

## Nine Week Novena For Mercy

### Week Seven Love Your Enemies

**“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you...” Matthew 5: 43-44**

Take a moment to stop and think of how many people in your life right now would you consider an enemy, someone who has persecuted you or has done you an injustice. How many people were you able to add to this list?

At any given moment in our lives, there is bound to be at least one person, who has mistreated us, abused us or has seemed to go completely out of their way to injure us in some way. This can cause us to experience a wide variety of emotions, depression, anxiety and pain. Sometimes it feels as though we may even attract persecution like a magnet. None of this should ever be taken lightly. The pain, suffering, emotional, physical or mental distress that can be caused by our enemies, is real and it hurts. Do we allow the hurt to continue? Do we react in the same way? Or...Do we try to rise above it?

**“If you want to make peace, you don’t talk to your friends. You talk to your enemies.”**

**Blessed Mother Teresa**

Don’t confront the issue or the situation, approach the person with an open heart. If we allow our emotions to run away with our hearts, frustration and anger can turn into resentment and hate. When we dwell on a situation or issue, we live only in that moment, only in the emotion of that moment. God calls us to love one another, to love our enemies and to forgive their offenses against us. Sometimes this seems utterly impossible, that there are some things that are unforgiveable.

**“If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ but hates his brother, he is a liar; for whoever does not love a brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen, This is the commandment we have from him: whoever loves God must also love his brother.” 1 John 4:20-21**

Enemies are souls without peace... Hearts without purpose. Shall we become the same? Shall we be as cold as those who mistreat, abuse and torture us? We are called to love for we have been loved. We are called to forgive, because we have been forgiven. Is it possible to see the face of God in the eyes of your enemy? Love is not reserved for those who are kind and decent to us... love is for those who need it the most.

*Jesus, teach me to love, as you have loved.  
You forgave those who hated You, who tortured  
You, who had You put to death.  
Soften my heart, that I may know love for all  
people, including and especially for those who  
persecute and mistreat me.  
May I always see Your face in the eyes of those I  
confront and may I only speak words of truth and  
love no matter what has been done to me.*

*AMEN*