

## Biographical Notes

Antonietta Meo, affectionately called “Nennolina,” was born in Rome on December 15, 1930. At the age of three, she attended nursery school with religious sisters, and at age five, she enrolled in Catholic Action, in the group for the littlest ones. At six years old, osteosarcoma forced her left leg to be amputated. Already at that age, she had a concept of the value of suffering that was incomprehensible without the grace of God.

A religious sister who was a nurse in the clinic testified: “One morning, while I was helping the nurse who was in charge of the room of the little girl, her father entered. After caressing her, he asked her: “Do you feel much pain?” And Antonietta said: “Daddy, the pain is like fabric, the stronger it is, the more value it has.” The religious sister added: “If I had not heard this with my own ears, I would not have believed it.”

She attended elementary school at the age of six, with a prosthesis that bothered her greatly. However, she offered it all to Jesus, “May each step that I take be a little word of love.” She wanted to celebrate the day of the anniversary of her amputation with a big lunch and with a novena to Our Lady of Pompeii, in order to give thanks that she was able to offer her suffering to Jesus.

The night of Christmas of 1936, she received her First Holy Communion with great fervor and a few months later she was confirmed. The amputation of her leg had not stopped the tumor that had spread to the head, hand, foot, throat, and mouth. Both the illness itself and the treatments intended to heal her caused her great pain.

She liked to attend school and catechism class; she wrote to Jesus, “I go enthusiastically, because I learn so many beautiful things about You and Your saints.” Having not yet reached the age of seven, she died in the midst of terrible pain.

On December 17th, 2007 Pope Benedict XVI declared Antonietta Meo, “Venerable.” Her life has been a witness of sanctity for children who suffer.

## What is a Novena?

Its name deriving from the Latin word "*novem*," meaning "nine," a novena is nine days of private or public devotion in the Catholic Church to obtain special graces. Though they are not part of our liturgy and remain a "popular devotion," novenas have been prayed since the very beginning of the Church. Mary and the Apostles prayed from the Ascension of Our Lord to Pentecost, a period of nine days (Acts 1). Also, a nine-day period of supplication was a pagan Roman and Eastern practice, so novenas were easily accepted by the earliest converts in these lands.

The Christian and Jewish meaning of the number "9" entered into Christian thinking on the matter, as "9" was associated with suffering, grief, and imperfection, making it a fitting number for when "man's imperfection turned in to prayer to God" (Catholic Encyclopedia). St. Jerome wrote that "the number nine in Holy Scripture is indicative of suffering and grief" (Ezekiel 7:24).

Novenas, then, often, but not necessarily, have about them a sense of "urgency." They are typically made for special intentions, one's own or another's ("I'll make a novena for you"). Novenas to certain Saints are often made according to that Saint's patronage. St. Jude for "desperate cases," St. Peregrine for cancer patients, etc.

There are four main types of novenas:

- novenas of mourning, such as the novena made during the *novendiales* — the nine day period following the death of a Pope.
- novenas of preparation, or "anticipation," such as the Christmas or Easter Novenas
- novenas of prayer
- the indulgenced novenas

In some novenas, the same prayer is said each day for nine days, or sometimes nine times in one day. Others may have (or add) different prayers for each of the nine prayer sessions.

**Prayer to obtain graces  
through the intercession of  
Venerable Antonietta Meo**

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You, who gave her the grace of being joined to the Cross of Our Lord Jesus, and of suffering with fortitude and joy, make her glorious even now on earth, so that everyone can look to her as a shining example of loyalty to the Gospel.

Grant us her simple and passionate love for the Eucharist and the Church; draw near to us in our need and, by her intercession, according to Your Holy Will, give us the grace which we request in faith.

WE HUMBLY REQUEST HEALING FOR FRIDA GALVAN, PETER ESCHENBACH AND ALL CHILDREN WHO SUFFER FROM CANCER. Amen.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be...

“I want to be your lily that  
remains forever to adorn your altar.”



## First Day

### Little Letter to God the Father

Dear God the Father God! Father! Father!...What a beautiful name!... Dear God the Father!...let me get well soon so that on Sunday I can receive the sacrament of the Confession. Dear God the Father I like this name so much, Because it means Father of all the world. You who are the Maker...send all of us the Holy Spirit. Dear God the Father I love You so much. Dear God the Father, bless all the world First of all my parents and my little sister and then all the others and send them all to Paradise. Save a lot of souls so that they can go to Paradise and glorify You. Dear God the Father!...First of all bless the Church and the Clergy and all the community of the Church. Dear God the Father tell Jesus that I'm very glad to receive Him and I wish He will be happy, too. Dear God the Father, many greetings from Your daughter.

Antonietta

(letter 72 of the 22nd of November 1936)

### Prayer to obtain graces through the intercession of Venerable Antonietta Meo

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Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be...

## Second Day

### Little Letter to Christ Crucified

Dear Jesus Crucified I love You so much I love You so I want to stay with You on Calvary and I suffer with joy because I know I'm on Calvary. Dear Jesus, I thank You for having sent me this illness because it is a means to get to paradise. Dear Jesus, tell God the Father that I love Him, too. Dear Jesus, I want to be Your lamp and Your lily dear Jesus. Dear Jesus, give me the strength to bear this pain I offer You for sinners. Dear Jesus tell the Holy Spirit to enlighten me with love and fill me with the seven gifts. Dear Jesus, tell sweet Virgin Mary that I love Her so much and I want to stay with Her on Calvary because I want to be Your victim of love dear Jesus. Dear Jesus, I entrust my father confessor to You; grant him every necessary favor. Dear Jesus, I entrust my parents and my sister Margherita to You.

Dear Jesus, greetings and kisses.

Antonietta of Jesus

(letter 162 of the 2nd of June 1937)

### Prayer to obtain graces through the intercession of Venerable Antonietta Meo

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## Third Day

### Little Letter to the Risen Lord

Dear Risen Jesus I didn't write to You on Easter day but I want to write to You today and I want it to be a beautiful letter. Dear Jesus my heart is bursting with love for You and I love You so much. Dear Jesus, I want to do what You want me to do. I want to abandon myself in Your hands, O Jesus, dear Jesus. Let me get well so that I can go to school, dear Jesus, and save a lot of souls and convert a lot of sinners. Dear Jesus, tell God the Father that I entrust myself to Him too to get well, tell Him I love Him so much. Dear Jesus, tell the Holy Spirit to enlighten me, to fill me with grace and bless me. Dear Jesus, tell the sweet Virgin Mary to bless me and that I want to stay always under Her mantle and tell Her to pray to You so that You grant me the necessary favors for my soul and my body. Dear Jesus, I want to abandon myself in Your hands and make of me what You prefer I want to repeat that I love You so much. Dear Jesus, I also want to repeat that I entrust souls to You again. Dear Jesus, I want to stay with You under the Cross. You have suffered a lot but three days after your death, You rose from the dead and You stayed another forty days with us. Dear Jesus, I want to be your lamp and the flame means the love of the heart and I want to be your lily that means the purity of the soul. Dear Jesus, I kiss Your hands and feet and the Holy Wound of Your chest, and I entrust my father confessor to You and I send You greetings from Your,

Antonietta and Jesus

(letter 151 of the 30th of March 1937-she herself signed it)

### Prayer to obtain graces through the intercession of Venerable Antonietta Meo

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Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be...

## Fourth Day

### Little Letter to the Risen Lord

Dear Jesus Eucharist I love You so much!... Really very much!... Not only because You are the Father of all the world, but also because You are the King of all the world, I always want to be Your lamp which burns night and day before You and near You in the Sacrament of the altar. I'd like You to grant me three favors. The first - make me saint, and this is the most important favor. The second - give me some souls. The third - make me walk normally, to tell the truth this is the least important. I'm not saying to give me back my leg, I gave it to You!... Dear Jesus I like my teacher Sister Noemi very much so I love her, help her to do all the necessary things that You want her to do. Dear Jesus Eucharist!... I love You so much so that I'm really longing for Christmas. Make my heart shine to You when You come into my poor heart. Dear Jesus, I'll make a lot of sacrifices that I'll offer to You when I make my First Holy Communion. Dear Jesus Eucharist!...I want to suffer a lot to redeem also the sins of men, especially of the very bad ones. Dear Jesus Eucharist I say good-bye to You and I kiss You.

Your Antonietta. Good night Jesus, good night Mary.  
(letter 33 of the 16th of October 1936)

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## Fifth Day

### Little Letter to Jesus Scourged

Dear Scourged Jesus, You who suffered so much for us in the scourging, O Jesus You didn't deserve to suffer and I admit all my sins and I ask Your forgiveness. Dear Jesus we have been really bad and I ask Your forgiveness for my sins and for all the sins of the others and You who are so good forgive them and let them go to Paradise. Dear Jesus You suffered so much during the scourging with patience. I want to learn that if someone gives me a slap or teases me I mustn't give it back but I have to be kind with him in the name of Your love. Dear Jesus I offer to You all my sacrifices for all the sins that sinners will commit and are committing, but help me because I can do nothing without Your help. Dear Jesus, I love You so much and I want to stay with You forever. Dear Jesus, I want to be Your lamp that burns a flame of love near You and your lily which decorates your altar and adores You. Dear Jesus, this Holy Week I want to pray all the time and make acts of mortification. Dear Jesus, I don't think I've been naughty today and I offer You the acts of mortification I've done. Let me do more and more of them during this week so that I'll really decorate the altar when Easter comes, O Jesus, and You will have risen from the dead, and love must rise again with You in our hearts. Dear Jesus, this week I want to write a letter to You every night and on Easter day I want to write a letter more beautiful than the others. Dear Jesus, good-bye and I kiss Your Wounds.

Antonietta and Jesus

(letter 146 of the 26th of March 1937)

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## Sixth Day

### Little Letter to the Holy Spirit

Dear Holy Spirit, sanctify our souls. Dear Holy Spirit, I thank You because You've let me find a good confessor and I hope I'll meet him soon. Dear Holy Spirit, I thank You for having let me receive First Holy Communion on Christmas night. Dear Holy Spirit, enlighten my soul and let me always be the small lamp that always enlightens the Holy Tabernacle dear Holy Spirit. First of all, bless the Pope, the Church, the Clergy, then my father, my mother, my little sister and bless me, my relatives and all the world. Dear Holy Spirit I love You so much, tell Jesus I love Him so much and that I thank Him that this morning He came into my heart. Dear Holy Spirit, I say good-bye to You and I send lots of kisses to You, Antonietta and Jesus. Jesus from Heaven, come into my heart, You who are Love.

(letter 116 of the 16th of January 1937- she only wrote "Jesus")

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Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be...

## Seventh Day

### Little Letter to the Trinity

Dearest Holy Trinity, Holy Trinity I love You so much, really very much!... Dear God the Father! What a beautiful name Father!... Father of infinite divinity, Father Creator of the world!... Father, what a beautiful name! I want to repeat it!... Father, what a beautiful name!... Dear Jesus!...I love You so much, dear Jesus!... How much You suffered carrying the Cross! Dear Jesus, You died to save all of us and You see how bad we are. Dear Jesus, I want to make a lot of small sacrifices to make up for the sins people commit against You. Dear Jesus, set a lot of souls free from Purgatory. Dear Holy Spirit! I love You so much, dear Holy Spirit, enlighten my soul and my body and sanctify me, my dear Virgin Mary. Hail Mary!... Lots of greetings my Holy Trinity and lots of kisses from Your dear Antonietta.

ANTONIETTA AND JESUS

*(letter 118 of the 15th of January 1937- she herself wrote the whole letter)*

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## **Eighth Day**

### **Little Letter to Our Lady**

Dear Virgin Mary I love You so much and tell Jesus to forgive me of the fact that in church I didn't stand still. Dear Virgin Mary tell Jesus that I love Him so much my dear Virgin Mary I'm glad that today is your day. My dear Virgin Mary the next time Jesus' will come, I'll make small sacrifices and tell Jesus to make me die before I commit a mortal sin. Dear Virgin Mary it's not enough telling You how I love You just one time so I'll repeat that I love You so much really very much and I promise that from now on I'll always be good. Dear Virgin Mary, lots of greetings and caresses and kisses from Your daughter.

Antonietta

(letter 88 of the 8th of December 1936)

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Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be...

## Ninth Day

### Little Letter to Our Lady

Dear Blessed Mother, dear Immaculata, You who are so pure, make me as pure as You are. You who have suffered so much in these days, I want to bear my Cross with You. Dear Immaculate Virgin tell Jesus I love Him so much. My dear Virgin Mary help me confess well and let me remember all my sins and help me so that I will commit them no more. I want to correct my faults to become better so that I might please Jesus and You my dear Virgin Mary. My dear Virgin Mary I love You so much. Tell the Holy Spirit to enlighten and bless me. My dear Virgin Mary tell God the Father that I entrust myself to Him and that I love Him so much. Dear Virgin Mary, bless the Church and the Clergy and especially my father confessor and help him in everything he has to do. Bless my family and all the world. My dear Virgin Mary, lots of greetings and kisses and tell Jesus I kiss all His Wounds.

Antonietta and Jesus

(letter 145 of the 17th of March 1937 – she herself signed it)

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## Four Steps to Sainthood

The Catholic Church teaches that there are four steps to become a Saint. Before a person can be considered for sainthood, he or she must have been dead for at least 5 years.

First Step: When the subject arises that a person should be considered for Sainthood, a Bishop is placed in charge of the initial investigation of the person's life. If it is determined that the candidate is deemed worthy of further consideration, the Vatican grants a *Nihil Obstat*. This is a Latin phrase that means "nothing hinders." From this moment, the candidate is called a "Servant of God."

Second Step: The Church Official, a Postulator, who coordinates the process and serves as an advocate, must prove that the candidate lived heroic virtues. This is achieved through the collection of documents and testimonies that are collected and presented to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints in Rome. When a candidate is approved, he or she earns the title of "Venerable."

Third Step: To be beatified and recognized as a "Blessed," one miracle acquired through the candidate's intercession is required in addition to recognition of heroic virtue (or martyrdom in the case of a martyr).

Fourth Step: Canonization requires a second miracle after beatification, though a Pope may waive these requirements. (A miracle is not required prior to a martyr's beatification, but one is required before his or her canonization.) Once this second miracle has been received through the candidate's intercession, the Pope declares the person a "Saint."