

PREPARATORY NOVENA FOR CHRISTMAS

“Novena de Aguinaldos”
(December 16–24)



ORIGINS OF THE NOVENA

This Colombian tradition preparing Christmas dates back to the 1700s when Fray Fernando de Jesus Larrea, a student priest born in Quito, wrote *La Novena de Aguinaldos* for Mrs. Clemencia de Jesus Caycedo Velez, the founder of *La Enseñanza*, a Catholic school in Bogota, Colombia.

Many years later, in the 1800s, a nun from the same Catholic school, Sister Maria Ignacia added to the Novena de Aguinaldos the Joys (“Los Gozos”), which are the verses often sung at the end of the daily and day-specific prayers of the Novena.

OPENING PRAYER

Most Benign God of infinite charity Who so much loved mankind that Thou has given by Thy Son the greatest gift of Thy love so that, made Man in a Virgin's womb, He was born in a manger for our benefit and remedy; I, in the name of all mortals, give You infinite thanks for such a sovereign benefit.

In return I offer you the poverty, humility, and other virtues of Thy Son made Man, pleading by His Divine merits, by the discomforts of His birth, and by the tender tears that He shed in the manger, that He may infuse our hearts with a profound humility, with an ignited heart, with such scorn for the temporal, that Jesus may have in these virtues His crib and remain there eternally, Amen. **(3 times *Glory Be...*)**

Day 1 (December 16)

The Life of The Eternal Word within His Father was marvelous and yet, divine mystery, He sought another dwelling, a created mansion, not because His eternal mansion lacked anything for His eternal happiness, but because His infinite mercy longed for the redemption and salvation of humanity, which without Him could not be achieved. Adam's sin had offended God, and that infinite offense could only be forgiven through the merits of that very same God. Adam's race had disobeyed and merited an eternal punishment, thus, it was necessary to save that race and satisfy its fault that God, without leaving Heaven, take the form of a man and, with obedience to the dictates of His Father, atone for that disobedience, ingratitude, and rebellion. That is why the Eternal Word, burning with desire to save mankind, resolved to make Himself human as well, and thus redeem the guilty.

Day 2 (December 17)

The Eternal Word was about to take Its created nature in the holy house of Nazareth where Mary and Joseph lived. When the Divine Decree overshadowed and came over Her, Mary was alone in deep prayer, passing the silent hours of the night in the most intimate union with God; and while She prayed, the Word took possession of His created Dwelling. However, The Word did not arrive unexpectedly, sending a messenger beforehand in the form of The Archangel St. Gabriel, to ask Mary, in the Name of God, Her consent for the Incarnation. The Creator did not want to carry out this great mystery without the consent of His child.

Day 3 (December 18)

In this way the Child Jesus began His life Incarnate. Let us consider the Glorious Soul and the Holy Body that He had taken, adoring them profoundly. Firstly, admiring the Soul of that Divine Child, let us consider in that Soul the completeness of Its Beatific Science, through which from

the very first moment of His life He saw the Divine Essence more clearly than all of the angels, and read past and future with all of its details and knowledge.

Day 4 (December 19)

Let us consider that, from His Mother's womb, the Child Jesus began to put in practice His eternal submission to God, which continued without any interruption throughout His entire life. He adored His Eternal Father, He loved Him, He surrendered to His Will; He accepted with resignation the state in which He found Himself, knowing all of its weakness, its humiliation, its discomforts. Who among us would return to such a state while in full control of our senses and reason? It was through such a path that the Divine Child began His painful and humiliating career; it was thus that He began to humble Himself before His Father; to teach us what God deserves from His children; to atone for our pride, the source of all of our sins.

Day 5 (December 20)

We have seen the life led by the Infant Jesus in the womb of His Mother most pure; Let us today consider the life led by Mary during that same period of time. Mary never ceased aspiring for the moment in which She would enjoy the Earthly Beatific Vision; the Face of God Incarnate. She was at the point of seeing that Human Face which would illuminate Heaven eternally. She was going to read the filial love in those very same eyes whose rays would forever scatter joy among millions of chosen ones. She would witness them in the apparent ignorance and innocence of infancy, the particular charm of youth, and in the severe reflections of maturity.

Day 6 (December 21)

Let us consider that Jesus had been conceived in Nazareth, domicile of Joseph and Mary, and it would have been there, in all probability, where one would have expected Him to be born. However, God had arranged things in another way and the prophets had announced that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem of Judah, city of David. In order to fulfill this prediction, God made use of a seemingly totally unrelated means; the order given by Emperor Augustus that all subjects of the Roman Empire register for a census in their place of origin. Mary and Joseph, as descendants of David, were thus obligated to go to Bethlehem.

Day 7 (December 22)

Let us consider the trip of Mary and Joseph toward Bethlehem, carrying with them the yet unborn Creator of The Universe, made Man. Let us contemplate upon the humility and obedience of that Divine Child who, although of Jewish race and having loved His people for centuries with an unexplainable predilection, now obeys a foreign ruler's dictate that a census be held, as if He was taking advantage of the moment to fulfill a role as an authentic subject of that ruler from the moment He came to this world.

Day 8 (December 23)

Joseph and Mary arrive in Bethlehem, seeking shelter in the Inns without success, either because they find them full or because of their own poverty. However, nothing can disturb the inner peace of those fixed on God. If Joseph experienced sadness upon being rejected house by house, thinking of Mary and the Child, he also smiled with holy tranquility upon looking at his chaste spouse. The still unborn Child delighted in these refusals which were a prelude of His approaching humiliations. This is what He had come to find. The desire for those humiliations had been the motivation for Him to take human form.

Day 9 (December 24)

But now, midnight has arrived, and we suddenly see within that manger, shortly before empty, the Divine Child, expected, foretold, desired during four thousand years with such indescribable longing! At His feet kneels His Most Saintly Mother in the depths of an adoration which nothing can approach. Joseph also approaches Him and renders Him homage with which He inaugurates his mysterious and imponderable role of putative father to the Redeemer of mankind. The multitude of angels descending from Heaven to contemplate this unequalled wonder, vibrate the harmonies of that Glory *in Excelsis* in the air, which is the echo of the adoration produced before the Throne of the Most High made perceptible for an instant in the ears of the mere earth below. Convened by these angels, groups of shepherds from the area arrive to adore the newly born Child and present their most humble offerings.

Oh, adorable Child, we too, who have made this novena to prepare for the day of Your birth, want to present our humble adoration. Do not reject it. Come to our souls, come to our hearts full of love. Ignite in them a devotion to Your Holy infancy. A devotion which, truly practiced and zealously propagated, will guide us to eternal life, freeing us from sin and planting in us all of the Christian values.

PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Sovereign Mary, Who by Thy great virtues and especially by Thy humility, did merit to be chosen Mother of God, I plead with You to prepare and dispose of my soul, and the souls of all praying this Novena, for the spiritual birth of Thy Adored Son.

Oh sweet Mother, express something of the profound devotion and divine tenderness with which Thou held Him so that we could be made less unworthy to see, love, and adore Him for all eternity. **(3 Hail Marys)**

PRAYER TO ST. JOSEPH

Oh, Holiest Joseph, spouse of Mary and adoptive father of Jesus! I give infinite thanks to God Almighty for having chosen You for such a high ministry and having adorned You with all of the gifts proportionate to such an excellent stature. I plead that by the love which Thou had for the Divine Child, thou may embrace me with a fervent desire to see and receive Him sacramentally, while in His Divine Essence I may see and enjoy Him in Heaven. Amen (Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be)

JOYS

My sweet Jesus, my adored Child and Way.....Come to our souls, please do not delay!

Oh supreme wisdom, Sovereign God and King, as a child before us, our hope to bring Oh Divine Infant, come to reveal, a truth and a prudence, we can truly feel.

My sweet Jesus, my adored Child and Way.....Come to our souls, please do not delay!

Oh Sacred Root, of Joseph that brings, your fragrant scent, upon Angels' wings Sweetest Child, our anguish healed, "Lily of the Valley, sublime flower of the field"

My sweet Jesus, my adored Child and Way.....Come to our souls, please do not delay!

Oh Light from the East, Eternal Ray in our night, show us the path, through this earthly fight Precious Child, Christians' joy to behold, Whose Smile glows within us, turning back the cold

My sweet Jesus, my adored Child and Way.....Come to our souls, please do not delay!

King of nations, Israel's Emmanuel so traced, Shepherd of His people, His flock most embraced Child tends His charges, with loving staff sound, whether wild sheep, or gentle lamb found

My sweet Jesus, my adored Child and Way.....Come to our souls, please do not delay!

Heavens open wide, with rain from above, benign shower, holy peace of the dove Come sublime Child, man's mortality healed, God made man, budding flower of the field

**My sweet Jesus, my adored Child and Way.....Come to our souls,
please do not delay!**

Come that Mary, anticipates Her embrace, to hold and behold, Your Heavenly
Face Come that Joseph, with sacred longing's pine, awaits and arranges, Your earthly
shrine

**My sweet Jesus, my adored Child and Way.....Come to our souls,
come do not delay!**

Help of the weak, protection in sorrow, solace in affliction, the outcast's
tomorrow Life of my life, my vision sublime, my constant friend, my Brother Divine

**My sweet Jesus, my adored Child and Way.....Come to our souls,
come do not delay!**

Look upon my eyes, enamored with Thee, kissing Thy hands, kissing Thy feet. My arms stretch
before You, and beyond my words' tries, my heart does implore you, my now constant cries

**My sweet Jesus, my adored Child and Way.....Come to our souls,
come do not delay!**

Come our dear Savior, for Whom we do sigh

**My sweet Jesus, my adored Child and Way.....Come to our souls,
come do not delay!**

PRAYER TO THE INFANT JESUS

Remember, Oh most Sweet Child Jesus, Thy words to the venerable Margarita of The Blessed
Sacrament, and through her to all of Thy devoted, these ever consoling words for our
overwhelmed and mourning humanity. "Everything that you ask, ask by the merits of My
Infancy and nothing shall be denied of you." Full of confidence in You, Oh Jesus, Who art Truth
itself, we place our misery before Thee. Help us to lead a saintly life, in order to thus obtain a
favorable eternity. Concede us, by the infinite merits of Thy incarnation and Infancy, the graces
which we need so much. We place ourselves in Your Hands, Oh omnipotent Child, certain that
our hopes will not be dashed, and that by virtue of Thy Divine Promise , Thou will receive and
serve our pleas favorably, Amen.