



An Ideal Family Devotion for Advent

Prayed as a family, the Saint Andrew Christmas Novena is a very good way to help focus the attention of your children on the Advent season.

The Saint Andrew Christmas Novena

Hail and blessed be the hour and moment in which the Son of God was born of the most pure Virgin Mary, at midnight, in Bethlehem, in piercing cold. In that hour, vouchsafe, O my God! to hear my prayer and grant my desires, through the merits of Our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of His Blessed Mother. Amen.

An Explanation of the Novena

The opening words of this prayer—"Hail and blessed be the hour and moment"—may seem odd at first. But they reflect the Christian belief that moments in the life of Christ—His conception ~~in the womb~~ of the Blessed Virgin at the Annunciation; His birth in Bethlehem; His death on Calvary; His Resurrection; His Ascension—are not only special but, in an important sense, still present to the faithful today.

The repetition of the first sentence of this prayer is designed to place us, mentally and spiritually, there in the stable at His birth, just as an icon of the Nativity or a Nativity scene is meant to do. Having entered into His presence, in the second sentence we place our petition at the feet of the newborn Child.

Definitions of Words Used

Hail: an exclamation, a greeting

Blessed: holy

Most pure: spotless, unstained; a reference to Mary's Immaculate Conception and her lifelong sinlessness

Vouchsafe: to grant something, especially to someone who doesn't deserve it on his own

Desires: something one wants strongly; in this case, not a physical or gluttonous desire, but a spiritual one