

## DEVOTIONS

Devotions are the wide variety of prayers and practices that Catholics engage in outside the Sacred Liturgy. Unlike Holy Mass devotions are not compulsory for Catholics but they are nevertheless an excellent means of expressing personal love for God. The very diversity of devotional prayers and practices means that all Catholics can find one suitable for particular needs.

Devotions assist in forming habits of prayer and when shared with others they can help to sanctify people and places. Many devotions are associated with a period in the Liturgical Calendar. For example, the wreath and crib are employed during Advent. The Stations of the Cross are especially apt during the Season of Lent.

Adoration and Benediction ensure the worship of Jesus Christ outside of Mass. Popular Marian devotions include the Holy Rosary, the Angelus and the Miraculous Medal. Countries and certain activities enjoy the protection of patron saints while a novena is a common means by which to pray for the intercession of a saint and prepare for important feasts.

Places too are marked out for special devotion. This is the case with shrines which the faithful often frequent on pilgrimage. Well known examples include Lourdes, Fatima and Knock.

Devotions such as Adoration typically take place in Church and all the faithful may attend. However other devotions lend themselves to prayer in private either alone or with others. The family home can cultivate love of God through practices such as the family Rosary, grace before and after meals and morning and evening prayer.

Certain objects in the home also help to recall the centrality of God in the life of a family. These may include: a crucifix; a Sacred Heart picture; a holy image of Mary or the saints; a Bible; and a holy water font.

Click on the menu to the left to read in more detail about some of the above-mentioned devotions.