

A NOVENA OF PREPARATION

Day 1: We pray first for all disciples, at all stages on our journeys of faith.

We ponder the question of what Jesus intended when called his first disciples, and what that means for us as a Church today. We are called to live out vibrant discipleship both in our personal missions and in our parishes.

Our identity, our daily identity, rests in the Lord and spills over into our interactions with others. It can be as simple as looking someone in the eye, when greeting and speaking to them. When we call others by name and look them in the eye, we acknowledge that they're a child of God and we want to share God's love with them.

Let us pray for all those who are praying and working to create a vibrant, mission-driven and sustainable Church here in our Diocese.

Day 3: We pray today in thanksgiving for the gift of the Eucharist.

The Mass is our invitation to join in Christ's sacrifice and participate in communion with God and love for Jesus.

We pray for everyone who receives the Eucharist, that they may know and experience Christ's true presence. Let us bring our awareness back to Christ, so that our participation in the Mass produces the fruit our Lord intended when He gave us this gift of Communion through the Eucharist.

We are a Eucharistic people. Today, we pause and take some time in this particular moment to think about how important it is to have that relationship with the Lord, that the Lord gave us the gift of Himself — His body, His blood in the Eucharist.

Holy Spirit, Divine Counselor,

I adore You as the one true God
with the Father and the Son.

I give You my heart and I offer my thanksgiving
for all the graces which You bestow on me.

Grant me the gifts of wisdom, understanding, counsel,
fortitude, knowledge, piety, and fear of the Lord, so that I may
rightly direct all my actions, and thus renew the face of the
earth. Recreate me as your true disciple so that the Church in
Peoria will be renewed. **Amen.**

Please place this Novena in the pew, and pray together as a parish.

Day 2: We pray today for all priests, and for the pastors who lead and guide our parishes.

Jesus called the apostles to be fishers of men, and we pray for all those that He has raised up new apostles in His Holy Church. You have kindled in the hearts of your priests the fire of zeal for souls.

Lord, grant our priests and pastors the courage to follow you, who are the Way, the Truth and the Life. Grant them the wisdom, understanding, and strength they need to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.

Allow them to experience joy in their ministry as they share the divine grace of the Eucharist with the faithful of our Diocese.



Day 4: We pray in thanksgiving for the example and life of Venerable Archbishop Fulton Sheen.

The El Paso, IL native and media evangelist has helped transform using mass media to share the Gospel message.

He not only knew our Catholic faith on a rich and deep level, but he was also versed in current culture. He incorporated difficult topics into his teachings, often related to world events. He had the capability to take complex theological concepts and present them in a way that everyone could understand.

As his cause for sainthood advances, we are blessed to have an example of a modern, media-savvy evangelization to look to within our own community.

We pray this Novena for the people of the Diocese of Peoria.

With the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the faithful will be empowered to go make disciples in our new, mission-driven, sustainable structure of parishes.

Day 5: We pray for all those who educate young people, and hand down the Catholic Faith to the next generation.

Through the teachers, instructors, catechists, and those who serve in leadership roles, Catholic families can receive an education and an experience that prepares them to be everything God made them to be - academically, socially, and spiritually.

As Catholics, we seek to develop faith-filled individuals who will lead our world in finding solutions to problems affecting peace, social harmony, and human and civil rights.

We pray today for all the families and students who participate in the Catholic education and faith formation process in our Diocese.



Day 7: We pray for all those discerning their path to holiness in this world, especially those considering a vocation to the priesthood.

We pray in a special way for them – choosing a consecrated vocation is a radical act in our modern world. Let us hold all these individuals in our prayers today.

Let us encourage young people, and have them hear us say that they would be an amazing wife and mother, husband and father, as well as a priest or consecrated religious.

We pray also for holy families. Happy, healthy and holy priests and religious are going to come from strong, holy families. It starts with the family, the domestic church in our midst.

Day 9: Today we pray in a special way for Bishop Lou Tylka and all past and future Bishops of the Diocese of Peoria. "And so I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the netherworld shall not prevail against it." Matthew 16:18

The task of a shepherd is to lead his flock, care for those in need, and make difficult decisions about what God is calling us to do and be in our community.

Since 1875, our Diocese has been led by nine Bishops who have given their lives to God, in the service of His Church. We pray in a special way for all our bishops, and for all those who will serve in this role in the future.

Day 6: We pray for all those who will benefit in the future from the decisions we are making today.

Let us renew discipleship efforts, and work to grow in our relationship with Jesus Christ in every corner of the Diocese. This process has helped us recommit to living out our parish-based missions to spread the Good News of the Gospel of Jesus amidst the challenges of today.

"Now to him who is able to accomplish far more than all we ask or imagine...to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever."
(Ephesians 3: 20-21)

We pray for those future generations, who will benefit from this renewed pastoral plan for the Diocese of Peoria.

Day 8: We pray in thanksgiving for all the members of consecrated Religious Communities, Contemplatives and Religious Orders who have served the Diocese of Peoria now and throughout our history.

The charisms of these orders have enlivened our faith for generations.

We pray for all their members, and in thanksgiving for the good work that they have done throughout the generations here in the Diocese of Peoria.