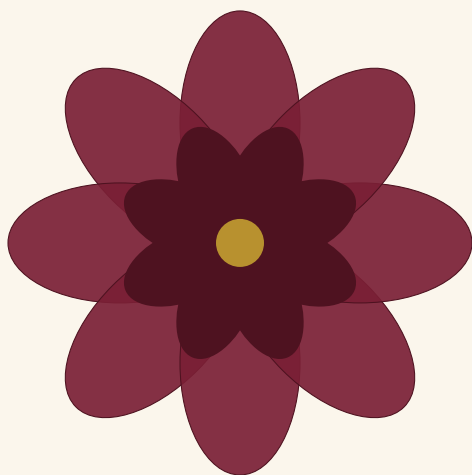




NOVENA

to Saint Rita of Cascia

Patroness of Impossible and Desperate Causes

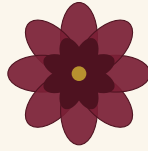


A nine-day prayer of trust, walked alongside Saint Rita through the sorrows and hopes of her own life,
for every cause that feels beyond human help.

“Be ye lifted up, ye everlasting doors.”

Advocate of the Impossible — pray for us.

Before You Begin



Who Was Saint Rita?

Saint Rita of Cascia (1381–1457) is one of the most beloved intercessors in the Catholic tradition, venerated above all as the patroness of impossible and desperate causes. Born Margherita Lotti in the small hill town of Roccaporena, in the Umbrian countryside of Italy, she lived a life that passed through nearly every form of human sorrow: an unhappy marriage, the murder of her husband, the death of both her sons, and years of hidden suffering as a religious sister marked by an unhealed wound. Rather than being crushed by these trials, Rita transformed each one into an act of trust. It is precisely because she knew what it meant to hope when hope made no sense that the faithful have turned to her, century after century, with the causes everyone else has given up on.

How to Pray This Novena

This novena is prayed over nine consecutive days. Many people begin on May 13, so that the ninth day falls on May 22, Saint Rita's feast day, but you may begin on any day when you are carrying a need that feels beyond human help. Before you begin, choose a single, clear intention: the specific impossible or desperate cause you wish to entrust to her. Each day, find a quiet moment, pray the Opening Prayer below, read that day's meditation slowly, and then pray the day's own prayer, followed by the concluding prayers. If you have a small rose, a holy card, or an image of Saint Rita, keeping it near you as you pray is an old and simple custom — a reminder of the rose she asked for, and received, in the depths of winter.

Prayers Said Each Day

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

Each day, after the day's own prayer, conclude with one Our Father, one Hail Mary, and one Glory Be, followed by that day's closing invocation.

Opening Prayer

Said each day before the daily reading



In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Lord God, You allowed Your servant Rita to walk the whole road of human suffering — as daughter, wife, mother, widow, and religious — and You never let her hope fail. Through her prayers, I bring to You now a cause that seems impossible to me: (here, in silence, name your intention). I do not ask You to make it easy; I ask only that Your will be done, and that, like Rita, I may trust You in the meantime. Amen.

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DAY 1

A Heart Given to God



Meditation

Margherita Lotti was born in Roccaporena, near Cascia, toward the end of the fourteenth century, to parents already advanced in years who had long prayed for a child. From her earliest years she showed a love for silence, for the poor, and for long hours before the Blessed Sacrament that set her apart from other children of the village. It is said that as a small girl she once asked her parents' permission to enter a convent, so strong was her attraction to a life hidden in God. Her parents, however, had other plans, and in time arranged a marriage for her, as was the custom of the day. Rita's story, then, does not begin with an easy or obvious 'yes' to God; it begins with a young heart that wanted one thing and was asked, instead, to walk a much harder road. In this she is a companion to everyone whose life has taken a shape they did not choose.

Day's Prayer

Saint Rita, before you knew what your life would demand of you, you had already given your heart to God. Obtain for me that same first love — a willingness to belong to Him even before I understand what it will cost. Pray that I may bring Him, today, the desire beneath my desire: not simply that my impossible cause be resolved, but that in every outcome I may still be able to say yes.

One Our Father • One Hail Mary • One Glory Be

Saint Rita, Advocate of the Impossible, pray for us.

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DAY 2

Obedience in a Difficult Marriage



Meditation

Rita accepted her parents' choice of a husband, a man named Paolo Mancini, known in the region for a quick temper and for ties to the violent feuds that divided the local families. From the beginning, the marriage was a hard one. Rita bore harsh words, long absences, and a household with little peace, yet she did not answer with bitterness or resignation. Instead she met her husband's harshness with a steady, patient kindness that, by every account, cost her a great deal to sustain. She is remembered not for having an easy marriage, but for the way she chose, day after day, not to let another person's cruelty determine the shape of her own heart.

Day's Prayer

Saint Rita, you remained faithful in a marriage that gave you little comfort, and you refused to let hardship harden you. For all who carry a difficult marriage, a strained family, or a relationship that wounds more than it heals, ask God for the patience that is not weakness but strength, and the wisdom to know how that patience should be lived out. Pray for me, that in my own impossible situation I may act from love rather than from fear or resentment.

One Our Father • One Hail Mary • One Glory Be

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DAY 3

Patience Amid Suffering



Meditation

For roughly eighteen years, Rita lived within a marriage marked by suffering that never fully lifted. She bore two sons during these years and carried, quietly, the weight of a household in tension. Tradition remembers her prayer during this period as constant — not showy, but persistent, carried on in the ordinary hours of housework and motherhood. Her patience was not passivity; it was a form of active love, chosen again each day, that slowly, almost invisibly, began to change the atmosphere of her home. Suffering carried in this way does not disappear, but it stops being wasted.

Day's Prayer

Saint Rita, teach me your patience — not a patience that pretends suffering does not hurt, but one that keeps loving in spite of it. In the waiting that my own impossible cause requires of me, keep my heart from growing hard or hopeless. Pray that whatever I must endure before my prayer is answered may still bear fruit in me.

One Our Father • One Hail Mary • One Glory Be

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DAY 4

The Conversion of Her Husband



Meditation

Little by little, Rita's constancy did what argument and confrontation could not: it reached her husband's heart. Paolo, softened over the years by his wife's patience and unwavering kindness, was reconciled to a gentler life and, by most accounts, to God, in the years before his death. It is one of the quiet miracles of Rita's story — not a dramatic conversion witnessed by crowds, but a slow thaw, achieved through nothing more spectacular than a wife's fidelity and prayer. Shortly afterward, Paolo was killed in the region's ongoing violence, struck down by enemies from a rival family, and Rita, though widowed, could at least be at peace about the state of his soul.

Day's Prayer

Saint Rita, you obtained through quiet perseverance what seemed impossible: the softening of a hardened heart. I bring before you the people in my own life whose hearts feel closed to God, to reconciliation, or to change. Pray that my patience, offered as yours was, may not be wasted, and that where I can see no way forward, God may already be at work.

One Our Father • One Hail Mary • One Glory Be

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DAY 5

The Loss of Her Sons



Meditation

When Paolo was murdered, his sons resolved to avenge their father's death, as the custom of vendetta demanded. Rita, now facing the prospect of watching her own children become killers and lose their souls to the same violence that had taken their father, did something almost unthinkable: she asked God, if there were no other way to keep them from this sin, to take them from the world first. Within a short time, both young men fell gravely ill and died, reconciled to God, before they could carry out their revenge. Rita was left, within the span of a few years, without husband or sons — a grief that would have broken many hearts entirely, and that she carried instead into deeper prayer.

Day's Prayer

Saint Rita, you loved your sons enough to pray for their souls even above their earthly lives. For every parent grieving a child, in body or in spirit, and for everyone whose prayer for a loved one feels like an impossible request, be an advocate today. Ask God for me the grace to want what is truly good for the people I love, even when I cannot see clearly what that good requires.

One Our Father • One Hail Mary • One Glory Be

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DAY 6

Entering the Convent



Meditation

Alone in the world, Rita turned again to her early longing for religious life and asked to enter the Augustinian convent of Saint Mary Magdalene in Cascia. She was refused — not once, but three times — both because she was a widow rather than a young unmarried woman, and because the sisters feared the ongoing feud connected to her husband's family. Tradition holds that Rita did not give up, and that one night, through means no one could fully explain, she found herself inside the locked convent, led there, the story says, by three saints she had long invoked in prayer. Seeing in this an unmistakable sign, the community received her at last. Whatever the precise history behind the legend, its meaning has always been clear to those who tell it: when every human door was closed to her, God found a way to open one.

Day's Prayer

Saint Rita, patroness of the impossible, you know what it is to be refused again and again and to keep asking anyway. For every door that seems permanently shut in my life — every plan that has failed more than once, every reconciliation refused — pray that I may have your persistence, and that God may open, in His own way and His own time, the door I cannot open myself.

One Our Father • One Hail Mary • One Glory Be

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DAY 7

The Wound of the Thorn



Meditation

Once inside the convent, Rita gave herself to a life of prayer, penance, and service to her sisters. Moved deeply by a sermon on the Passion of Christ, she begged to be allowed to share, in some small way, in His sufferings. Soon afterward she received what is remembered as a partial stigmata: a wound on her forehead, as though torn open by a single thorn from Christ's crown. The wound bled, would not heal, and gave off an odor that at times required her to live apart from the rest of the community. Rather than seeking to be rid of it, Rita accepted the wound as a sign of closeness to Christ's own suffering, and carried it, largely without complaint, for the rest of her life.

Day's Prayer

Saint Rita, you welcomed a suffering that isolated you rather than resent it, because you saw in it a share in the Cross. Whatever wound I carry that sets me apart, or that others cannot understand, help me bring it to Christ rather than hide it. Pray that even my hardest, least explainable suffering may somehow be drawn into His.

One Our Father • One Hail Mary • One Glory Be

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DAY 8

Union with Christ in Her Final Years



Meditation

In the years before her death, Rita's health declined, and she was largely confined to her cell, marked always by the wound on her forehead. Even in this narrowed life, she remained a woman of remarkable warmth toward those who came to her for counsel and prayer. Near the very end of her life, in the dead of winter, she asked a visiting relative to bring her a rose and two figs from the abandoned garden of her childhood home in Roccaporena. Against every expectation of the season, a single rose was found in bloom, and two figs on the bare tree. It is a small detail, almost domestic, and yet it has become the sign by which Rita is remembered everywhere: a reminder that God is not bound by what seems possible to us.

Day's Prayer

Saint Rita, you asked for a rose out of season, and received one. I bring you now my own request that feels just as unlikely, just as out of season. I do not presume to know how God will answer it, but I ask, through your intercession, that He look on it with the same tenderness He showed you in your last winter.

One Our Father • One Hail Mary • One Glory Be

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Saint Rita, Advocate of the Impossible, pray for us.

DAY 9

Patroness of the Impossible



Meditation

Rita died in her convent at Cascia on May 22, 1457. Almost immediately, the people of the region began seeking her intercession, and reports of favors granted through her prayers spread well beyond Umbria in the centuries that followed — favors for broken marriages, for those suffering abuse, for the sick given up as incurable, for family reconciliations no one thought possible. Pope Leo XIII canonized her in 1900, formally recognizing what generations of ordinary people already believed from experience. Today, roses are blessed on her feast day in churches around the world, in memory of the rose that bloomed for her out of season, and countless people continue to bring her the causes for which they have run out of every other hope.

Day's Prayer

Saint Rita, Advocate of the Impossible, on this final day of the novena I place before you again the intention I have carried through these nine days. You who suffered every kind of human sorrow and never stopped trusting, intercede for me now before the throne of God. Obtain for me what I ask, if it is for my good, and if it is not, obtain for me instead the grace to trust as you trusted, and to keep hoping even when hope makes no sense.

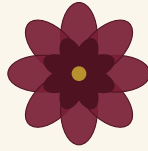
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A Litany of Saint Rita



Lord, have mercy. *Lord, have mercy.*

Christ, have mercy. *Christ, have mercy.*

Lord, have mercy. *Lord, have mercy.*

Saint Rita, faithful daughter of the Church, *pray for us.*

Saint Rita, child who loved silence and prayer, *pray for us.*

Saint Rita, patient and long-suffering wife, *pray for us.*

Saint Rita, instrument of your husband's conversion, *pray for us.*

Saint Rita, mother bowed down with sorrow, *pray for us.*

Saint Rita, widow who sought a hidden life, *pray for us.*

Saint Rita, religious of humility and penance, *pray for us.*

Saint Rita, bearer of the wound of the thorn, *pray for us.*

Saint Rita, lover of the Passion of Christ, *pray for us.*

Saint Rita, flower that bloomed out of season, *pray for us.*

Saint Rita, advocate of the abandoned, *pray for us.*

Saint Rita, comfort of troubled marriages, *pray for us.*

Saint Rita, help of mothers who grieve, *pray for us.*

Saint Rita, patroness of impossible and desperate causes, *pray for us.*

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, *spare us, O Lord.*

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, *graciously hear us, O Lord.*

Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, *have mercy on us.*

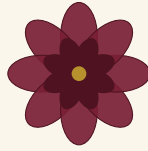
V. Pray for us, O glorious Saint Rita,

R. *That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.*

Let Us Pray

O God, who gave Saint Rita such love for the Passion of Your Son that she carried its very wound, and such trust in Your providence that nothing seemed impossible to her prayer, grant that we, who now call upon her in our own time of need, may find in her a faithful advocate, and in You the strength to bear what cannot be changed and the hope to await what seems beyond hope. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Prayer for an Impossible or Desperate Cause



O glorious Saint Rita, who mirrored in your own life the whole mystery of the Cross — as a daughter who longed for God, a wife who suffered in silence, a mother who grieved two sons, and a religious marked by the very wound of the thorn — you have been given by God a singular power to help in causes that seem beyond all human remedy.

With great confidence I come to you now with my own impossible cause: (name your intention silently). You who make possible what seems impossible, carry my petition to the Heart of Jesus, and obtain for me, if it be for the good of my soul, the favor I so greatly desire.

Above all, obtain for me the grace never to lose hope, whatever the answer, and the strength to carry my own cross with something of the patience with which you carried yours. Saint Rita, Advocate of the Impossible, pray for me. Amen.



If your prayer is answered through Saint Rita's intercession, the old custom is a simple one: tell someone. Her story has traveled for six hundred years this way — one grateful voice at a time.