

THE MIRACULOUS ICON OF OUR MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP

The image of Our Mother of Perpetual Help was venerated centuries ago in Crete, and from there sailed to Rome. Who created it or when, we don't know. A private family held the image until the Blessed Mother appeared to the little girl of the household and told her she wished her picture to be placed in a church "between my beloved Church of St. Mary Major and that of my beloved son, St. John [Lateran]."



On March 27, 1499, the picture was exposed for veneration in St. Matthew Church, midway between Sts. Mary Major and John Lateran, where it remained for three centuries. In 1798 war destroyed the church, but the icon was preserved by Augustinian monks, who took it with them to their new monastery in another part of the city.

The Redemptorists came to Rome in 1855 and built the Church of St. Alphonsus Liguori on the site where St. Matthew Church had been.

They petitioned Pope Pius IX to return the icon to its former home, and the pope agreed, commanding the Redemptorists to "make her known throughout the world." On April 26, 1866, the miraculous icon was carried in solemn procession to the Church of St. Alphonsus, where it has remained ever since.

THE MEANING OF THE ICON

In the Eastern world, religious art is seen as an extension of God's presence in creation. Icons are much more than beautiful images: they're meant to help us connect directly with God. And each element of an icon has a specific meaning.

As you contemplate the icon, its beauty and meaning will slowly unfold before you.

- Mary's eyes, filled with compassion and love, are directed toward us.
- Our Lady is clothed in the colors of virgins (red) and of mothers (blue). These are also royal colors.
- Jesus, depicted as a young boy, wears the colors of a king.
- The star on Mary's veil reminds us that she is the dawn announcing the coming of Christ.
- Our Lady's hands hold her Son securely, and her right hand directs our gaze to Him.
- The Christ Child grasps His mother's hand as though He is frightened by what He sees.
- In His hurry to reach His mother, Jesus has almost lost one of His sandals. He became human, like us, in all things but sin.
- On Our Lady's left and right we see the reasons for Jesus' fear. On the right is the Archangel Gabriel, holding a cross and four nails. On the left is the Archangel Michael, holding a lance, a pole with a sponge, and a vessel of vinegar. This vision of the instruments of the crucifixion has driven the Child to His mother's protective embrace.
- Yet Mary's gaze is fixed on us, her children on earth. She is our source of constant comfort and hope.

NOVENA PRAYERS



OUR MOTHER OF PERPETUAL HELP

Novena to
Our Mother of Perpetual Help

May 16 - 24, 2025

ST. CATHERINE *of* SIENA
CATHOLIC CHURCH

WHAT IS A NOVENA?



The Catholic Encyclopedia defines a Novena as "nine days of private or public devotion in the Church, or at home, to obtain special graces."

The Catholic tradition of doing a Novena comes from the Biblical account of the Apostles and the Blessed Virgin Mary staying in the Upper Room after the Ascension for nine days. The Bible tells us that Jesus “commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father.” The persistence of those who waited in the Upper Room ended in fulfillment. The Lord God poured out His grace upon them.

Nine day vigils became a tradition of the Church from the third century onward. By the middle ages novenas were offered for the Pope’s intentions. Our intention during a Novena is to declare our desire to wait for the promise, persevering with confidence until the end.

Either as a public or personal observance, a novena involves nine days of hopeful anticipation of an answer for the petition or intention for which prayers are being offered. We pray with urgency because we believe in the power of prayer. During the month of May we will celebrate a Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

The Novena will begin on Wednesday, and end with a special celebration on Friday evening. During the time of Novena we will offer the Novena prayer at all our parish Masses.

NOVENA PRAYER

Our Lady of Perpetual Help, with the greatest confidence I come before you to ask for your intercession. May I be inspired by the example of your life. I think of you at that moment when, full of faith and trust, you accepted God’s call to be the Mother of His Son. Help us to be like you in the way you put your faith and trust in God.

When you learned that your cousin Elizabeth was in need, you immediately went to offer your help to her. Help us, to be like you, to be concerned for others.

We remember at the foot of the cross how your heart was broken in grief. We remember the joy you felt when you heard that Jesus had risen from His death.

Dearest Mary, Mother of Perpetual Help, help me through the trials and disappointments of my life. In particular, I ask you for this favor...pause.

Dearest Mary, Mother of Perpetual Help, we give thanks to the Lord for all the wonderful things He has done for us. We give thanks to the Lord for the many gifts He has given to us. Despite our failures and shortcomings, the Lord our God continues to show His love to us. We give thanks to the Lord for giving you to us, our Mother of Perpetual Help. We give thanks to the Lord for all the favors we have received through your intercession. Our Lady of Perpetual Help, pray for us. Amen.

PRAYERS TO OUR LADY

SALVE REGINA

Hail, Holy Queen, Mother of Mercy, our life, our sweetness and our hope. To thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve; to thee do we send up our sighs, mourning and weeping in this valley of tears. Turn, then, most gracious Advocate, thine eyes of mercy toward us; and after this, our exile, show unto us the blessed fruit of thy womb, Jesus. O Clement, O Loving, O Sweet Virgin Mary. Pray for us O Holy Mother of God, that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ. Amen.

THE MEMORARE

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy aid, or sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired by this confidence I fly unto thee, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To thee do I come, before thee I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer me. Amen.

THE ANGELUS

V. The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary.

R. And she conceived of the Holy Spirit.

Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

V. Behold the handmaid of the Lord.

R. Be it done unto me according to thy word.

Hail Mary...

V. And the Word was made flesh.

R. And dwelt among us.

Hail Mary...

V. Pray for us O holy Mother of God.

R. That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray:

Pour forth, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy grace into our hearts; that we, to whom the Incarnation of Christ, thy Son, was made known by the message of an angel. May by his Passion and Cross be brought to the glory of his Resurrection. Through the same Christ, Our Lord. Amen.