary, you exemplify a mother's selfless love for her child. You said yes to God's call even as you trembled at Gabriel's message. As a young woman, not yet married, you were not prepared to be a mother, but you found confidence in God's love, and you treasured the new life in your womb. Blessed Mother of God, we ask for your intercession for women called to be mothers. Be with them and help them not to be courageous like you.

Loving Mary, you were willing to give until it hurt. You suffered many sorrows, collecting each in your patient heart, but never responded with anything but love and acceptance. As sinners, we often try to avoid pain and seek only pleasure. You taught us that the greatest love comes with pain. Help us bear our sorrows as you bore yours. Help us to see that only through love can sorrows turn to joy. Pray for mothers considering abortion. In following your example, may we be witnessed to God's love and celebrate life.

Holy Mother Mary, you said yes to bearing Christ. I will follow your example and say yes to God's plan! I say yes to life!

Hail Mary...

DAY 3: JUNE 18 • **St. Joseph**

31% of women choosing abortion cite partner-related reasons where the father is not supportive, is abusive, or does not want the baby.³

“But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’” (Matt. 1:18-21)

St. Joseph, righteous man and protector, you said yes to God without hesitation and without concern for your own desires. You did as the angel of the Lord commanded you, took Mary to be your wife, named her baby Jesus, and raised him as your own. When there was no room at the inn, you found shelter for your family. When the wrath of King Herod threatened their safety, you brought them safely to Egypt, saving them from the bloody massacre of the Holy Innocents. In caring for them, you teach us the capacity of a father’s love and a husband’s dedication. Teach us strength, inspire us by your example.

Not only were you a pillar of strength and manhood, as a descendant of King David, you passed along the kingly lineage to Jesus, fulfilling prophecy. You remind us that our families and communities pass on culture and traditions. When babies are aborted, a branch of our family tree is forever destroyed.

Brave St. Joseph, you said yes to protecting Christ and his Blessed Mother. I will follow your example and say yes to God’s plan! I will say yes to life!

Hail Mary...

DAY 4: JUNE 19 • St. Elizabeth

Statistics reveal that a lack of emotional support and financial resources are the primary reason women seek abortions.

"In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a city of Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the child leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and she exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For behold, when the voice of your greeting came to my ears, the child in my womb leaped for joy.'" (Luke 1:39-44)

Blessed St. Elizabeth, your faith was rewarded when you conceived your son, John. In her joy, the Mother of our Lord journeyed from miles away to visit you, and you shared her joy in the coming Christ. Your neighbors and kinsfolk rejoiced and rallied around you as you welcomed your firstborn. You and Zechariah found great support in your family and community. As friends, grandparents, or Godparents, we play a critical role in supporting expectant mothers and fathers as their babies wait to be born. How will I react when I hear news of new life? Will I react with joy and go out of my way to show my support? Too often new mothers are met with disappointment or judgment, or they fear a negative reaction from family and friends. Expectant mothers should feel confident in the support of their community. Help me to live in hope of new life and welcome it with joy

Blessed St. Elizabeth, you remind me not to question the ways of Our Lord but say yes to the mystery and the majesty of his works. I will follow your example and say yes to God's plan! I will say yes to life!

Hail Mary...

DAY 5: JUNE 20 • Simeon and Anna

Women with strong social networks demonstrate a decreased risk of anxiety, depression, and self-harm. Strong support systems also benefit the health and developmental outcomes of their babies.

"Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And inspired by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, 'Lord, now let your servant depart in peace, according to your word for my eyes have seen your salvation...'" (Luke 2:25-31)

Righteous Simeon and Devout Anna greeted the Holy Family at the temple with great joy. Simeon rejoiced when he saw Jesus because he knew he had at last set eyes on the Christ who would deliver our salvation. Prophetess Anna shared in that joy, giving thanks to God for the gift of our redeemer. Simeon and Anna remind me of our priests, deacons, religious, and catechists who minister to families in my own parish communities, providing the spiritual guidance and support we all need. We give thanks for these holy men and women in our lives. Almighty God, bless and equip your ministers with your grace so that they, like Simeon and Anna, embrace families and offer spiritual homes for families to grow in faith.

Joyful Simeon and devout Anna demonstrate the love and support of our parish communities. I will follow your example and say yes to God's plan! I will say yes to life!

Hail Mary...

DAY 6: JUNE 21 • **St. John the Baptist**

It's important to speak out when what is legal is not moral or acceptable. Pro-life volunteers have a direct impact on saving lives. Through their peaceful persistence, the pro-choice movement has started to abandon the claim that preborn children are not human beings, acknowledging the fatal reality of abortion.⁶

"And they came to John, and said to him, 'Rabbi, he who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you bore witness, here he is, baptizing, and all are going to him.' John answered, 'No one can receive anything except what is given him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him. He who has the bride is the bridegroom; the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice; therefore, this joy of mine is now full. He must increase, but I must decrease.'" (John 3:26-30)

Courageous St. John the Baptist, who leapt in your mother's womb upon hearing Mary's voice, you dedicated your life to proclaiming the truth with loving persistence. Confident in your mission, but ever humble, you did not let the pressure of this world deter you. Your example teaches me to trust unflinchingly in God's plan. Your voice called out from the wilderness for repentance. Help me to admit my own failings while standing up for what is right and just. An unbending reed against gusting wind, you remind me that everything I do should point to Jesus. You were willing to give until it hurt. In diminishing yourself, you said yes to God, yes to salvation for all mankind.

Courageous St. John the Baptist, you said yes to Christ before you were even born, and you proclaimed his Word up to your death. I will follow your example and say yes to God's plan! I will say yes to life!

Hail Mary...

DAY 7: JUNE 22 • **Holy Innocents**

Studies prove that extremely premature babies do experience pain, and pain management is now part of the medical standard of care. “Both neonatologists in neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) and anesthesiologists during fetal surgery acknowledge that their patients are pain-capable. Their pain exists.”⁷

“Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the Wise Men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the Wise Men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: ‘A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more.’” (Matthew 2:16–18)

Holy innocents, you were given no choice, but you felt pain at the hands of your killers. You could not say yes to life because you were powerless against the onslaught of violence unleashed by a selfishness that knew no bounds. Guilty of nothing but being under the age of two, we know you only as the nameless victims, the first martyrs to die for Christ. The people in power who should have protected you, failed you. You remind me of the people in my own society, sworn to protect, serve, or heal—legislators, politicians, and doctors—who are called to use their authority to protect life, not harm it. Patron saints of babies, intercede for the innocent preborn lives.

Holy innocents, I will speak up for those, like you, who cannot defend themselves. I will say yes to God’s plan! I will say yes to life!

Hail Mary...

DAY 8: JUNE 23 • **St. Mary Magdalene**

Surgical complications, stress, or regret are realities of abortion.⁸ With the rise of abortion pills where one out of three abortions are chemical rather than surgical, women face additional trauma from seeing the deceased baby when the medication expels the child from her body.⁹

"And Jesus answering said to him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' And he answered, 'What is it, Teacher?' 'A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he forgave them both. Now which of them will love him more?' Simon answered, 'The one, I suppose, to whom he forgave more.' And he said to him, 'You have judged rightly.' Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house, you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven her for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.' And he said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.' (Luke 7: 40-48)

Loving St. Mary Magdalene, you loved Jesus with the passion of a wounded creature that has been saved. You abandoned a sinful life for a new life in Christ. Many sins were forgiven you because you loved so much. You teach me that no sin is so great that God cannot forgive me. Your sweet devotion to Jesus revealed your repentant heart. One of Jesus' most loyal followers, you accompanied him on the sad road to Calvary, stood vigil alongside his mother, and upon rising from the dead, he appeared to you first. You remind me that I am not defined by my sins but by my love. Regret and despair are tools of the devil. Repentant St. Mary Magdalene, you teach me to trust in Christ's redeeming love. Intercede for all women who have chosen abortion; help them heal. We can all change our lives, we can all be redeemed.

Loving Mary Magdalene, you said yes to Christ, yes to a new life. I will follow your example and say yes to God's plan! I will say yes to life!

Hail Mary...

DAY 9: JUNE 24 – CELEBRATE LIFE DAY • **Holy Trinity**

“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born, I consecrated you.” Jeremiah 1:5

“Do nothing from selfishness or conceit, but in humility count others better than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.” (Philippians 2:3-8)

Today, we celebrate life! Holy Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—three persons, one nature, united in love. Pray for us!

God the Father, you created me in your image. I want to renew my awe in your creation and recognize the sanctity of life. You knew me before I was born and loved me. Even when I turn away from you, I hear you gently call me back. May I learn to trust in your plan, answer your call, and give thanks for your love that has no end.

Jesus Christ, Son of God, who humbled himself on the cross to redeem us all from sin, you came to serve and not be served. Help me empty myself for others. You knew me before I was born and loved me—dying for me in a personal and individual way. None of us are excluded from your cross. There is no life that doesn't count because you died for each of us.

Holy Spirit, you are the love between the Father and the Son. Help me to understand God's plan for me. May I invoke your love in all that I do. Holy Spirit—you knew me before I was born and loved me. Help me to extend that love to others, so that before I know them, I love them because they too are your creation.

Holy Trinity, I say yes to YOUR plan, I say YES to Life!

Our Father...



“Human rights are not a privilege conferred by government. They are every human being's entitlement by virtue of his humanity. The right to life does not depend, and must not be declared to be contingent, on the pleasure of anyone else, not even a parent or a sovereign.”

-St. Teresa of Calcutta

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