

NOVENA TO BLESSED SISTER MARIA ANTONINA KRATOCHWIL

*School Sister of Notre Dame
(21 August 1881 – 2 October 1942)*



**A Patron
of *Shalom***

INTRODUCTION

This novena expresses dimensions of the life of Blessed Sister Maria Antonina:

- radiant witness
- courageous follower of Jesus
- simple and poor in spirit and in life
- authentically loving the enemy
- unshaken in her trust of God
- overcoming evil with true love
- spiritually supporting her co-prisoners
- devoted to children and youth
- committed to the will of God to the end

Reflecting on dimensions of her spiritual life, in light of the Word of God from the liturgy of the day and our Constitution *You Are Sent*, offers direction for our lives. Let us listen to the challenges and allow them to touch our inner being, so that we become authentic witnesses of God's love, as she was.

PRAYER FOR EACH DAY OF THE NOVENA

**Triune God,
we stand before you
to express our gratitude
for the gift of our Sister
Blessed Maria Antonina Kratochwil**

- Day I: radiant witness
- Day II: courageous follower of Jesus
- Day III: simple and poor in spirit and in life
- Day IV: authentically loving the enemy
- Day V: unshaken in her trust of God
- Day VI: overcoming evil with true love
- Day VII: spiritually supporting her co-prisoners
- Day VIII: devoted to children and youth
- Day IX: committed to the will of God to the end

**Through her intercession we ask you
to open our hearts and give us the graces
that you bestowed upon our Sister
so that we may be authentic witnesses
of your love in our world today.
Amen.**

DAY I – 23 September Sister Maria Antonina

RADIANT WITNESS

WORD OF GOD: No one who lights a lamp conceals it with a vessel or sets it under a bed; rather, he places it on a lampstand so that those who enter may see the light. (Lk 8,16)

OUR CONSTITUTION: Moving toward the fullness of personhood in Christ, we become more integrated, freer to proclaim the good news. (YAS, C 46)

LET US PRAY: Lord Jesus Christ! Blessed Sister Maria Antonina sought to reach the fullness of her personality in you. Through the example of her life, she became light and did not allow fear and doubt to darken her love for you. Grant us the grace to look at the truth about ourselves, so we may become more integrated, and thus more able to proclaim the Good News.

**Blessed Sister Maria Antonina,
radiant witness of God's love,
PRAY FOR US!**

DAY II – 24 September
Sister Maria Antonina

COURAGEOUS FOLLOWER OF JESUS

WORD OF GOD: Afterward he journeyed from one town and village to another, preaching and proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God. (Lk 8,1)

OUR CONSTITUTION: Our mission is to proclaim the good news as School Sisters of Notre Dame, directing our entire lives toward that oneness for which Jesus Christ was sent. As he was sent to show the Father's love to the world, we are sent to make Christ visible by our very being, by sharing our love, faith, and hope. (YAS, C 4)

LET US PRAY: Lord Jesus Christ! Blessed Sister Maria Antonina, as a School Sister of Notre Dame, gave her life for that unity for which you yourself came to earth, sharing her love, faith and hope with others. Grant us the grace of fervent love, deep faith, and an unwavering hope, so that we are able to reveal you to the world.

**Blessed Sister Maria Antonina,
courageous follower of Jesus,
PRAY FOR US!**

DAY III – 25 September **Sister Maria Antonina**

SIMPLE AND POOR IN SPIRIT AND IN LIFE

WORD OF GOD: [He] sent them to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to heal [the sick]. He said to them, “Take nothing for the journey, neither walking stick, nor sack, nor food, nor money, and let no one take a second tunic. (Lk 9, 2-3)

OUR CONSTITUTION: Consecrated by the Triune God for mission, we live in such a way that the kingdom becomes more clearly visible in our redeemed yet sinful world. Prophetically we proclaim the primacy of God’s reign, present yet still to come. Our vowed life complements the life of other members of the Christian community just as their manner of following Christ supports and challenges our own. Together we continue Christ’s mission. (YAS, C 12)

LET US PRAY: Lord Jesus Christ! Blessed Sister Maria Antonina experienced hunger, and yet she shared with other prisoners her portion of the prison daily bread. For poor children she always had a special place in her heart. Grant us the grace that we understand those who ask us for a piece of bread. May our hearts be open to help others, and may we continue to carry out Christ’s mission.

**Blessed Sister Maria Antonina,
simple and poor in spirit and in life,
PRAY FOR US!**

DAY IV – 26 September

Sister Maria Antonina

AUTHENTICALLY LOVING THE ENEMY

WORD OF GOD: But Herod said, “John I beheaded. Who then is this about whom I hear such things?” And he kept trying to see him. (Lk 9, 9)

OUR CONSTITUTION: Our living of gospel poverty as School Sisters of Notre Dame urges us to serve the poor. Making the concerns of the poor our own, we become painfully aware of the many who suffer privations stemming from the sinfulness of our world. In accord with church teaching and directives, we work actively, especially in our local situations, to eliminate the root causes of injustice in order to realize a world of peace, justice, and love. (YAS, C 17)

LET US PRAY: Lord Jesus Christ! Blessed Sister Maria Antonina, strengthened by your grace, followed your example, ready to accept shortcomings, insults, persecution, and even death, for the sake of the Kingdom of God. At the present time in our history when violence, lies and brutality terrify us – we pray, make us instruments of your peace and reconciliation, so that your love may grow among us and all nations.

**Blessed Sister Maria Antonina,
authentically loving the enemy,
PRAY FOR US!**

DAY V – 27 September
Sister Maria Antonina

UNSHAKEN IN HER TRUST OF GOD

WORD OF GOD: Then he said to them, “But who do you say that I am? (Lk 9, 20)

OUR CONSTITUTION: Enriched by our experience of Christ’s love, we dare to follow him in unqualified reliance on a provident God. (YAS, C 15)

LET US PRAY: Lord Jesus Christ! For Blessed Sister Maria Antonina, living in life-threatening conditions, you were the Messiah of God. Her total trust in you led her into the Paschal Mystery. We ask you to give us the grace of trusting you, that we may be able to experience any difficulty with unwavering trust in you.

**Blessed Sister Maria Antonina,
unshaken in your trust of God,
PRAY FOR US!**

DAY VI – 28 September

Sister Maria Antonina

OVERCOMING EVIL WITH TRUE LOVE

WORD OF GOD: Pay attention to what I am telling you. The Son of Man is to be handed over to men. (Lk 9, 44)

OUR CONSTITUTION: In memory of Jesus and following his example, we are impelled to extend Eucharist into our daily lives, giving ourselves totally for others, gratefully receiving from them...In the light of God's radical love, we experience our own failure to love, our need to be reunited with God and with one another. We learn little by little that we are all engaged in the same life-long process of conversion of heart, of return to love. (YAS, C 34, 36)

LET US PRAY: Lord Jesus Christ! Blessed Sister Maria Antonina was convinced that persevering love has the power to heal. Yet today hostility and violence continue to destroy families, culture, and society; the world is still torn and divided by injustice, racial, ethnic and national conflicts, and different philosophies of life. We ask you to give us courage to be witnesses of unity in a divided world and, wherever we are to make efforts towards reconciliation.

**Blessed Sister Maria Antonina,
overcoming evil with true love,
PRAY FOR US!**

DAY VII – 29 September

Sister Maria Antonina

SPIRITUALLY SUPPORTING HER CO-PRISONERS

WORD OF GOD: There was a rich man who dressed in purple garments and fine linen and dined sumptuously each day. And lying at his door was a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who would gladly have eaten his fill of the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. (Lk 16,19-21)

OUR CONSTITUTION: To confront injustice credibly requires that we ourselves act justly. We strive to live simply, to value human labor rightly, and to respect the dignity of every person, witnessing that living these values is a possibility for humanity. Strengthened by Christ's grace and following his example, we are willing to suffer want, insult, oppression, and death for the sake of the kingdom. (YAS, C 17)

LET US PRAY: Lord Jesus Christ! Blessed Sister Maria Antonina, prisoner during World War II, despite exhaustion and injustice that she experienced, served other prisoners. She listened to them, advised them, led a heart to true repentance before God, prayed for her persecutors, and offered her suffering for the Church. We ask you for the grace of inner peace when touching what is unjust, incomprehensible, and harmful, that we may be able to see the needs of others and not become closed within ourselves.

**Blessed Sister Maria Antonina,
spiritually supporting your co-prisoners,
PRAY FOR US!**

DAY VIII – 30 September

Sister Maria Antonina

DEVOTED TO CHILDREN AND YOUTH

WORD OF GOD: [He] said to them, “Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me. For the one who is least among all of you is the one who is the greatest. (Lk 9,48)

OUR CONSTITUTION: Deep faith and high courage urged Mother Theresa to risk already meager resources to satisfy needs wherever she was called. In her spirit we respond to God’s call expressed in our times. Like her, we educate in schools and in other areas of urgent need; like her, we exclude no one from our concern, but are especially sensitive to youth and women and are impelled to prefer the poor. (YAS, C 24)

LET US PRAY: Lord Jesus Christ! Blessed Sister Maria Antonina surrounded children with selfless love and always directed their hearts to God. Her maternal love embraced especially poor and abandoned children. As youth found a mother in her, she was concerned about their spiritual life and maturing to true humanity. We ask you to grant us the grace that we may be able to support children and young people in their development to fullness of humanity in today's world.

**Blessed Sister Maria Antonina,
devoted to children and youth,
PRAY FOR US!**

DAY IX – 1 October

Sister Maria Antonina

COMMITTED TO THE WILL OF GOD TO THE END

WORD OF GOD: When the days for his being taken up were fulfilled, he resolutely determined to journey to Jerusalem. (Lk 9, 51)

OUR CONSTITUTION: Created for total union with God, we strive to become ever more united with him as we move into the future... This basic thrust of our lives reaches its climax in death, the moment for which life itself prepares us. In death, we say our ultimate human yes to our Creator. Trusting in God's power to bring us to fullness of life, we see death as an act of worship: in dying, we proclaim God, God, and ourselves, creatures... In hope and peace, we enter into the joy of the Lord! (YAS, C 48, 47)

LET US PRAY: Lord Jesus Christ! Blessed Sister Maria Antonina, sustained by grace, followed your example, ready to accept shortcomings, insults, persecution and even death, for the sake of the Kingdom of God. In our times when violence, lies, and brutality overwhelm us, help us to fulfill the will of God, because it is your power that overcomes all difficulties.

**Blessed Sister Maria Antonina,
committed to the end to the will of God,
PRAY FOR US!**

Blessed Maria Antonina Kratochwil

School Sister of Notre Dame (1881-1942)

A Patron of *Shalom*

Sister Maria Antonina Kratochwil was born 21 August 1881, in Witkowice by Ostrawa where her parents moved in 1879 to find work. In 1885 they returned, with their children, to the mother's homeland Węgierska Górka, and then settled down in Bielsko.

She entered the Congregation of the School Sisters of Notre Dame in 1901. As a candidate and later as a professed sister, she was sent to Karwina to teach in a Polish elementary school (1906-1909; 1910-1917). She was then sent to teach in Lwów (1917-1925). From 1925 to 1932 she was local leader, boarding school directress, and responsible for the candidates for the congregation in Tłumacz. She was sent again to Lwów, where she was appointed directress of the school and continued the formation of candidates (1931-1939). From 1940 to 1942 she was local leader at Mikuliczyn.

At the beginning of World War II, she was removed from school. In Mikuliczyn, Antonina and her local community were removed from their convent (February 1940 – June 1941). On 9 July 1942, together with six sisters, she was arrested and put into prison in Stanisławów. Enduring inhuman conditions (hunger, beating, torture, scoffing) she gave witness to Christian love, faith and forgiveness; she uplifted her sisters and lay co-prisoners. Five days after release from prison, on October 2, 1942, she died as a result of torture and typhus.

Sister Antonina was a woman of deep faith, a wise and competent teacher, and wonderful person. Sisters and lay persons who worked with her unanimously testified that Sister Antonina possessed a boundless goodness and friendliness, a joyful love of her vocation. True serenity and peace emanated from her. She loved children, especially poor and neglected children. Sister Maria Antonina Kratochwil was beatified in the group of 108 martyrs of World War II by Pope John Paul II in Warsaw on June 13, 1999. Her feast is celebrated on June 12 of each year.