

NOVENA
for the Spiritual Welfare of the African American Community

Nine days of prayer, known as *Novenas*, have been part of Catholic piety for centuries. *Novenas* have been attached to mysteries of the life and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the intercessory power of Mary the Mother of God and a myriad of saints. *Novenas* have proved powerful prayer programs in happy times and in desperate times. *Novenas* are often used for nine days of fasting or approaching particular feast days of the Lord and the saints.

The following prayers invoke the intercession of the Venerable Father Augustus Tolton who is on the path to declared sainthood. These prayers can be used in prayer groups in parishes, led by the clergy or laity or used as a private devotion. These prayers can be prayed all at once or separated by nine consecutive days or one day each for nine weeks.

Before each prayer pray first the official prayer for the canonization of Father Tolton:

*O God * we give you thanks for your servant and priest Father Augustus Tolton * who labored among us in times of contradiction, * times that were both beautiful and paradoxical. * His ministry helped lay the foundation for a truly Catholic gathering in faith in our time. * We stand in the shadow of his ministry. * May his life continue to inspire us * and imbue us with that confidence and hope* that will forge a new evangelization for the Church we love.*

*Father in Heaven, * Father Tolton's suffering service sheds light upon our sorrows; * we see them through the prism of your Son's passion and death. * If it be your Will O God, * glorify your servant Father Tolton, * by granting the favor I now request through his intercession * (pause) * so that all may know the goodness of this priest * whose memory looms large in the Church he loved.*

*Complete what you have begun in us * that we might work for the fulfillment of your kingdom. * Not to us the glory, * but glory to you O God, through Jesus Christ, your Son * and our Lord; * Father, Son and Holy Spirit, * you are our God living and reigning forever and ever. Amen*

2010 Bishop Joseph N Perry
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Francis Cardinal George, OMI
Archdiocese of Chicago

First Prayer: For the Spiritual Anchoring of the African-American Community

O Father Augustus Tolton, whose faith was grounded in Christ Jesus at an early age. Pray the same for all of the African American community, so that together we might be unified in one faith, one Lord, one Baptism. Pray Father Tolton for the black community to find and love that same fullness of faith that you found through the Catholic Church and that Church would find a richer fullness in itself in that community. Pray Father Tolton for the Holy Eucharist to become the source and summit of Christian life in the black Community and for the unique presence of Christ Jesus to work to conform all peoples into His image before God the Father. Amen

Second Prayer: For the Moral Formation of the African-American Community

Pray O Father Augustus Tolton, teacher of truth, for the moral formation of the young in the black community in America. Pray for their grounding in the teachings of Christ our Lord so that they might be living witnesses of the beatitudes. Pray Father Tolton for a strengthening and fortification of the Holy Spirit in the black community so that it might be guided and protected in all Truth, and thereby be able to withstand all assaults by the Evil One. Amen

Third Prayer: For the Stability and Strength of Marriages and Family in the African American community

Strong families and marriages are the woven threads that have proved most beneficial for all healthy societies. Pray O Father Augustus Tolton that husbands will love their wives as Christ loved the Church. Pray that wives will embrace their role as a type of Church in the household and embrace their husbands and children as such. Pray Father Tolton for the sanctity and dignity of marriage in the black community in America. Pray for the restoration of true Christlike masculinity for black men and for women to look upon our Blessed Mother Mary as a beacon of faithfulness and womanhood. Amen

Fourth Prayer: For Peace in the black community

O Father Augustus Tolton, servant of peace, pray for an end to all forms of violence and for an everlasting peace in the black community in America. Violence betrays our progress and robs us of our future. Pray then Father Tolton that we might know Christ Jesus enough that we will see Him in each other. Pray Father Tolton that in the pursuit of peace we might go from seeing Jesus in each other to loving each other through Jesus and doing all that grace empowers us to do to bring the in-dwelling of Christ more fully out of each other. Pray Father Tolton for the reign of peace throughout our city and our world. Amen

Fifth Prayer: For Good Educational Opportunities in the African American community

The doors of opportunity are open to all and are open even more fully to those who have been educated. Pray O Father Augustus Tolton, teacher of children, for the Holy Spirit's gifts of wisdom, understanding and knowledge to pour out abundantly over the black community in America, and that schools and colleges and universities that service the community will be blessed with resources, staff and faculty needed to achieve their goals. Pray for Catholic schools and universities' fidelity to the teachings of the Church and that they might open their doors to all, especially the poor and disadvantaged. Amen

Sixth Prayer: For Gainful Economic Opportunities in the African American community

O Father Augustus Tolton, who in your ministry came to the aid of the poor and downtrodden, as we seek your intercession for the spiritual needs of the black community in America we also come to you asking your prayer for our material needs. Pray Father Tolton for those in our community to have good economic opportunities, to land gainful employment or to start a business, so that all might have the resources needed to provide for themselves, their family and their Church. Pray Father Tolton that God might fill in all of us the spirit of a cheerful giver so that we might remember that giving from all that has been given to us will in return be given back to us by the providence of God. Amen

Seventh Prayer: For the End of abortion in the African-American community

Far too much treasure in America has been lost through the tragedy of abortion. Pray O Father Augustus Tolton for a quickening of the Holy Spirit in the black Community so that its conscience will be awakened to know that each child conceived belongs to God and that God has given each child a plan and purpose for its life. Pray for an end of sexual objectification, adultery and premarital sex that pave the way to compound personal misery. Pray that medical professionals will affirm the beauty of all pre-natal children even those that may be born in any way different or disadvantaged. Pray Father Tolton for all women and men who have in some way participated in abortion, for their forgiveness and healing. Pray for all pregnant women to have the help and support they need to bring their child safely into the world, so that their children might have the opportunity to know, love and serve God in this life and in the next. Amen

Eighth Prayer: For Catholic Evangelization of the African American community

O Father Augustus Tolton, who always sought new opportunities to reach out to those on the margins of faith and practice. Pray Father Tolton for the Lord to send more evangelists of the Gospel to the black communities of America. Pray Father Tolton that the Lord might send us catechists like you to point God's children to the light and love of Christ Jesus through the sacraments and rich traditions of the Catholic Church. And pray, Father Tolton, that wherever the evangelists of today might go that they will have the courage to speak what God has given them to say and that their words will fall upon fertile soil. Amen

Ninth Prayer: For Vocations to the Priesthood, Diaconate and Consecrated Life from the black Community

O Father Augustus Tolton who, as a young man, accepted generously God's gentle voice speaking to your heart, intercede for us and pray that as the Eternal Father sent you that He will send more men and women from the black Community to serve God's people as priests and deacons and consecrated religious. Pray Father Tolton for the Church's cup to overflow with blessing from vocations of men and women responding to their baptismal Call to serve God's people in love. Amen

Vicariate VI

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