

Pro- Life Novena

First Month March 25 - April 25

"Hail Mary, Full of Grace, the Lord is with thee..." With her acceptance of God's will, Mary's body prepares to carry Jesus in her womb. During this first month of pregnancy, the baby's heart is beating, and by the 20th day, the brain, spinal cord and nervous system are developed. He has arms, legs, eyes, ears, kidneys, a liver, a mouth and an umbilical cord. A placenta forms as a barrier to keep his mother's blood separate, while allowing nourishment and oxygen to pass through. The awesome news that a mother is with a child can be greeted with great joy or dread -- filled sorrow. Each year in the United States some 1.6 million mothers and fathers choose to still those beating hearts and reject those budding lives.

Pray for all mothers and fathers that they may choose life for their unborn children.

Second Month April 25 - May 25

Surely by now Mary has told her parents, Joachim and Anne, of her pregnancy. What must they think? How will they tell Mary's betrothed, Joseph the carpenter? The law would have Mary stoned for adultery. They must trust in God! Today's unwed teenage mother may never know the comfort of loving parents or the warmth of understanding support. Without parental guidance or knowledge, the law allows her to terminate an infant before it has begun its journey into life. At two months, a child in the womb has a fully functioning body with fingers, toes, a brain, its tiny heart beating twice as fast as an adult's. His milk-teeth are present at 6 1/2 weeks. Though only a little over an inch, it is now apparent that the baby is a boy or girl.

Pray for teens in crisis pregnancies, that God will strengthen them to make the right choice. Pray also for the passage of the "Illinois Parental Abortion Notification Act".

Third Month May 25 - June 25

Faith-filled Joseph, believing the revelation that he is to be the protector of the Messiah, bravely stands by Mary's side, offering his strength and sense of mission as her body begins to accommodate her child. How many fathers have abandoned the mothers of their children? Indeed, how many fathers who may have treasured a child, never know of its existence or of its terrible end? Babies are denied life who can at this stage hear, open and close their lips, hiccup and suck their thumbs. At three inches, the baby now begins to kick, curl and fan toes, make a fist, practice breathing.

Pray for all fathers that may use the awesome power of life-giving to be a true protector.

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Fourth Month June 25 - July 25

Mary now takes her place in village society as a married woman and expectant mother. Family and friends gather materials to weave the swaddling garments in which her child is to be clothed. At four months, Jesus' organs are functioning and his heart is pumping 6 1/2 gallons of blood each day. Approximately 6 inches in length, fine hair covers the child's body, eyelashes, and brows are showing as well as unique fingerprints which will remain the same all life long. The baby is comforted by listening to his mother's heart beat. Sadly, 160,000 abortions per year take place after the fourth month.

Pray for expectant mothers that they will find support to make life's realization possible.

Fifth Month July 25 - August 25

It is now apparent, even in the shapeless fashions of her time, that Mary is with child. Little can she imagine an innkeeper in Bethlehem who will in the future offer her all that he can in hospitality. At five months, there is no mistaking a baby's presence. Mothers feel its reaction when startled by outside noises or even its subtle hiccup. The baby now tastes of what she drinks. Sweet is fine; sour, uh-uh! The baby is now 10 inches long and weighs more than a half-pound. Despite these evidences of life, 44 abortions are performed each day in the United States on women carrying a child five months or older.

Pray for all who respect and foster life through education, support, and peaceful witnessing.

Sixth Month August 25 - September 25

Mary now feels the quickening of the Child Jesus that proclaims his presence within her womb. She sings to him and feels his response. At six months, a special covering (vernix) forms to protect the baby's skin from the fetal waters. The baby's eyes, closed since the seventh week, are now open to its surroundings. The infant is now 12 inches long and weighs 1 1/2 pounds. This baby could survive birth. Despite the fact that a child of six months has a chance of life, women may legally abort their unborn at any time throughout the nine months of their pregnancy.

Pray for all physicians, midwives, and nurses that they may recognize the sanctity of life and God as the author of that life.

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Seventh Month
September 25 - October 25

Mary and Joseph knew in advance that their baby would be a boy. And although Jesus was not his biological child, Joseph eagerly anticipated his birth. By the seventh month, the baby's hands grip strongly. His eyelids open and close as He surveys His increasingly cramped surroundings. The baby is now 15 inches long and weighs 2-3 pounds. The infant listens intently for his mother's recognizable voice. A child of seven months would survive birth. Four to 20 couples wait to adopt each available child. The average abortion takes 5-10 minutes. The average wait for adoption is 2-10 years.

Pray for all adoptive parents who provide the loving care and nourishing environment which every child deserves, and for foster parents who lend their hearts and homes to those whose fates hang in the balance.

Eighth Month
October 25 - November 25

Mary's pregnancy is nearing its completion. The crib and baby clothing are ready. But the best laid plans are sometimes turned upside down. The village is abuzz with the news that those of the House of David will be called shortly to Bethlehem to be counted among this princely dynasty. In Mary's eighth month, the Infant Jesus' skin begins to thicken and layers of fat are stored underneath for insulation and nourishment. Antibodies are building up. Jesus' quarters are getting cramped; chin on chest, His knees, arms, and legs are bent. Many twins are born in the eighth month. Physicians often counsel to reduce the pregnancy by aborting the twin, triplet, or added siblings in the womb.

Pray for physician and health care providers to foster the reverence for life.

Ninth Month
November 25 - December 25

Bolstered by provisions and buoyed upon a cushion of carpets, Mary perches upon their patient donkey as she and Joseph start their journey. The trip to Bethlehem should take four days, but Mary's pregnancy forces them to travel slowly. Do they perhaps fall behind their fellow travelers? Soon they will be entrusted with the life of God made man. How must they reflect on this awesome responsibility as they journey toward their destiny? At nine months, the baby is poised head down for its descent into the world. At birth, approximately 280 days from conception, a baby normally weighs from 6-9 pounds; it may be 19-21 inches long. Its tiny heart pumps 300 gallons of blood per day. How can this not be a child?

Give prayerful thanks to God for His most precious gift to humanity - Jesus Christ, His only Son.

We gratefully thank the Archdiocese of Chicago Respect Life Office for sharing this Novena with us.