



*Send forth
your spirit*

*and renew the face
of the earth*

PENTECOST NOVENA 2021



Happy children receiving their First Holy Communion in Bulgaria: in Spring 2019, Pope Francis himself personally led them to the Lord's table. The pastoral visit made by the Holy Father to the largely Orthodox Balkan state also made a deep impression on the author of our novena, Sister Nadya Ruzhina, who comes from the Bulgarian town of Rakovski. This is also reflected in this Pentecost novena.

PRAY FOR NINE DAYS

in solidarity with the people of Central and Eastern Europe

Renovabis 2021 Pentecost novena

"Send forth your spirit and renew the face of the earth"

by Sister Nadya Ruzhina OSB and The Reverend Dr Christian Hartl, CEO of Renovabis.

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26TH PENTECOST NOVENA FOR THE 2021 RENOVABIS CAMPAIGN

*Send forth
your spirit
and renew the face
of the earth*

by Sister Nadya Ruzhina OSB
and the Reverend Dr Christian Hartl

CONTENTS

- 3 **Foreword**
The Reverend
Dr Christian Hartl
- 8 **Welcome**
Sister Nadya Ruzhina OSB
- 13 **Notes on praying the
Pentecost novena**
- 16 Getting attuned:
**Ascension Day –
STAY TOGETHER**
- 22 First day | Friday:
PROTECT
- 28 Second day | Saturday:
RENEW
- 34 Third day | Sunday:
HAVE LASTING EFFECT
- 40 Fourth day | Monday:
EMBOLDEN
- 46 Fifth day | Tuesday:
PRESERVE
- 52 Sixth day | Wednesday:
BE SENT
- 58 Seventh day | Thursday:
BE LOVED
- 64 Eighth day | Friday:
TAKE RESPONSIBILITY
- 70 Ninth day | Saturday:
LIVE CONSISTENTLY
- 76 In conclusion:
**Pentecost –
BE THERE FOR EACH OTHER**

SELECTION OF PRAYERS AND HYMNS

- 82 Prayers that lead to stillness
- 85 Prayers of blessing
- 87 Prayers on the
topic of creation
- 95 Intercessions
- 97 Suggestion for the creation
of a novena devotion
- 98 Renovabis-Song: Renewed
is the face of the earth
- 103 Pentecost hymn

Dear friends of the Renovabis solidarity campaign, dear worshippers of our Pentecost novena!

What shall we call it? This is the thought-provoking question that was asked when, after the fall of the Iron Curtain, the Central Committee of German Catholics (Zentralkomitee der deutschen Katholiken) and the German Bishops' Conference (Deutsche Bischofskonferenz) made the joint decision to start a campaign of solidarity between German Catholics and the people of Eastern Europe. The name chosen was the Latin word *Renovabis* ("you will renew" or "you renew"), taken from Psalm 104. The reviver of whom the psalm speaks is YHWH, God Himself, who enables the future through his Spirit: "*When you send forth your breath, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.*" (Psalms 104, 30).

It has now been almost 30 years since Renovabis was founded, during which time church life and life in



Reverend Christian Hartl,
CEO of Renovabis

civil society in countries in Central, South-East and Eastern Europe have been completely reshaped.

The spirit of God was and is clear in this work. And for our partners and friends in Eastern Europe, for our colleagues in the Renovabis branch office and for all German Catholics, it is a comfort to know that it is God Himself who knows how to renew churches and societies. We are ‘only’ his helpers. But the work of renewal is more successful the more we give HIM room in our thoughts, plans and actions. This year’s Pentecost novena thus completely encapsulates the name and therefore **the fundamental concept of Renovabis**. This takes us back to the origins of the campaign.

Communism left behind great devastation in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe: economic, political, social, cultural, spiritual and religious. Even nature suffered great damage: it was exploited, destroyed, neglected. Renovabis has chosen **responsibility for creation** as its key topic for 2021 and for the Pentecost campaign in particular.

By doing so, we are addressing one of the central elements of the creation of the present and future – and we are taking up an invitation from Pope Francis, who hopes that the ideas laid out in his encyclical *Laudato si’* (LS), which was published over five years ago, will find their way into our awareness, thoughts and actions. Psalm 104 is also a great song of praise that extols God as the Creator. The Orthodox Church, in which there is a distinct sense of spirituality of creation, prays this psalm daily in vespers. In Roman Catholic liturgy, it is strongly associated with Pentecost.

And there is another important aspect of the work carried out by Renovabis that inspired the creation of this novena: the principle of **dialogue and partnership**. Both of these concepts, and many experiences associated with them, have been crucial and guiding from the very beginning. That is why I am delighted that this year’s Pentecost novena has been created in dialogue with Sister Nadya Ruzhina OSB from Bulgaria.

FOREWORD

Sister Nadya, of the Community of the Tutzing Missionary Benedictine Sisters (Gemeinschaft der Tutzingener Missions-Benediktinerinnen), has worked at our branch office in Freising for one year. She and I have reflected, prayed and written together. This is how the ideas and prayers in this novena came to be a joint effort.

We had two main aims: the Pentecost novena is usually prayed in the nine days before Pentecost. In Eucharist celebrations during these nine days, particular biblical readings are specified. On one hand, we wanted to provide a scriptural reading for the corresponding days to make it easier to form a connection with the liturgy. On the other hand, however, we wanted the content to concern the creation into which God has placed us, together with all our prayers and pains. **Reference to scripture and responsibility for creation:** those are the two poles of every aspect of consideration.

Sister Nadya and I hope that our ideas will give you a little help with getting started.

FOREWORD

More so, we hope and pray that the Holy Spirit will start and renew something in you. In any case, we look forward to sharing solidarity with you through prayer!



The Reverend Christian Hartl
CEO of Renovabis



Photo Daniela Schulz

At a slight distance due to the pandemic: Missionary Benedictine Sister Nadya Ruzhina from Rakovski, Bulgaria visited her homeland with Renovabis CEO The Reverend Christian Hartl before they then produced this year's Pentecost Novena together.

Dear worshippers of the Novena,

I am delighted about and grateful for the invitation from The Reverend Christian Hartl to contribute to this year's novena. On one hand, this is because Pentecost is particularly important to me, and on the other hand, it is because this year's novena seeks to guide our focus to the actual reviver – the Holy Spirit, who may renew us, our families and communities, and our societies. Last but not least, I am delighted that this novena will bring my homeland, Bulgaria, a little closer to you, and that you will support my people through your prayers.

I was born in Plovdiv, Central Bulgaria, in 1988 and I grew up in the nearby town of Rakovski. You probably are not familiar with Plovdiv. However, you may have heard the name during the Apostolic Journey of Pope Francis to Bulgaria in 2019. While there, when meeting with Catholics from the country, the Pope also visited the Reverend of my hometown.



Sr. Nadya Ruzhina OSB

With a population that is 90 per cent Catholic, the city is a major exception in the country. Most Bulgarians are Orthodox (60%) or of an unspecified faith (27%). The proportion of Catholics in the country is less than one per cent.

For me, faith and community were formative values, and it was in this church diaspora that I came to learn about and value them. Thanks to the church in my hometown, I had the foundations for a life of faith with God and for God, with the people and for the people. So, it is no wonder that I then chose a life in a religious order and entered the Community of Missionary Benedictine Sisters. I had to come to Germany for my conventual formation because Bulgaria does not have a house of formation that corresponds to our constitution. So I came to Tutzing on the beautiful Lake Starnberg, where I was able to spend several years of my life.

I have become very fond of nature while in Germany. God has bestowed on it wonderful mountains and

lakes, forests and valleys. During my social work studies at Benediktbeuern Catholic Foundation College (Katholische Stiftungsfachhochschule Benediktbeuern), I was able to experience the impressive landscape surrounding Benediktbeuern and get to know many committed individuals every day. Everything that God has gifted us, we must enjoy and be grateful for. But, as part of creation, we must also be aware of our responsibility for creation. I am delighted that the German church is committed to treating creation properly and sustainably, even beyond its own borders.

My homeland is also richly endowed with beautiful nature; the Rila and Pirin mountains and the Black Sea coast are just a few examples. Besides this, it is a country with a 1300-year-old history, a country lying between Asia and Europe, between north and south. It is therefore no wonder that it is highly influenced by crossovers between cultures. I am grateful to God that people of different faiths have lived together peacefully over the past few decades!

The Missionary Benedictine Sisters of Tutzing have been present in Tsarev Brod in Northern Bulgaria since 1914. At that time, the small village was inhabited by Tatars, Russians, Italians and Germans who were seeking a new place to live in a fertile region for their families. Four pioneering sisters came from Tutzing to strengthen the faith of the young people among the German settlers and to work as teachers, nurses and farmers. This was followed by a number of social and political events that challenged the country and the people. The sisters themselves also experienced highs and lows, new beginnings and endings. After two world wars and the communist era, and 30 years after German reunification, it is actually a miracle that there is still a small community of sisters living and working there.

Since then, there have always been four sisters there, and you could almost say that that is a new beginning in itself, because the older Bulgarian sisters are all now in Heaven. At present, the community is made up of two Korean sisters, one Filipino sister and one

Kenyan sister who are trying to find their way to be there for God and for the people in the 21st century. May God bless them!

Dear worshippers, I sincerely hope that the Renova-bis novena helps you to be well prepared for Pentecost and that you will sense the work of the Holy Spirit in your life and in your church. Maybe when doing so you will discover something that you can look back on and be thankful for. I know I certainly will.

United in prayer,
Sr. Nadya Ruzhina OSB

Whether for **personal Novena prayer** or **prayer in a group**, we recommend the following simple order, which you will also find as a foldable page at the end of this booklet:

- 1 *Opening*
- 2 *Invitation to stillness*
- 3 *Scriptural text, inspiration, questions to think about, silence, prayer of the day*
- 4 *Pentecost hymn*
- 5 *Blessing*

On workdays, the novena prayer can also be integrated into the **celebration of the Eucharist**. When doing so, it is helpful to have the inspiration, questions to think about, silence and prayer of the day 3 after the gospel. The Pentecost hymn 4 can be sung after the communion silence.

One of the prayers that lead to stillness (2) may be well-suited to this, at the beginning of the celebration of Mass before Kyrie or even as the communion meditation.

In **daytime liturgy**, the Pentecost hymn or the Veni Sancte Spiritus (4) can be sung at the beginning. The scriptural quote, inspiration, questions to think about and silence (3) are instead of the reading. The prayer of the day can serve as the closing oration.

In May, the month of Mary, the Pentecost novena can also be integrated into a **May devotion**. We then recommend the following scriptural sequence: hymn to Mary; introductory thoughts telling of how Mary, together with the young Jesus, prays to the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room in Jerusalem; prayer to the Holy Spirit in the Pentecost hymn (4); scriptural text, inspiration, questions to think about, silence, prayer of the day (3); followed by a prayer to Mary (e.g. prayer 676, 4).

Alternatively, however, the basic structure can be extended to include a **Novena devotion**. A template for this, as well as a selection of prayers, intercessions and suggested songs, can found in the annex to this booklet.

Essentially, we must remember that the Pentecost novena is not about “more prayers” but rather “going deeper into prayer”. For this reason, the scriptural text should be short, the inspiration and the prayer should be spoken slowly and very calmly, and you should allow enough time for the questions to think about.

13 May 2021 | Ascension Day

Stay together





FROM THE READING OF THE DAY

While meeting with them, he enjoined them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father about which you have heard me speak; for John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the holy Spirit ... But you will receive power when the holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, throughout Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

Acts 1, 4-5.8

INSPIRATION

by The Reverend Christian Hartl

Jesus returns home to his Father. He must leave behind the disciples who have become his friends. That is painful – for him and for them. It makes it all the more important that his family do not run away but stay together instead: “Do not leave, but wait!” This they do. They stay together. We find them later in the upper room of a house in Jerusalem. They are praying together with Mary, the Mother of Jesus, to the Holy Spirit, who was promised to them all.

When speaking about our planet, Pope Francis likes to use the image of a “common home” (LS 1). It is a memorable image: we – people of all continents, nations and cultures – live in this common home (although we may feel like we live on different levels).

We should not, and cannot, evade our shared responsibility for this home; we cannot run away, as we have nowhere else to live. Here we must also be em-

boldened to consciously stay together, stick together and, as Pope Francis says, think about how humanity has the ability “to work together in building our common home” (LS 13). This works even better the more receptive we are to God’s breath of life. God’s breath gives this wonderful and, unfortunately, often wounded creation life.

But this holy and healing Spirit also wants to give us the inspiration and power to fulfil our responsibility to each other and to creation.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

- What do I expect from God when I open up to his mysterious presence?
- What does the creation in which I find myself mean to me?

PRAYER

God, you are great!
Greater than we can conceive
and closer to us than we know.
We encounter you in your creation
at every turn.
Open up our senses to your presence
so that we can see and feel,
hear and taste, smell and sense
how abundantly you have blessed us.
Amen.

14 May 2021 | First day

Protect



FROM THE READING OF THE DAY

One night in a vision the Lord said to Paul, “Do not be afraid. Go on speaking, and do not be silent, for I am with you. No one will attack and harm you, for I have many people in this city.” He settled there for a year and a half and taught the word of God among them.

Acts 18,9-11

INSPIRATION

by Sister Nadya Ruzhina OSB

Today we read that the great Paul the Apostle received encouragement from God – which he clearly needed! “Do not be afraid! Keep on speaking, do not be silent!” – easier said than done. But God also gave the reason for trusting in him: “For I am with you.” Paul thus found the power and confidence to fulfil his mission in Corinth, that is, to proclaim the word of God.

We can also take this encourage on board and practise in trust. And what is our mission today? Besides our own individual mission, we have together been given the task of performing the Creator’s work: protecting creation, wherever we are, with the skills and opportunities we have.

What is environmental protection like in my homeland of Bulgaria? To be honest, many people there have other problems that are far more important and existential. Unfortunately, 14 years after its accession

to the EU, Bulgaria remains one of the poorest Member States. But there are definitely people there who are advocating for the protection of creation. Those who, when faced with wrong, do not remain silent, but speak. Those who raise their voices against corruption and the destruction of the environment, for example, through improper development on the Black Sea coast. It is also encouraging to see the younger generation doing creative and innovative things to try and take small steps towards reducing plastic use and raising awareness of climate protection. They probably do not have a religious motive for doing so – and yet they are in some way motivated by the word of God. They are not afraid; they speak.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

- In which situation in my life would I like God's encouragement to "not be afraid"? I can ask God for it!
- How am I committed to protecting creation? What exactly could I do?

PRAYER

God, you are our Creator.
You breathed into us your holy breath.
Give us the confidence
that we have your protection
when standing up for what is right and
protecting your creation.
Amen.



15 May 2021 | Second day

Renew



FROM THE READING OF THE DAY

On that day you will not question me about anything. Amen, amen, I say to you, whatever you ask the Father in my name he will give you. Until now you have not asked anything in my name; ask and you will receive, so that your joy may be complete.

John 16,23b-24

INSPIRATION

by The Reverend Christian Hartl

“Until now you have not asked for anything in my name,” says Jesus to his disciples. They must first learn to ask “in his name”, that is, by praying by

invoking him and his values, his thoughts and thus his Spirit.

“Until now you have not asked for anything in my name” – is he also saying this to us? Or have we already taken one step further? “The deeper into my relationship with Jesus Christ that I get, the more I realise how far away from Him I used to be,” someone once very honestly said. In our relationship with Jesus Christ, there is always more; it can always become deeper, more mysterious. In this sense, however, our relationship with him never comes to an end. When trying to live with him, we are always learning something and able to experience a constant transformation of our relationship with God and of our prayers.

“Renew” and “learn” are also historically significant aspects: when the communist dictatorships in many Eastern European countries were toppled over 30 years ago, renewal was spoken of there. “We want to offer support with this rebuilding of the church and civil society. Because we belong together – as Europeans, as Christians, as members of humankind!”

And this was the origin of the Renovabis solidarity campaign that has to date stood by the side of numerous partners in 29 Central, South-Eastern and Eastern European countries to provide both help and friendship.

On our shared path over the years and decades, we have learnt a lot from each other – and we are not finished! When welcoming our partners to Germany or being welcomed by our partners in Eastern Europe, I often ask: “what brings you joy and what causes you worry?” And sometimes the conversation becomes even deeper and together we reflect on what God must be trying to tell us in the current situation and in light of the challenges we are facing. Sometimes, we reflect on what we can and should ask him for in order to create something new. And often we ask him to let us experience what is proclaimed in the name of our “Renovabis” solidarity campaign: that His Spirit renews the face of this earth. This applies to everything: people and the world, church and civil society, economics and politics, nature, and creation as a whole – everything is in constant need of renewal, which we can ask him for.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

- How great is my trust that God is capable of changing and renewing something, maybe even through me or through us?
- What do I want to ask God for today – for me, for my fellow people, for the face of this earth?

PRAYER

**Mysterious God,
you send forth your Spirit
to renew the face of this earth.
Grant us the mindfulness and
the devotedness to do good
where only we can do so.
And grant us the trust
in the opportunities that you give us
when we ask you to.
Amen.**



16 May 2021 | Third day

*Have lasting
effect*



FROM THE READING OF THE DAY

This is how we know that we remain in him and he in us, that he has given us of his Spirit. Moreover, we have seen and testify that the Father sent his Son as savior of the world. Whoever acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God remains in him and he in God. We have come to know and to believe in the love God has for us. God is love, and whoever remains in love remains in God and God in him.

1 John 4,13-16

INSPIRATION

by Sister Nadya Ruzhina OSB

“God has given us of his Spirit,” says the author of the Epistle of John. Am I aware of this? Do I believe that God’s Spirit is in me? That he *lives* in me?

Yes, I believe that God’s spirit is present in all of us and unobtrusively endeavours to enable us to live our lives. It enables us to be aware of God and to “know and rely on” his love. Through him, we realise that our human dignity does not lie in our abilities, in our industriousness, our success, our income or our ancestry but rather in the fact that we are all God’s creatures. Not because we are “so great” but in spite of our weaknesses. This is how we come to know God’s love in us.

“Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them.” If only love and continuance were so simple! That would be a wonderful basis for having lasting effect, because whoever accepts love can also love.

What does somebody who cannot accept love have to give? In the Parable of the Vineyard, Jesus says: “apart from me, you can do nothing” (John 15,5). But how often do we want to “do it ourselves” or “know better”?


When we look around at our world, we can identify the prevalent trends in human actions: egotism, greed, consumption, profit, apathy. These driving forces create systems and an economy that are not good for us people or for creation. In his encyclical *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis speaks about how we are not faced with separate crises, like those of the environment, society or the economy. Instead, there is one crisis that is social and environmental; it affects us all and requires an integral ecology which encourages a change in thinking and sustainable action in all areas of life. We should not grow weary of actively addressing the following question in our lives: what world do we want to leave behind for future generations?

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

- Can I believe that God’s Spirit has been given to me and acts in me? What signs could there be that HE is really in me?
- How do I fulfil my responsibility towards future generations?

PRAYER

Creative God, you share with us
your life-giving Spirit.
Help us to trust your work in us
and through us,
so that all that we are and do contributes
to preserving your creation.
Amen.

A first-person perspective looking down a wooden plank bridge over a rushing river. The bridge is made of weathered wooden planks and has two vertical wooden rails on either side. The water below is a vibrant turquoise color with white foam from the rapids. At the bottom of the frame, the person's feet are visible, wearing teal sneakers with brown laces and white socks. They are also wearing dark blue shorts.

17 May 2021 | Fourth day

Embolden



FROM THE READING OF THE DAY

Behold, the hour is coming and has arrived when each of you will be scattered to his own home and you will leave me alone. But I am not alone, because the Father is with me. I have told you this so that you might have peace in me. In the world you will have trouble, but take courage, I have conquered the world.”

John 16,32-33

INSPIRATION

by The Reverend Christian Hartl

”Sometimes I think about the many hardships and challenges in our world and I just despair!” or similar is something that many of us have groaned at some point upon seeing pictures of starving children, documentaries about unfair economic ties or corruption, or reports of environmental disasters.

In his encyclical *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis writes about “what is happening to our common home”. He means Planet Earth, which we all share, and he laments, among other things, environmental pollution and throwaway culture, the loss of biological diversity, decline in the quality of human life, the breakdown of society and global inequality. He discusses problems as they really are, and rightly so! One must look and say what is not right. One – no, we(!) – must expose injustice mercilessly.

That is because this is necessary for change and renewal. But sometimes, all these problems and challenges, particularly the injustice, take my breath away. But, as Jesus said, there are many unsettling things in the world. Where does it start? Where does it end?

But Jesus emboldens us. He sends us the message: it is what it is, but above all, what you should know, is that I am with you! I myself am the way through sorrow and injustice, lack of understanding and violence, so that even in such sorrow, you do not have to feel misunderstood. Have courage! I will accompany you, quite inconspicuously, each step of the way. I want to inspire you with my Spirit..

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

- What worries are bothering me right now?
- What or who gives me courage?

PRAYER

God, your creation sighs
for the many wounds
that we people have inflicted upon it.
Give us a clear view of reality,
courage to identify problems,
creativity in the face of
our opportunities and
limitless trust
in your helpful presence.
Amen.

18 May 2021 | Fifth day

Preserve





FROM THE READING OF THE DAY

And everything of mine is yours and everything of yours is mine, and I have been glorified in them. And now I will no longer be in the world, but they are in the world, while I am coming to you.

John 17,10-11a

INSPIRATION

by Sister Nadya Ruzhina OSB

When Jesus prays to God, I hear him say: “All that I have is from you, Father. It does not belong to me! And yet it belongs to me all the same. Because you

entrust all that belongs to you to my hands.” Jesus considers all that he has to not be something to be taken for granted but rather a privilege. Such a perspective gives rise to wonder, love and gratitude.

The same applies for us. All that we have was gifted to us – our lives, the wonderful world around us, nature, our fellow human beings. We were given all this for free.

Bulgaria is a beautiful country. Anyone who has ever passed through marvels at how everything can be found in such a small space: diverse landscapes, mountains, rivers, ocean and a cultural heritage that is thousands of years old. Many Bulgarians are proud of it and are delighted to identify with it. But it is also apparent that the environment often is not handled with care: we find plastic in every forest or stream, fields are covered with rubbish, and so on.

Are we aware of our responsibility to preserve creation? We constantly need to take new steps towards

changing our thinking and behaviour to protect “our” environment from us ourselves. Back in 1989, the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople Dimi-trios called on the entire Orthodox and Christian world to establish a “day of creation”. We observe it on 1st September, the start of the Byzantine ecclesi-astical year, to start the year by praising God, the creator of the universe, and with awareness of our responsibility.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

- If I took the time to remember the many gifts I have already been given in my life, how long would the list surely be?
- How do I contribute to preserving creation? How and where could I make even more of a commit-ment?

PRAYER

Life-giving God, help us
to see ourselves as recipients of your gifts
and, in this knowledge,
to become givers of gifts too.

Send us your Holy Spirit
so that we can recognise
why and how you need us today
to bring your gifts
to the people.

May this perspective help us
to treat the creation that has been entrusted to us
with care and respect.
Amen.

19 May 2021 | Sixth day

Be sent





FROM THE READING OF THE DAY

I do not ask that you take them out of the world but that you keep them from the evil one. They do not belong to the world any more than I belong to the world. Consecrate them in the truth. Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so I sent them into the world.

John 17,15-18

INSPIRATION

by The Reverend Christian Hartl

We live in a world which, in many ways, is amazingly beautiful – but, at the same time, unjust, violent and wicked. But Jesus sent his family out into this diverse world. He knows them only too well, as he knew he himself had been sent out into the world by his Father. A few hours before his death, he passes this mission on to all those who want to belong to him. After his resurrection, he gifts us the Holy Spirit as inspiration for this mission in today's world.

However, this is why we as Christians cannot hide away in a pious corner. Instead, our mission is to fulfil our complex responsibility to society and the world and to help shape them. The same also applies in relation to current environmental challenges.

In his encyclical *Laudato si'*, Pope Francis poses the following questions that run through the entire letter and must be “reframed and enriched again and again”:

“the intimate relationship between the poor and the fragility of the planet, the conviction that everything in the world is connected, the critique of new paradigms and forms of power derived from technology, the call to seek other ways of understanding the economy and progress, the value proper to each creature, the human meaning of ecology, the need for forthright and honest debate, the serious responsibility of international and local policy, the throwaway culture and the proposal of a new lifestyle” (LS 16).

It is easy to associate these issues with challenges and tasks. Not everybody has to deal with or think about everything. But everybody is sent by God to do what is required in their own area of life and scope of responsibility. This may seem threatening or feel burdensome. But we can also feel the confidence and empowerment found in Jesus’ mission: he trusts us to do good things in his name. And he prays for us so that, above all, we will be protected against evil.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

- Have I ever got the feeling that Jesus has something in mind for me? When and where was this?
- What could my mission be today?

PRAYER

God, we are part of this world
and we have a mission for this world,
for Jesus Christ has sent us
to bear witness to his love for the world
through our work.
Help us to be
trustworthy messengers of this love
wherever you have placed us.
Amen.



20 May 2021 | Seventh day

Be loved



FROM THE READING OF THE DAY

Father, they are your gift to me. I wish that where I am they also may be with me, that they may see my glory that you gave me, because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

John 17,24

INSPIRATION

by Sister Nadya Ruzhina OSB

Jesus prays to his Father – for us, the people. I marvel at the faithful and loving relationship between Father

and Son. And I marvel at how much Jesus cares about us – about me.

Some of us may be able to look back at our parents with gratitude or even pride. But we also know that there are other realities in our world. We know about our human weaknesses and the fact that some fathers and some mothers have caused many wounds.

This is what Neli's life is like. She lived in the Roma quarter of Sofia and was 13 years old when her father forced her to marry against her will for a considerable sum of money. Then her mother-in-law, who had paid for her, trained her in the "art of stealing" and forced her to "work" in different countries across Europe. One day, she managed to escape to a women's refuge centre. She says she will never understand why her own father sold her instead of protecting her. Unfortunately, Neli's case is not a unique one. In Europe, human trafficking is a reality that we would unfortunately rather turn a blind eye to.

It is therefore all the more important that we Christians stand up to protect the dignity of every single

person. We are grateful that we are able to be there for people – including for partners of Renovabis – who are tackling human trafficking and standing up for decent lives through various projects, for example, women's refuge centres. Because people like Neli should be able to experience unconditional acceptance, respect and love. Whether or not they sense God's devotion in our loving acceptance is beyond our control. But the way in which we approach them should be shaped by our own position and experience of being loved by God.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

- Have there been moments in my life where I have experienced unconditional love? Including from God?
- Where might there be someone waiting for a sign of my love and devotion today?

PRAYER

God, you create every single person
in your image and likeness.

But, for so many reasons, we people
do not treat each other well.

May your Holy Spirit
open our hearts and teach us
to respect every single human life.
Give us the courage and the power
to be witnesses
of your unconditional love
through our lives.

Amen.

21 May 2012 | Eighth day

Take responsibility





FROM THE READING OF THE DAY

When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Feed my lambs.” He then said to him a second time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” He said to him, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.” He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was distressed that he had said to him a third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” (Jesus) said to him, “Feed my sheep”.

John 21,15-17

INSPIRATION

by The Reverend Christian Hartl

The wonderful word “responsibility” also implies “giving an answer”. Peter replies to Jesus’ profound and almost identical question three times. But he knows that he has failed to fulfil his responsibility just days before. Three times he lied to his master and friend; when asked, he replied that he did not know Jesus. Now, in a moment of insightful therapy, he is asked three times by Jesus whether he loves him. He looks for the right answer.

When reading the original Greek text, one notices that Jesus twice asks “do you love me?” and Peter humbly replies, “You now *that I am your friend*”. The third time, Jesus uses Peter’s own wording. He asks: “are you my friend?”. Now Peter can reply on an equal footing: “You know all things. You know that I am your friend.” Giving an answer and taking responsibility are clearly a matter of mutual understanding.

We also have a responsibility towards creation. It might help us to understand this better if we first

realise how much God's love is revealed to us through our wonderful creation. In his encyclical *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis very touchingly writes: "The entire material universe speaks of God's love, his boundless affection for us. Soil, water, mountains: everything is, as it were, a caress of God" (LS 84). What a wonderful image: God caressing us through creation! This image can give us the power of greater appreciation.

Pope Francis goes on to write: "The history of our friendship with God is always linked to particular places which take on an intensely personal meaning" (LS 84). The places where I have lived in the past and where I now live can convey God's nearness to me. I become aware of how long a friendship with Him I have already have. I can answer to the love bestowed upon me "there and then".

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

- Where and when have I felt appreciative of the gift of creation or even like I am being "caressed"?
- How and where can I intensify my responsibility for creation?

PRAYER

God of the universe:
The earth, the water,
the air and the light,
all that sustains and surrounds us,
is a gift from your hand.
Help us to find the right answer
for this wonderful gift.
Amen.

22 May 2021 | Ninth day

Live consistently





FROM THE READING OF THE DAY

Peter turned and saw the disciple following whom Jesus loved, the one who had also reclined upon his chest during the supper and had said, “Master, who is the one who will betray you?” When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, “Lord, what about him?” Jesus said to him, “What if I want him to remain until I come? What concern is it of yours? You follow me.”

John 21,20-22

INSPIRATION

by Sister Nadya Ruzhina OSB

Jesus’ words to Peter could not have sounded more direct and insistent: “You must follow me!” It is about him personally, as a follower of Jesus. Was that a déjà vu for Peter? He had already heard these words on the riverbank, back when he first met Jesus. He followed him immediately. But a lot had happened since then. He had periods of exaltation and wonderful healings, but also periods of unfulfilled expectations, fear and death. This Peter, now sitting on the riverbank looking again at Jesus, was different. What could have been in his heart and mind at that moment? “You must follow me!” – Peter must again make a decision.

In our lives too we feel that we have reached the same point, the same fork in the road. Often, we ask ourselves why this happens when we have already made our decision. We might get the feeling that we are going round in circles, or we might start to doubt whether the path we have taken is the right one.

We should not let ourselves be irritated by such experiences because we are always changing. It may be that we needed the intervening period to grow and mature. Maybe we need a little silence to hear Jesus' call amongst all the other voices within us: "Follow me!" Jesus knows our weaknesses and this is why he keeps calling on us to follow him. He is faithful. It is our decision whether to stand by and live by our answer consistently. Christian life always involves being willing to change, growing in faith and love, and contributing to the renewal of the face of the earth through the power of the Holy Spirit.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

- Has there been a moment in my life when I have believed that God was addressing me personally? What would I like God to say now?
- The novena is coming to an end. Is there anything that has stayed with me? What would I like to take away from this?

PRAYER

Risen Lord,
you have promised us your Holy Spirit
to help us.

Through it, renew our faith
and courage to follow you consistently
in these times, in our world,
in your creation.
Amen.

23 May 2021 | Pentecost

*Be there for
each other*





FROM THE READING OF THE DAY

And no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the holy Spirit.

There are different kinds of spiritual gifts but the same Spirit; there are different forms of service but the same Lord; there are different workings but the same God who produces all of them in everyone. To each individual the manifestation of the Spirit is given for some benefit.

1 Cor 12,3b-7

INSPIRATION

by Sister Nadya Ruzhina OSB

Like Paul the Apostle, we can also see that we have been given various gifts, that we can perform different kinds of service, and that our powers and our influence are each different. Many of us may be highly active in the parish, another in the political community. Many of us may be certain of our work, another may be seeking their calling. Many of us may be adept in the IT sector or the digital world, another in social services or healthcare. Some work in their home country, others abroad, etc.

It is good that we have different talents, all of which the world today needs. But, as Paul the Apostle says, the origin and core of all our skills and services is “the same Lord ... the same Spirit”. It was on Pentecost that this Spirit empowered Jesus’ small circle of followers to bear witness to his message in all languages, everywhere. Over the last two centuries, this message has actually spread all over the world, losing none of its power of renewal and relevance. But, as Paul says, that only happens if people have come

to know God in their own lives, so that they can use their talents and skills “for the common good”.

For the common good. We may find a clue if we take a look at our fellow human beings and creation today. If we try to use our powers for the common good and to serve creation, then the world sees that we ourselves are a new creation. Not just individualists and egotists, but rather people who no longer endeavour to live just for themselves but for Jesus Christ, who died and rose for us. We were given his Holy Spirit upon our baptism and confirmation – and he gives it to us again every day.

“When you send forth your breath, they are created, and you renew the face of the earth.” (Ps 104, 30), we pray on Pentecost. Yes, God sends forth his Holy Spirit and renews his creation. The creation that is us and the world of today and tomorrow, which he has entrusted to us.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

- Which experiences or events in my life connect me to the Holy Spirit?
- How do I employ my talents and skills for the common good? What helps me to find the balance between employing them for the common good and awareness of myself?

PRAYER

God, we thank you for your Holy Spirit.

You have given us
various gifts.

You gave nobody everything – and nobody nothing.

You gave everyone a share.

Help us to serve one another with what you have
given all of us

for the benefit of others.

We ask you in the name of Jesus Christ.

Amen.

SELECTION OF PRAYERS AND HYMNS

PRAYERS THAT LEAD TO STILLNESS

siehe
Basic structure
of the novena

2

Open my eyes ...

Open my eyes, Lord,
to see your glory in the variety of
plants and flowers.

Open my ears, Lord,
to hear your voice in the birdsong
and in the rustling of the leaves.

Open my heart, Lord,
to feel your love in the abundance of
fruits and seeds.

Open my hands, Lord,
to nurture and protect
your creation.

Open my life, Lord,
and enable me
to recognise you in everything.

Andrea Rehn-Laryea
Prayer 19,3

Come, Holy Spirit ...

Come, Holy Spirit,
Fill the hearts of your believers,
*and light in them the fire
of your love.*

Send forth your Spirit,
and all will be created new,
*and you will renew the face
of the earth.*

I wish to be a vessel ...

I wish to be a vessel
to receive thoughts of peace
A vessel for you, Holy Spirit.

I hold my empty hands out to you
open to the fullness of life
Empty hands for you, Holy Spirit.

I want to open my heart
ready for the power of your love
A heart for you, Holy Spirit.

I want to be good earth
prepared for the seeds of justice
Good earth for you, Holy Spirit.

I wish to be a riverbed
to receive the waters of goodness
A riverbed for you, Holy Spirit.

Anton Rotzetter

PRAYERS OF BLESSING

In
sequence

4

Bless us, Lord
Origin and source
Start and end
Father and mother
Filler and holder of creation

Bless us, Lord
Humans and flesh
Solidary in joy and sorrow
Hope of the weak and oppressed
The death of death
Jesus Christ

Bless us, Lord
Breathing and breath
Life and power
Peace and joy
Unity and diversity
The Holy Spirit

Bless us, triune Lord
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Anton Rotzetter

or

Gracious God enlightened the disciples
by pouring into them the Holy Spirit;
he blesses us and gives us an abundance
of his gifts.

Amen.

That fire which, in many tongues,
descended on the disciples,
cleanses our hearts and ignites in us
God's love.

Amen.

The Holy Spirit, who combined many languages
in affirmation of faith,
stand us firmly in the truth and lead us
from believing to beholding.

Amen.

Grant us this, triune God,
the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

from the service book

For further inspiration:

PRAYERS ON THE TOPIC OF CREATION

Song to the sun

Highest, almighty, good Father,
Yours is the prayer, the glory, the honour
and every blessing.

You alone, Almighty, befit them
and no man is worthy of naming you.

You are praised, my Father,
with all your creatures,
especially Brother Sun,
who brings us the day and through which you
illuminate us.

And he is beautiful and radiant in his brilliance:
a symbol, Almighty, of you.

You are praised, my Father,
for Sister Moon and the stars.
You formed them in Heaven,
clear and precious and beautiful.

PRAYERS ON THE TOPIC OF CREATION

You are praised, my Father,
for Brother Wind,
for the air and the clouds and the serene and
for all weather,
through which you preserve your gifts in life.

You are praised, my Father,
for Sister Water.
She is so useful
and humble and precious and clean.

You are praised, my Father,
for Brother Fire,
through which you illuminate the night.
And he is beautiful and cheerful and powerful and strong.

You are praised, my Father,
for our sister Mother Earth,
who preserves us and guides us and yields
so many fruits,
with bright flowers and herbs.

You are praised, my Father,
for those who forgive for the sake of your love
and suffer illness and distress.
Blessed are those who wait in peace,
because you, Almighty, will crown them one day.

PRAYERS ON THE TOPIC OF CREATION

You are praised, my Father,
for our sister, bodily death;
no living person can escape it.
Woe those who die in deadly sin.
May he be blessed who finds your holy will,
because the second death will do him no harm.

Praise and bless my Father
and thank and serve him with great humbleness.

Francis of Assisi

Translation into German: Leonhard Lehmann – GL 19.2

You can order the prayer card for the
Renovabis 2021 Pentecost Campaign.
The back page features a prayer from
The Reverend Christian Hartl to inspire
meditation on the secret of creation.

Order no. 1 815 21 · free

Email: renovabis@eine-welt-shop.de
or ☎ 0241 / 479 86-200



Photo: Evgeni Tcherkassi

A prayer for our earth

from the papal encyclical *Laudato si'*

All-powerful God, you are present
in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour out upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned and
forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty, not pollution
and destruction.

Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,

to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.

Pope Francis



**YOU RENEW
THE FACE OF THE
EARTH**

Renovabis
www.renovabis.de

East and West
in shared responsibility
for creation

PENTECOST COLLECTIVE on 23 May 2021
LIGA Bank eG IBAN DE24 7509 0300 0002 2117 77



A Christian prayer in union with creation
from the papal encyclical *Laudato si'*

Father, we praise you with all your creatures.
They came forth from your all-powerful hand;
they are yours, filled with your presence
and your tender love.
Praise be to you.

Son of God, Jesus,
through you all things were made.
You were formed in the womb of Mary our Mother,
you became part of this earth,
and you gazed upon this world with human eyes.
Today you are alive in every creature
in your risen glory.
Praise be to you.

Holy Spirit, by your light
you guide this world towards the Father's love
and accompany creation as it groans in travail.
You also dwell in our hearts
and you inspire us to do what is good.
Praise be to you.

Triune Lord, wondrous community of infinite love,
teach us to contemplate you
in the beauty of the universe,
for all things speak of you.
Awaken our praise and thankfulness
for every being that you have made.

Continued on page 94

Give us the grace to feel profoundly joined
to everything that is.

God of love, show us our place in this world
as channels of your love
for all the creatures of this earth,
for not one of them is forgotten in your sight.
Enlighten those who possess power and money
that they may avoid the sin of indifference,
that they may love the common good,
advance the weak,
and care for this world in which we live.
The poor and the earth are crying out.
O Lord, seize us with your power and light,
help us to protect all life,
to prepare for a better future,
for the coming of your Kingdom
of justice, peace, love and beauty.
Praise be to you.
Amen.

Pope Francis

Selection of INTERCESSIONS

God is our creator, we were created by Him.
We lay our wishes out before him and pray with
trust in his kindness and loyalty ...

- for the earth, which you have entrusted to us as
our common home.

Answer:

**Send forth your spirit and renew the face
of the earth (prayer 645.3).**

- for the church, which is a global community of
prayer and solidarity.
- for the governing classes, who bear particular
responsibility for global sustainable development.
- for the women and men standing up for justice,
peace and the protection of creation.
- for the people who perform their daily work
with patience and love.

Continued on page 96

INTERCESSIONS

- for nature, which needs our attention and protection.
- for children and young people, to whom the future belongs.
- for everyone working with and for nature.
- for all people who are suffering from illness or who are affected by environmental damage and natural disasters.
- for us ourselves, as we are part of creation.
- for ...
- for the deceased, who have departed this world and yet are still with us.

Lord, we thank you for creating the world with wisdom and for continually renewing it. You are the praise and the glory now and for eternity. Amen.

See model novena devotion: right side

MODEL NOVENA DEVOTION

Besides the basic structure of the novena (cover), other elements could include: longer scriptural reading(s), psalms, antiphones/litanies, intercession hymns, prayers of supplication, symbolic acts, creative elements, discussion among the group/sharing of the faith.

- Opening P: Our help is in the name of the Lord ...
A: Who created Heaven and Earth.
- Pentecost hymn or Veni Sancte Spiritus/song
- Brief introduction and invitation to stillness
- Silence
- Reading of the day
- Short song (e.g. prayers 646.1, 365, 386)
- Inspiration of the day
- Silence
- Prayer of the day
- Intercession
- Lord's Prayer instead of the closing intercession prayer
- Song
- Prayer (e.g. one of the prayers on the topic of creation – see pages 87 to 94)
- Closing/blessing

Dass erneuert werde das Antlitz der Erde

INTRO/ZS Φ

Kathi Stimmer-Salzedor 2007

Instrument zur 2./4./5. Strophe

1. Dass er - neu - ert wer - de
 2. Dass durch uns auf - scheine
 3. Dass wir We - ge fin - den,
 4. Dass durch uns - re Hän - de
 5. Dass die Grenzen fal - len,

das Ant - litz der Er - de,
 die Lie - be, die ei - ne,
 die Not ü - ber - win - den,
 Be - dräng - nis sich wen - de
 ein Zei - chen uns al - len: Der Ga - ben sind

und be - freit und be -
 die al - les um -
 Ge - rech - tig - keit
 und Glau - be auf -
 Der Ga - ben sind

Renewed is the face of the earth

1. reit, den Frie - den zu fas - sen,
 2. fasst, das Na - he, den G⁴
 3. sä'n mit all un - sem Kräf - ten,
 4. steht, der Mut macht zum Teil - len,
 5. viel und je - der kann ge - ben!

send' aus Dei - nen Geist, Du
 Send' aus...

Gott al - len Le - bens,
 re - no - va - bis fa - ci - em ter -
 fa - ci - em ter -

(ZS-Einsatz)

TAKING ACTION IN THE EAST WITH RENOVABIS

Renovabis was founded in March 1993 by German bishops as a campaign of solidarity between German Catholics and the people of Eastern Europe at the suggestion of the Central Committee of Ger-



man Catholics. Renovabis remains in contact with partners from churches and communities in 29 Central, Eastern

and South-Eastern European countries and fosters communication with the people there. As a campaign of solidarity between German Catholics and the people of Central and Eastern Europe, Renovabis has put almost 800 million euros into funding around 25,200 projects since 1993.

Its name for the aid campaign is "Renovabis faciem terrae – You renew the face of the earth". These words from Psalm 104 are interpreted by benefactors, partners and employees of Renovabis as follows: "We want to constructively contribute to the pastoral, social and societal renewal of East-

ern Europe, but we know that this is only possible with the power of God."

The funds that are also required originate from the Pentecost collectives in all Catholic parishes in Germany, from one-off donations and from church tax, with another part coming from public funds.

The latest information on Central and Eastern Europe and on the project and partnership work carried out by Renovabis can be requested from:

**Renovabis, Domberg 38/40, D-85354 Freising,
telephone 08161/5309-0, fax 08161/5309-44,
E-Mail: info@renovabis.de
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1 Opening

Oh God, help me.

Lord, come to my rescue.

Honoured are the Father and the Son
and the Holy Spirit.

*As in the beginning, so it is now and always
and for eternity.*

Amen.

2 Invitation to stillness

I will receive from your hands forever more.
So it is and so it shall be.
That is my truth and my joy.
Forever more will you turn your eye to me,
and I live from your vision,
you, my creator and my salvation.
Teach me your presence in the stillness,
the secret to understanding what I am.
And that I am through you and before you and for you.
Amen.

*Romano Guardini
Prayer 19,1*

Alternatively: prayers on pages 82/83/84

4 PENTECOST HYMN

Come, Holy Ghost, creator of life,
with your power fill us.
Your value as Creator called us into being:
Now breathe God's breath into us.

Come, comforter, guider of hearts,
helper sent by the Lord;
from you flows light, love and fervour,
Make us, the weak, stronger and braver.

Send forth God's omnipotence,
through fire and through storms;
Our speechless mouths you open
And to the world the truth proclaim.

Burning senses and soul,
the love of our hearts aglow,
and our weak flesh and blood
with your power do what is good.

Ward off the power of evil,
Always send us your peace.
Keep us on the right path,
so that we may come to no harm.

Let us see the Lord with faith,
and understand his image, the Son,
and trust in you, who is within us,
and brings the love of God to us.
Amen.

after "Veni,
Creator Spiritus ",
9th century,
Hrabanus Maurus

5 PRAYER OF BLESSING

Mysterious God, we pray for your blessing for us and for the people in Eastern Europe. Strengthen us for the better and give us the inspiration of the Holy Spirit to renew the face of the earth.
Amen.

BASIC STRUCTURE for the sequence of the daily novena prayer

1

OPENING

→ Page 102

2

INVITATION TO STILLNESS/SILENCE

→ Page 102

3

SCRIPTURAL TEXT, INSPIRATION AND PRAYER

→ for today's: page 18 onwards

4

PENTECOST HYMN

→ Page 103

5

PRAYER OF BLESSING

→ Page 104

The basic format can be supplemented by other elements as desired, e.g. for a devotion in the parish (reading, psalms, songs, intercession, creative elements). Suggestion: page 97.

YOU RENEW THE FACE OF THE EARTH



East and West
in shared responsibility
for creation



Photo: Borislav Chepichev

Pentecost collective
on 23 May 2021

Front photo: Evgenii Tcherkasski

Renovabis promotional poster 2021