

Building Hope

Novena to the Holy Spirit

17th – 25th May 2026



Pentecost, from St John's Church, Carraroe, Sligo

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A period of Prayer, Reflection and Planning for the renewal of the Church in the Archdiocese of Dublin

This resource is for use in the nine days from 17th – 25th May beginning on the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord, through Pentecost and continuing to the Feast of Mary, Mother of the Church. You are warmly invited to join together in this annual *Building Hope* Novena – a period of prayer, reflection and planning for the renewal of the Church in the Archdiocese of Dublin.

The Novena Prayer for daily use, is available on the next page and on the Prayer Card. Other prayer resources are offered here; a daily introduction, images and intercessions. These resources, day by day, will be your companion for this period of prayer. Please feel free to use the prayer material for your personal prayer, during the Mass and at your parish/partnership pastoral council, parish team or ministry group gatherings.

Let us as a diocese, unite together in prayer as one People of God, during this dedicated period of the Novena. May this time of reflection and planning in every parish and partnership in the Archdiocese of Dublin be blessed and build hope.

***‘Brothers and sisters,
today we need to look to the future with hope
and to build the hope of the future.***

Do not be afraid to do so!’

Pope Leo XIV, Kilamba, Angola, 19th April 2026

All resources and images are available at www.dublindiocese.ie under *Building Hope*

Novena Prayer

Mary, Mother of the Church,
stand with us at this Spirit-filled time.
Grace us with your faithful presence
as we pray, reflect and plan.

Mary, our Mother,
wrap your mantle of gentleness and courage around us.
Inspire us to say 'yes' to your Son,
as we breathe in the Spirit of Truth and Love,
to renew our communities of faith around Jesus.

Holy Mary,
you stood at the foot of the Cross, broken-hearted.
You witnessed the joy of the resurrection
and the wonder of Pentecost.
You walked great distances in your time.
Be with us now on our Synodal Journey, *Building Hope*.

Beloved Mother,
open our hearts generously to our baptismal calling.
Encourage us into ever deepening communion
with your Son, with each other,
with those most in need, and with all of God's creation.

A Mhuire Mháthair,
hold us close to you
as we embrace God's loving invitation
to wholeness, healing and peace.
Amen.

Archdiocese of Dublin

Building Hope through Prayer, Reflection and Planning

Novena Day 1 - The Ascension of the Lord - 17 May 2026

Introduction

We begin our *Building Hope* Novena to the Holy Spirit on the Feast of Christ's Ascension into Eternal Glory.

Scripture **From the Gospel of Matthew**

Go, therefore, make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-19)

Intercessions

Gathered in hope, on this Ascension Day, we bring our petitions before God.

1. Let us pray for those who will be initiated into the Church by Baptism: that they may be supported on their journey by the living and loving example of Christians.
2. Let us pray for those who minister in our Parish Baptism and RCIA Teams: that they may be empowered by God's Spirit to be witnesses of truth and love.

God of power and love, listen to the prayers of your people which we ask in the Spirit, through Christ, our Lord. Amen

Reflection

Here is a prayer and gesture that embeds sacred ritual in families preparing for the baptism of one of their members. Imagine Mary joining with you.

Each evening, when saying 'goodnight' to your child, make the sign of the cross on their forehead, saying; 'God bless you and keep you, in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit'.

The above prayer is based on the prayer of welcome from the Baptism ceremony.



Novena Prayer: [You might like to pray the prayer at Mass before the final blessing]

Please join now as we pray the NOVENA PRAYER slowly together...

Mary, Mother of the Church...

Novena Day 2 - First Anniversary of the Inauguration of Pope Leo XIV - 18 May 2026

Introduction

We mark the first anniversary of the Inauguration of Pope Leo XIV who was elected, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, on 8 May 2025 at the Conclave of Cardinals in the Sistine Chapel, Rome.

Scripture **From the Acts of the Apostles**

When Paul placed his hands on them, the Holy Spirit came on them, and they spoke in tongues and prophesied. (Acts 19:6)

Intercessions

Called together by our shared faith, we offer our intercessions in trust to God

1. We pray for the Church in these synodal times: that under the leadership of Pope Leo XIV we will walk together on the path of listening and discerning.
2. We pray for those who have been called to be prophets in our time: that they will be courageous in proclaiming the truth with the support of Our Lady of Pompeii.

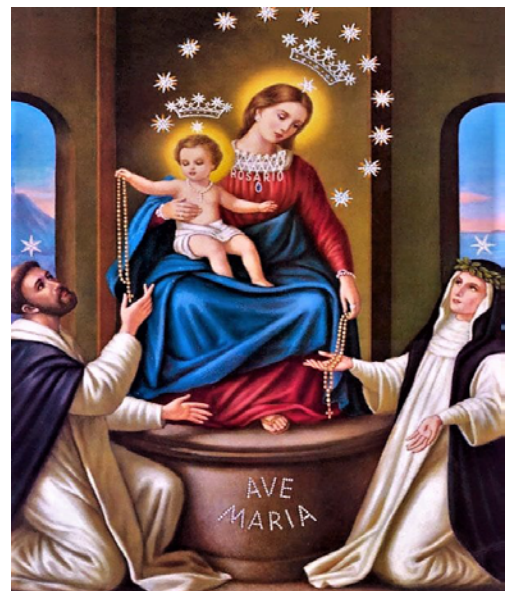
God of hope and strength, pay attention to the prayers of your family which we ask in the Spirit, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Reflection

Words of Pope Leo XIV on the day of his election as Supreme Pontiff – 8 May 2025

“To all of you, brothers and sisters of Rome, of Italy, of the whole world, we want to be a Church of the Synod, a Church that walks, a Church that always seeks peace, that always seeks charity, that always seeks to be close, especially to those who suffer.

“Today is the day of the Supplication to Our Lady of Pompeii. Our Mother Mary always wants to walk at our side, to remain close to us, to help us with her intercession and her love. So I would like to pray together with you. Let us pray together for this new mission, for the whole Church, for peace in the world, and let us ask Mary, our Mother, for this special grace.”



Novena Prayer: [You might like to pray the prayer at Mass before the final blessing]

Please join now as we pray the NOVENA PRAYER slowly together...

Mary, Mother of the Church...

Novena Day 3 - Tuesday of the Seventh Week of Easter - 19 May 2026

Introduction

The suffering of Saint Paul because of his courageous witness to the Good News of Jesus, leads us to confront religious persecution in our own time.

Scripture **From the Acts of the Apostles**

I only know that in every city the Holy Spirit warns me that prison and hardships are facing me.
(Acts 20:23)

Intercessions

Called together as a prayerful people we offer our intercessions with gentle confidence

1. Let us pray for our communities building hope together in their partnerships: that they will promote a spirit of mutual respect for followers of other religions.
2. Let us pray for those who suffer persecution because of their Christian faith: that we will speak up in their defence and lobby for justice where we can.

God of inspiration and kindness, listen to the prayers of your faithful that we ask in the Spirit, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Reflection

Women of Pakistan

The number of Christians exposed to persecution and at risk of suffering violence worldwide rose by 8 million people compared to last year—reaching a record 388 million. We remember them in prayer and may we work for justice on their behalf.



Novena Prayer: [You might like to pray the prayer at Mass before the final blessing]

Please join now as we pray the NOVENA PRAYER slowly together...

Mary, Mother of the Church...

Novena Day 4 - Feast of Saint Bernardine of Siena - 20 May 2026

Introduction

You will be familiar with the letters **IHS** as a design in many of our churches. Saint Bernardine of Siena, whose Feast Day we celebrate today, was the person who initiated this idea to promote our rich Eucharistic inheritance.



Scripture

From the Acts of the Apostles

“Now I commit you to God and to the word of his grace, which can build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”
(Acts 20:32)

Intercessions

Called together as a community of faith we offer our intercessions to God

1. We pray for all in consecrated life whose intuition of the needs of their time has inspired movements of charity and action: we remember the followers of St. Francis of Assisi as we mark the 800th anniversary of his death.
2. We pray for the ‘People of God’: that following the example of those who give witness to the Gospel, we may continue to carry the light of hope in our hearts.

God of generosity and charity, listen to the prayers of your people which we ask in the Spirit, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Reflection

Saint Bernardine of Siena (d. 1444), was a member of the Franciscan Order, the greatest preacher of his time, journeying across Italy, calming strife-torn cities, attacking the paganism he found rampant, attracting crowds of 30,000, ...compared with Saint Paul, he had a keen intuition of the needs of the time, along with solid holiness and boundless energy and joy.

Especially known for his devotion to the Eucharist, he devised a symbol—**IHS**, the first three letters of the name of Jesus in Greek—in Gothic letters on a blazing sun. This was to displace the superstitious symbols of the day, as well as the insignia of factions: The devotion spread, and the symbol began to appear in churches, homes and public buildings.



Novena Prayer: [You might like to pray the prayer at Mass before the final blessing]

Please join now as we pray the NOVENA PRAYER slowly together...

Mary, Mother of the Church...

Novena Day 5 - Thursday of the Seventh Week of Easter - 21 May 2026

Introduction

Courage to speak the truth is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Both the late Pope Francis and Pope Leo XIV have displayed this gift during their papacy. Saint Paul was brave in his witness and left that grace as his legacy. Those preparing for Confirmation might explore the lives of people of courage and faith such as the late Sr Stan Kennedy, who said; *"In the face of the worst that the universe can throw at us, If we have hope, we can endure."* (Sr. Stan Kennedy RSC d. 2025)



Scripture

From the Acts of the Apostles

The following night the Lord stood near Paul and said, "Take courage! As you have testified about me in Jerusalem, so you must also testify in Rome." (Acts 23:11)

Intercessions

Called together as a believing people we offer our intercessions with strength and confidence

1. We pray for the Spirit of courage: that we will speak the truth with compassion to those who need Your light regardless of the cost.
2. We pray for the grace of faithfulness: that we will hold fast to the religious traditions that sustain us and never be afraid to share them with family and community.

God of renewal and new life, listen to the prayers that we ask in the Spirit, through Christ, our Lord. Amen

Reflection

One of the many legacies of Pope Francis are the Beatitudes he gave us in 2016.

"Blessed are those who remain faithful while enduring evils inflicted on them by others and forgive them from their heart."

We are invited to face the challenge of staying true to our values. In the spirit of the early church, let us reclaim our space of truth in our own time. Pope Leo XIV has come under pressure recently for his condemnation of war and the use of the Gospel to justify it.

"I will continue to speak out loudly against war, looking to promote peace, promoting dialogue and multilateral relationships among the states to look for just solutions to problems. Too many people are suffering in the world today. Too many innocent people are being killed. And I think someone must stand up and say there's a better way."

Novena Prayer: [You might like to pray the prayer at Mass before the final blessing]

Please join now as we pray the NOVENA PRAYER slowly together...

Mary, Mother of the Church...

Novena Day 6 - Friday of the Seventh Week of Easter - 22 May 2026

Introduction

The celebration of the Eucharist is at the heart of the Christian community. People are nourished by the grace of the Sacrament. They are also fed by liturgies that are participative in music and word. People recognise when coordination and effort are evident because of the contribution of a liturgy group.

Scripture

From the Gospel of John

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" "Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." (John 21:15)



Intercessions

Gathered together as people of the Good News, we bring our intercessions before God.

1. We pray for those who receive their First Communion this year: that they will be nourished and fed at the table of love.
2. We pray for all who minister at the Lord's table: that they will renew their faith and understanding of the gift of the Eucharist and the privilege they enjoy.

God of joy and truth, listen to the prayers of your family that we ask in the Spirit, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Reflection

"We know how important it was for Jesus to share meals with his disciples, but also, and especially, with sinners and the outcast. Sitting at table, Jesus was able to listen to others, to hear their stories, to appreciate their hopes and aspirations, and to speak to them of the Father's love. At each Eucharist, the table of the Lord's Supper, we should be inspired to follow his example, by reaching out to others, in a spirit of respect and openness, to share with them the gift we ourselves have received... Through the testimony of lives transformed by God's love, we best proclaim the Kingdom's promise of reconciliation, justice and unity for the human family. Our example can open hearts to the grace of the Holy Spirit, who leads them to Christ the Saviour." **Pope Francis, January 2016**

Novena Prayer: [You might like to pray the prayer at Mass before the final blessing]

Please join now as we pray the NOVENA PRAYER slowly together...

Mary, Mother of the Church...

Novena Day 7 - Saturday of the Seventh Week of Easter - 23 May 2026

Introduction

Listening to God's Word is another source of spiritual nourishment. John, the Evangelist reminds us that his Gospel account is a small window into the words and actions of Jesus during his time on earth. Mary, the great listener, was best placed to hear the Word of God who she brought into the world.

Scripture **From the Gospel of John**

But there are also many other things which Jesus did; were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. (John 21:25)

Intercessions

Celebrating our connectedness we present our prayers

1. We pray for all gathered here today and for those joining us on the webcam: that our hope in the power of God's Word will support us in difficult times.
2. We pray for those who are called to speak and preach the Word of God: that they will listen to God's Spirit as they prepare to carry out their special role.

Creative and all-powerful God, hear our prayers and answer our pleas. We ask this in the Spirit, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reflection

It is difficult for people to sit quietly with God's Word. We are so used to scanning through messages and news on our phones that we are losing our power of concentration. Brother Richard Hendrick OFM Cap tells us that monks used to pray with short phrases from the Bible. Choose a phrase for yourself.

He describes the practice of sitting with a short phrase, repeating it over and over again and thinking about it like 'chewing the cud'. In the same way that cattle eat, chew and chew before swallowing, we can do the same by simply sitting with one simple phrase.

"We get all the goodness from the scripture and then finally a deep silence falls...we wait for the harp of the heart to be plucked...and a moment of awareness to dawn".

We can do this today and any day using the phrase we have chosen.



Novena Prayer: [You might like to pray the prayer at Mass before the final blessing]

Please join now as we pray the NOVENA PRAYER slowly together...

Mary, Mother of the Church...

Novena Day 8 - Pentecost Sunday - 24 May 2026

Introduction

Pentecost is about renewal. 'Send forth your Spirit, O Lord and renew the face of the earth' is the Psalm 103 response for the day. Maybe we have been discerning, during the Novena, what might need a fresh look in our Partnership...



Scripture

'Peace be with you' (John 20:19)

'Send forth your Spirit, O Lord and renew the face of the earth' (Psalm 103)

Intercessions

Challenged by God's Word and the needs of our community we offer our intercessions

1. Let us pray for our Parish Partnerships: that the Spirit of the Lord will help us renew our communities, *Building Hope* in a Synodal Way.
2. Let us pray for peace: that we will work together in a spirit of harmony to build relationships in our community under the peaceful prayer of our Mother, Mary.

God of warmth and embrace, Listen to our prayers that we ask in the Spirit, through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Reflection

Prayer for Peace – Pope Leo XIV

Lord Jesus,
you conquered death without weapons or violence:
you shattered its power with the strength of peace.

Grant us your peace,
as you did to the women filled with doubt on Easter morning,
as you did to the disciples who were hiding in fear.

Send forth your Spirit,
the breath that gives life and reconciles,
that turns adversaries and enemies into brothers and sisters.

Inspire in us to trust in Mary, your mother,
who stood at the foot of your cross with a broken heart,
firm in the faith that you would rise again.

May the madness of war cease
and the Earth be cared for and cultivated by those who still
know how to bring forth, protect and love life.

Hear us, Lord of life! Amen

Novena Prayer: [You might like to pray the prayer at Mass before the final blessing]

Please join now as we pray the NOVENA PRAYER slowly together...

Mary, Mother of the Church...

Novena Day 9 - Feast of Our Lady, Mother of the Church - 25 May 2026

Introduction

We are blessed to conclude our Novena on this special day in honour of Mary, Mother of the Church. You will have recited, perhaps meditated on, our new Novena Prayer for 2026 each day. May it become a source of study and reflection in our communities.

Scripture **From the Acts of the Apostles**

They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers. (Acts 1:14)



Intercessions

Called together as a synodal, listening people we present our intercessions with humility

1. Let us pray for our Diocese on our Synodal journey *Building Hope*: that with the intercession of Mary, Mother of the Church we will become closer to each other.
2. Let us pray for our communities, at the conclusion of this Novena: that we will continue to use these prayers and resources at parish meetings and assemblies.

**God of hope and strength, listen to the prayers we ask in the Spirit, through Christ, our Lord.
Amen.**

Reflection **From Fr Bill McNichols**

“Pope Francis has spoken beautifully about the Church as Mother. I know he would like to see more women and lay men involved in the decisions and hierarchy of the Church. In this icon Mary is solemn with an ever so gentle upturning of her mouth, as if she is awaiting the arrival of the Spirit, as she did in the first Pentecost. As Mother of the Church, she knows our problems and what is needed most of all right now to keep us all following the Gospels. She knows the Holy Spirit never goes backwards but is always creating anew. Her throne is not made of gold, but Hildegardian greens and warm colours. The Flame of the Spirit hovers above her. Doctor St Hildegard of Bingen saw the Holy Spirit as the “greening agent” of the Most Holy Trinity, and she put these inspirational visions into some of her 77 songs as well. In this era of urgent need to protect Mother Earth, as St Francis of Assisi called her, I have great hopes that young people will be given some “miraculous inspirations/interventions” from the Holy Spirit and help to save our world.”

Fr Bill McNichols – Icon Writer – Pentecost 2021

Novena Prayer: [You might like to pray the prayer at Mass before the final blessing]

Please join now as we pray the NOVENA PRAYER slowly together...

Mary, Mother of the Church...