



NOVENA

with Father Triest

compiled by Bro. René Stockman

Prayer for the Beatification of Father Triest

Lord Jesus,

After your example, your servant Peter Joseph Triest opened his heart completely to the love of the Holy Father.

He became a priest moved by charity and concerned about the wellbeing of the poor, the sick and of all those who suffer. By providing comfort and assistance, he enabled them to participate in the joy of the resurrection.

Assisted by those who followed his example, he translated the evangelical message of love in his time and he laid out a trail of charitable initiatives wherever he came.

Permit that his memory remains alive in all those places where people live and work, inspired by his words and by his actions.

And permit that his presence is rendered lively in the Church by elevating him above the faithful as an example.

For that should allow us to understand even better that God is Love and that it was your sole desire to live in his love. Amen.

Preface

The life of Peter Joseph Triest reflected the goodness and love of God. His contribution to the establishment of the Kingdom of God here on earth was characterised by his dedication to the poor, his single-minded devotion to God and his founding of four religious congregations.

His spirit lives on in the many people who share his charism as religious brothers and sisters and he inspires many others to live and work in accordance with the message of the Gospel.

He continues to intercede for us before the throne of God, so we confidently address our prayers to him and tell him all our needs. We look forward to the day when the Church will publicly proclaim the holiness of this Servant of God. This is a further reason why we pray that his message may be known and lived by even more people.

During this novena, we will dwell on the most important aspects of his life and we will pray that we might live increasingly in his spirit.

A Historical Outline of P.J. Triest's Life

Peter Joseph Triest was born in Brussels on August 31st 1760 as the ninth child of a wealthy family. Because of undue interference from the Austrian authorities in religious matters, he was forced to change schools several times, until he eventually succeeded in finishing his secondary education at the Latin School in Geel. In 1780, he enrolled at the Catholic University of Louvain. Two years later he decided to become a priest and he attended the seminary of Mechlin, where he was ordained a priest on June 10th, 1786.

Still a young priest, he was sent to Blaasveld, Our Lady over de Dijle, Asse and Hanswijk, until he was appointed parish priest of Saint Peter's parish in Ronse in 1797. At that time priests were forced to swear loyalty and obedience to the laws of the French Republic. If they refused, they were forced into hiding. Father Triest was one of those who refused, and found himself obliged to perform his duties as a priest unlawfully for 5 years. Those years were a period of spiritual growth in his life. Despite

oppression, he nevertheless founded a workshop for orphans.

On May 15th, 1802, Triest was allowed to speak in public again for the first time. He immediately invited his parishioners to wholeheartedly pardon their enemies.

A conflict with the anticlerical mayor of Ronse brought him to Lovendegem in 1803. There he was deeply affected by the extreme poverty of the people. In order to fulfill the needs of his parishioners, he founded his first congregation on November 4th, 1803: The Sisters of Charity of Jesus and Mary. The little house in the Appensvoorde neighbourhood, where the congregation was founded, still exists, and is now maintained in Triest's memory by the Sisters.

Through his Gospel inspiration an motivation to improve the situation of the poor, Triest was called to Ghent in 1805, together with his Sisters, to take up the care for the terminally ill. A little later, he was invited to join the Commission of Civil Hospices. Thus he became co-responsible for the organisation of poor relief in 19th century Ghent. The next thirty years of

Triest's life will be remembered as tumultuous, but productive, for he had but one objective: taking care of all the poor, the sick and the afflicted, consoling and nursing them, inspired by the love of God.

In order to improve the care of elderly men at the Byloke hospital, he founded a second congregation on December 28th, 1807: The Hospital Brothers of Saint Vincent, later to be called 'Brothers of Charity'.

It is with their help that he broke the shackles of the mentally ill who were locked in the crypt of Gerard the Devil's Castle in 1815. That intervention would eventually make him, together with Dr. J. Guislain, the founder of psychiatric care in Belgium.

In order to provide home care for the poor, he founded the congregation of Saint John of God in 1823. However, in 1846 that congregation merged with the Brothers Hieronymites.

Meanwhile, the Brothers and Sisters had set up various apostolic works in aid of the deaf, and the blind. They had also opened schools for poor children.

Good father Triest, as everyone knows him in Ghent, pleaded with the Dutch king William I to preserve

the beguinages (Communities of women who have not taken religious vows, but who live an austere and religious life all the same).

In 1830, the honorary Canon became titular Canon of the Chapter of the Cathedral of Saint Bavo, and member of the Episcopal Council.

A year before his death, he founded a fourth congregation: The Sisters of the Childhood of Jesus. Its task was to take care of foundlings.

The Belgian Vincent de Paul died on June 24th 1836, pronouncing the words of Luke: “*Give and it shall be given unto you.*”



Novena

Day 1: God First

“God of Love, my heart, made strong by your grace, will burn with passion for You.”

To devote the first place in one's life to God, to open up one's heart and spirit to His grace, and to be able to say that God is the only fulfilment of one's life, that is the vocation of every Christian. As Christians, we must take that vocation to holiness very seriously. Father Triest had understood that very well, so it became the foundation of his life. He became a man of prayer who would reserve the best hours of the day for God. Only thanks to that knowledge can one understand his complete dedication to the poor.

“You must pray and meditate, for do not forget that a religious who lacks the spirit of prayer is like a soldier deprived of his weapons, like a bird with clipped wings, like a city with no defences, a body without a spirit or a soul. You must convince yourself never to waste a moment of prayer time.”

- **Prayer**

God, whom we may call Father,
enfold us ever more in your love,
and rid our hearts
of all that is in the way of your love.
make us seek You in prayer every day,
help us to find You and to stay with You,
so that we may proclaim:
“I require only God.
Oh! God of Love,
let my heart, made strong by your grace,
burn with passion for You.”
Amen.

- **A Decade of the Rosary with Invocation**

Lord, grant us, through the intercession of your
servant Father Triest, the grace of a life of prayer
and the favour that we beg of your mercy.

- **Prayer for the Beatification of Father Triest**

Day 2: God Is Love

*“When God loves you, then
try to live up to His love
and try to love Him truthfully too.
Our heart is capable of loving God to the extent
that we desire to love Him.”*

In Father Triest's opinion, God's love was the source of his human love. God who loves all of us unconditionally, wants people to love one another in the same way. For this reason He sent His son Jesus to us, Jesus, the living image of God's love. He showed us the measure of God's love: immeasurable love, unconditional love, universal love but, at the same time, personal love. Over time, Jesus' heart became the symbol of that immeasurable love.

“But how could I speak of You, Oh Divine Love, since no one can contain you? Oh blazing fire of love, help me overcome my incapacity and make my heart feel the things that reason cannot explain. Jesus' heart loved us in a way beyond measure, let us love Him in an equally immeasurable way.”

- **Prayer**

God, You who are love, help me to overcome my self-love, which causes me to close my heart to You and to my neighbour. Awaken in me the desire to love only You so that I may become a loving person to my fellow man. My heart is capable of loving You, God, to the extent that I desire to love You. Amen.

- **A Decade of the Rosary with Invocation**

Lord, grant us, through the intercession of your servant Father Triest, the grace of a life of prayer and the favour that we beg of your mercy.

- **Prayer for the Beatification of Father Triest**

Day 3: The Sacrament of Love

“In the Eucharist, Jesus’ love appears to excel even more than in the mystery of His incarnation.

*Upon His incarnation,
Jesus seemed to abandon his godhead,
but in this holy sacrament he appears to give up
his humanity altogether.*

*Upon the incarnation,
He chose to disguise himself as a slave
but in this sacrament He is hidden
in the shape of bread.”*

As a priest, Father Triest devoted a lot of attention to preparing the young to receive Holy Communion. He let no occasion slip, to concentrate on the Eucharist during catechesis. “I should wish God to grant me the grace to stimulate passion for and love of this adorable sacrament among all the faithful.” Passion and love are dispositions in which the Eucharist ought to be celebrated and whereby we are allowed to consume the Body and Blood of Jesus. And let us rejoice with Mary: “The Lord raises my soul on high, enraptured is my spirit with God, my Redeemer.”

“Given that this holy sacrament is a sacrament of love,

one must approach it with love. One must love God who loves us so much. Since He dedicates Himself entirely to us, we must dedicate ourselves entirely to Him. Since He belongs to us completely, we must belong to Him completely.”

- **Prayer**

Jesus, who comes to us time and again in the form of bread and wine, inspire in us the desire and disposition to receive You frequently. You are the healer of souls. You take away our hearts of stone, and give us your own loving heart
Since You belong to us completely,
we must belong to you completely as well.

- **A Decade of the Rosary with Invocation**

Lord, grant us, through the intercession of your servant Father Triest, the grace to be permitted to receive you regularly in the Eucharist and the favour that we beg of your mercy.

- **Prayer for the Beatification of Father Triest**

Day 4: Living the Joy of the Resurrection

*“I give you the resurrected Jesus.
Jesus Christ has truly risen and
God wants us to follow His example
and to rise and live the life of the resurrected.”*

To live the life of the resurrected changes us thoroughly. St Paul was very unambiguous about that: “And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is pointless and you have not, after all, been released from your sins. [...] If our hope in Christ has been for this life only, we are of all people the most pitiable” (1 Co. 15, 17-19).

The resurrection of Jesus is the key to our faith because it makes us live our lives from a different perspective. Life on earth is given eternal value and all our actions need to be placed in that perspective. True conversion, according to Father Triest, therefore has a lot to do with the resurrection. One has to live one’s life as though one had been raised already. Everyday life, with its beautiful and difficult moments, is unlocked and freed from its meaninglessness, its finiteness. That is the hope with which we approach others, and by helping them, we make resurrection possible in their lives.

“To distribute clothes among the poor, to prepare medicine for the sick, to provide them with a bed and to fluff their pillows so that they should be able to lay down their wounded and ill bodies, to cleanse and bandage their dirty and foul-smelling wounds, is that not to make the sun shine for them, to produce a new earth? Is that not to raise them and save them from the jaws of death?”

- **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, through your suffering, death, and resurrection, you truly saved us. Let us feel the joy of the resurrection and share it with others. Then we will be carrying on your work of salvation on earth and giving hope to all those people whose lives seem hopeless and desperate. Lord Jesus, truly risen, allow us to live as resurrected people even now.

- **Decade of the Rosary with Invocation**

Lord, grant us, through the intercession of your servant Father Triest, the grace to live as resurrected people and the favour that we beg of your mercy.

- **Prayer for the Beatification of Father Triest**

Day 5: Mary, Our Mediator

*“Seek refuge with Mary, mother of Jesus,
whom He gave to us as our Mother.
She is the refuge of all sinners,
always willing and prepared to intercede
with her Son in our favour
and to reconcile us with Him;
to obtain His grace for us
so that we should live
in loving harmony with God.”*

Father Triest was extremely devoted to Mary because he regarded Mary as the Mother of God and as a powerful mediator with her Son. Mary is, indeed, a mediator who is always prepared to speak in her children's favour. Nothing should prevent us from approaching Jesus through Mary who will repeat the words that she spoke at the wedding at Cana: “Do whatever he tells you!” (Jn. 2, 5).

We can also pray to Jesus with Mary's help. The rosary is like Mary's diary in which she tells us about her son Jesus: the moments of joy, of sorrow, of light, and of full glory. Her Magnificat may serve as our prayer.

“Great is my joy, I admit, but I owe it to pure and freely-given grace from the Lord. He has chosen me because He is infinitely good. Behold the source of my joy and happiness and the origin of my greatness. Behold what permeates me and makes me overcome with love.”

- **Prayer**

On the cross, You gave us your Mother, the last and most beautiful present that You could have given us. She became our Mediator, our safe and certain path towards your grace. Mary, full of grace, never give up your efforts to obtain grace for us so that we should always live in loving harmony with God.

- **Decade of the Rosary with Invocation**

Lord, grant us, through the intercession of your servant Father Triest, to open our hearts, like Mary, to your grace and the favour that we beg of your mercy.

- **Prayer for the Beatification of Father Triest**

Day 6: Follow Jesus' Example

*“Let your armour be the Lord Jesus Christ
(cf. Ro. 13, 14).
Organize your life and your whole lifestyle
according to the divine example
given by Jesus.”*

Many stars are flickering in the sky and in the world, but there is only one that leads us to all things good, true and beautiful. He is the one who refers to himself, by saying: “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”

In order to be able to follow His example, we must get to know Him, we must look for Him wherever He is dwelling. Following the advice of St. John the Baptist, we can go and look for Him until we see what was promised. “The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and rest is the one who is to baptise with the Holy Spirit” (Jn. 1, 33).

It is the Holy Spirit who leads us towards Jesus so that we can become disciples of Jesus. That is the

beginning of all imitation, the moment at which we decide to take Jesus as the only reference in our lives. Father Triest added a couple of questions.

“Search the strengths of your soul and the outer senses of your body. Does Christ rule your mind? Does Christ rule your will? He gave it to you so that you should love Him above all. Does Christ rule your eyes, your ears?”

- **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, You call upon us to imitate You on the way to your Heavenly Father and on the way to your brothers and sisters on earth. You are the Way, the Truth and the Life, show us your way, proclaim your truth, and guide us towards a fuller life. I am no longer alive. Henceforth, You, Jesus, are alive in me. Amen.

- **Decade of the Rosary**

Lord, grant us, through the intercession of your servant Father Triest, the grace to follow your example more fully and the favour that we beg of your mercy.

- **Prayer for the Beatification of Father Triest**

Day 7: Love One Another

*“Love one another as you should.
Prevent one another from malice
with signs of love.
Cause no one the least sorrow,
pain, or dissatisfaction.
Tolerate one another’s flaws lovingly.
Complain about no one. Be helpful.
Envy no one. Love one another willingly.”*

Father Triest dreamt about a perfect society in which love is the only binding power. He did not stop encouraging his brothers and sisters to foster love among each other. He understood that love, as mercy, is one of the pillars of every community. The words that he spoke, after having had to live in hiding for several years, remain as encouraging as ever: *“As far as I am concerned, I forgave my enemies a long time ago. I give them the kiss of true brotherly love and for revenge, I only wanted them to reconcile themselves to their God, so that they should be of one heart and spirit like true brothers in Jesus Christ.”*

“One of heart and spirit,” was also his message to the sisters in a letter for the New Year. “How blessed we are to live in a house where love, obedience, patience, peace, and helpfulness reign.”

- **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, mutual love became the sign of recognition of your first disciples. Bless our communities so that they should become schools of love, where love is shown and taught. Let us grow ever more in our love of one another and make it the reflection of your divine love. Amen.

- **Decade of the Rosary with Invocation**

Lord, grant us, through intercession of your servant Father Triest, the grace to become a loving neighbour to others and the favour we beg of your mercy.

- **Prayer for the Beatification of Father Triest**

Day 8: Be a Shepherd to One Another

*“As a shepherd I must be an example
for you in all things.
I must instruct you,
and I must be wholly at your service.”*

Example, instruction, and service. Those are three words that form a good summary of the mission that Father Triest envisaged for us. A well considered view, the fruit of five years of intense reflection while he was living and working secretly.

The first word “example”. One must practice what one preaches. A shepherd must take care of his spiritual life and therefore rely on God. “A shepherd must never count on his own talents. He must let the success of his actions depend on heaven.”

Only then will he be able to say the following sincerely: “*Woe to me, if I were not to proclaim the word of God!*”

But that word of God must result in being of service and Father Triest did not spare himself when it came to being of service.

“I owe you my waking hours, all possible efforts, my rest, and not only on certain occasions, but at every hour of the day or the night, and even when the roads are long, difficult, and muddy. Call me whenever it pleases you and do not spare me. Have no fear of disturbing me. I am happy when I, in imitation of Jesus, my Master, may sacrifice my rest, my health, and even my life for you.”

- **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, who told us that no one has greater love than the one who sacrifices his life for his friends, bless us so that our love may grow. May our lives be an example of loving sacrifice and may our service continually promote your Kingdom here on earth. Amen.

- **Decade of the Rosary with Invocation**

Lord, grant us, through intercession of your servant Father Triest, that our lives may be a witness of loving service to You in word and deed, and the favour that we beg of your mercy.

- **Prayer for the Beatification of Father Triest**

Day 9: To Serve the Poor Gladly

*“Due to your love and service,
you are equal to God.
You participate in the service of Jesus Christ.
And since you see Jesus in all those who suffer,
they see in you the person of Jesus,
the Saviour and Consoler.
There is no more perfect way of portraying Jesus
than by helping those who shed tears of sorrow,
who bear the cross of poverty,
and suffer from all kinds of illnesses
and live in sadness.”*

Divine love flourishes in charity. It implies, like Jesus Christ, going out to the poor and recognizing Jesus in them. Charity, therefore, is always a meeting with God, Jesus who meets himself in the poor. Father Triest lived that message radically and went to the poor in order to raise them from their desperate existence. He called upon others to do the same. When the limit of human reasonability was reached, he appealed to them to transcend it because “love

gives one strength that nature cannot give.” Even today, we still remember his words. “Since you were chosen, you are called upon to follow the Lord’s example. You are called upon to do for people what Jesus did and to do so lovingly and compassionately, whatever their circumstances. You are another Christ when you help them to open their hearts and minds to the grace of God”.

- **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, to imitate you is to show immeasurable love to the poorest of the poor. Never let us stray from that path, but help us to discover your face in every face that we see. May your charity be an act of reverence to the Lord and all people, and let the world be our altar. Amen.

- **Decade of the Rosary with Invocation**

Lord, grant us, through the intercession of Father Triest, the grace to serve You in the poor and the favour that we beg of your mercy.

- **Prayer for the Beatification of Father Triest**

Publications Devoted to Triest

- **Father Triest for every day** (Bro René Stockman)
Prayerbooklet
- **Comic Triest, a father for many**
(Bro René Stockman)
Comic book on Father Triest's life
- **The Good Father Triest** (Bro René Stockman)
Biography
- **Father Triest, 20 meditations**
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- **Various other publications, prayer cards,
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Take a subscription to “*Making the Sun Shine*”, a newsletter about the cause of Peter Joseph Triest. It will permit you to get to know Father Triest, his spirituality, and you will also learn more about the congregations that he founded and that keep his spirit alive and carry on his work. You will be kept informed about the progress that is made in the process of beatification, learn about prayers that were answered, and find information about recent publications.

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