

Novena of St. Isidore – Patron of Rural People



Appropriate Novena Dates:

May 7th to 15th: To end on the feast of St. Isidore. It is suggested that seeds be blessed on the feast day (or nearest possible time).

August 7th to 15th: To end on the feast of the Assumption which is also called the Feast of Our Lady of the Fields. The Church traditionally blessed herbs and flowers on this day.

November, eight days prior to Thanksgiving, ending on Thanksgiving Day. As Americans we join the nation in a day of thanks to God for all the benefits received.

Life of Sts. Isidore and Maria de la Cabeza

St. Isidore the Farmer was born in Madrid, Spain, in about 1110. He came from a poor and humble family. From childhood he worked as a farm hand on the De Vargas estate. He was very prayerful and particularly devoted to the Mass and the Holy Eucharist.

Isidore loved the good earth, he was honest in his work, and careful in his farming practices. It is said that domestic beasts and birds showed their attachment to him because he was gentle and kind to them. Master De Vargas watched Isidore at plowing and he saw two angels as his helps. Hence, the saying arose, "St. Isidore plowing with angels does the work of three farmers."

Isidore married a sweet and pious maidservant by the name of Maria. They had only one son who died in youth. Both were most charitable and ever willing to help neighbors in distress and the poor in the city slums.

St. Isidore died on May 15, 1170. His saintly wife, a little later. He was canonized on March 22, 1622. The earthly remains of the holy couple are found over the main altar of the cathedral in Madrid, Spain. St. Maria was not officially canonized, but is honored as a saint throughout Spanish countries. Her head (cabeza) is carried in solemn processions during times of drought.

By a special decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites, dated February 22, 1947, St. Isidore was constituted as the special protector of Catholic Rural Life and American farmers.

How beautiful and appropriate for the Catholic farm family to be devoted to this simple and saintly couple, who like farmers everywhere are "partners with God," in furnishing to the world food, fiber, and shelter.

Directions for the Novena

The Novena is intended for parish and home use. In the church the leader should be the priest. In the home, father or mother can lead. If a priest is present, he should impart his blessing at the end of the novena in the Traditional Custom. The leader will start the hymns, psalms and prayers, reciting the first few words up to the asterisk; then all join, alternating as customary. The diagonal indicates a pause. Traditional LOH reciting is also allowed.

Each day after the Reflections and the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory be to the Father, three times for the intention of the Holy Father, the leader chooses a prayer or the litany. If no Benediction or other church function follows, it is suggested to recite or sing "Holy God We Praise Your Name."

FIRST DAY: Partnership with God

Hymn

O Lord, as You have made the earth, To man and beast have given birth, Have given sun and rain that thence The soil might give them sustenance:

We beg You make us willing to Perform the law we get from You That work of ours and grace of Yours May bring the increase that endures.

Through Jesus Christ let this be done, Who lives and reigns, our Lord, Your son, Whom with the Spirit we adore One God with You forevermore.

Antiphon

P. How manifold are your works, O Lord! * In wisdom you have wrought them all; / the earth is full of your creatures.

(Psalm 8)

All: O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is your name over all the earth! * You have exalted your name above the heavens.

Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings you have fashioned praise because of your foes, / to silence the hostile and the vengeful.

When I behold your heavens, the work of your fingers, / the moon and the stars which you set in place:

What is man that you should be mindful of him, / or the son of man that you should care for him?

You have made him little less than the angels, / and crowned him with glory and honor.

You have given him rule over the works of your hands, / putting all things under his feet:

All sheep and oxen, / yes, and the beasts of the field. The birds of the air, the fishes of the sea, / and whatever swims the paths of the seas.

O Lord, our Lord, / how glorious is your name over all the earth!

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.

Antiphon

All: How manifold are your works, O Lord! In wisdom you have wrought them all; / the earth is full of your creatures.

P. (Chapter--Genesis 1:25 and 2:15) God made all kinds of wild beasts, every kind of cattle, and every kind of creature crawling on the ground. And God saw that it was good. The Lord God took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden, to till it and to keep it.

R. Thanks be to God.

P. You raise grass for the cattle and vegetation for men's use.

R. Producing bread from the earth, and wine to gladden men's hearts.

P. Let us pray.

Grant, we beg of You, O Merciful Lord, that through the intercession of blessed Isidore, farmer and confessor, we may forego the pride of worldly wisdom, and that, through his merits and exemplary life, we may, with all humility, ever perform works pleasing to You, through our Lord, Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and is King and God with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever.

R. Amen.

P. St. Isidore.

R. Pray for us.

Prayer in Honor of Saint Isidore

All: O God, * who taught Adam the simple art of tilling the soil, / and who through Jesus Christ, the true vine, / revealed Yourself the husbandman of our souls, / deign, we pray, through the merits of blessed Isidore, / to instill into our hearts a horror of sin and a love of prayer, / so that, working the soil in the sweat of our brow, / we may enjoy eternal happiness in heaven, through the same Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

P. Let us bless the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

P. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

R. Amen.

REFLECTION

The farmer's is a sacred calling because he is a collaborator with God in the work of His creation. In partnership with God he becomes to men a provider of the food, fiber, and shelter they need. Let the farmer, then, no longer belittle himself in his own eyes. The farmer's calling is among the noblest in all the world. The Lord considered it so, and the farmer must think of it in the same terms.

With God he lives and works in the vast realms of His bountiful and beautiful nature. He is not one of the millions who in thick formations swarm through factory gates. He is a free man as he strides through his fields guiding a plow, sowing the seed, or harvesting the crop.

The farmer's calling is one that must command great respect. Much knowledge and skill are required to manage well the farmstead with its land and fences, barns and granaries, tools and machinery. Farming is among the greatest of human arts. The farmer must be an

artisan and a craftsman, a capitalist, financier, manager, worker; a producer and a seller. He must know soil and seed, poultry and cattle; he must know when to till the soil, cultivate his fields, and harvest his crops.

In the presence of his Lord the farmer should recall all this, not in a spirit of vainglory or pride, but in grateful appreciation of the calling that God gave him as a tiller of the soil. Praise and thanksgiving should rise in his heart as he reflects on the high regard the Lord has showered upon him and his work.

(From "Partnership with God," by the Most Reverend Aloysius J. Muench.)

Recite the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be (etc.), three times, followed by a prayer of your choice for special needs.

SECOND DAY: Family Life in Christ

Hymn:

Lord, who to share creative life Created mankind man and wife, To
be with You creators of The objects of Your endless love;

As Jesus loves the Church His bride, Let our love be intensified, Let
love of one another be Our pledge of love eternally.

Through Jesus Christ let this be done, Who lives and reigns, our
Lord, Your Son, Whom with the Spirit we adore, One God with You
forevermore.

Antiphon

P. Happy they * who dwell in your house! / Continually they praise
you.

(Psalm 127)

All: Happy are you who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways!

For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork; / happy shall you be,
and favored.

Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine / in the recesses of your home.

Your children like olive plants / around your table. Behold, thus is
the man blessed / who fears the Lord.

The Lord bless you from Zion; / may you see the prosperity of
Jerusalem all the days of your life;

May you see your children's children. / Peace be upon Israel!

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.

Antiphon

All: Happy they who dwell in your house! / Continually they praise you.

P. (Chapter--Psalm 26:4-5) One thing I ask of the Lord: this I seek: to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, that I may gaze on the loveliness of the Lord and contemplate his temple. For he will hide me in his abode in the day of trouble; he will conceal me in the shelter of his tent; he will set me high upon a rock.

R. Thanks be to God.

P. I will make all your children to be taught of the Lord.

R. And an abundance of peace to your children.

P. Let us pray.

We offer You the sacrifice of praise, O Lord, and humbly pray that through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, and of Saint Joseph, You may establish our families in peace and grace, through the same Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

P. St. Isidore.

R. Pray for us.

Prayer in Honor of Saint Isidore

All: O God, * who taught Adam the simple art of tilling the soil, / and who through Jesus Christ, the true vine, / revealed Yourself the husbandman of our souls, / deign, we pray, through the merits of blessed Isidore, / to instill into our hearts a horror of sin and a love of prayer, / so that, working the soil in the sweat of our brow, / we may enjoy eternal happiness in heaven, through the same Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

P. Let us bless the Lord

R. Thanks be to God.

P. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

R. Amen.

REFLECTION

Christian marriage is a union in Christ between man and woman. It is a vocation of mutual love and fidelity in which each partner helps the other to draw closer to God, and the grace received by the husband and wife in the sacrament of matrimony strengthens them toward the achievement of this end. Since the rural family is the very foundation of the vocation of farming, it is providential that God should have raised up a holy family, St. Isidore and his wife, S. Maria de la Cabeza, to be the patrons of rural people. He wanted to teach us that the combination of the work of farming with the cares and obligations of family life can be a sure road to sanctity.

St. Isidore and S. Maria de la Cabeza exemplified the Christian ideal of land-home-family-work-worship in every aspect of their daily lives.

Moreover, the Church has traditionally regarded a home on the land as the ideal place in which to develop genuine Christian family life. Pius XII gave expression to this belief in his address to farmers (November 15, 1946): "Your lives are rooted in the family-- universally, deeply, and completely; consequently, they conform very closely to nature. In this fact lies your economic strength and your ability to withstand adversity in critical times. Your being so strongly rooted in the family constitutes the importance of your contribution to the correct development of the private and public order of society."

Farming is a family enterprise which tends to weld the family together. Mother and father are usually within calling distance of each other and see each other several times a day. The children can be at their parents' side to watch them and learn to work with them. There are many little tasks, which children can perform that contribute to the family welfare and allow them to acquire experience and habits of responsibility. It is not without reason that the rural home has been called the "natural dwelling place for the Christian family."

Recite the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be (etc.), three times, followed by the prayer of your choice for special needs.

THIRD DAY: Love of Neighbor

Hymn:

O God, who made man from the slime According to Your form
sublime, And made Christ share our lowliness To let us share His
holiness:

Be in each brother's hand a light To show the path through this dark
night, Be in us each the burning fire That kindles love and kills
desire.

Through Jesus Christ let this be done, Who lives and reigns, our
Lord, Your son, Whom with the Spirit we adore One God with You
forevermore.

Antiphon

P. Everyone shall help his neighbor * and shall say to his brother: /
Be of good courage.

(Psalm 132)

All: Behold, how good it is, and how pleasant, * where brethren
dwell as one!

It is as when the precious ointment upon the head runs down over
the beard, the beard of Aaron, / till it runs down upon the collar of
his robe.

It is a dew like that of Hermon, / which comes down upon the
mountains of Zion;

For there the Lord has pronounced his blessing, / life forever. 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.

Antiphon

All: Everyone shall help his neighbor and shall say to his brother: /
Be of good courage.

P. (Chapter--Romans 12:9-12) Let love be without pretense. Hate what is evil, hold to what is good. Love one another with fraternal charity, anticipating one another with honor. Be not slothful in zeal; be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord, rejoicing in hope, Be patient in tribulation, persevering in prayer.

R. Thanks be to God.

P. You are citizens with the saints.

R. And members of God's household.

P. Let us pray.

O God, You make all things work together unto good for those who love You. Give to our hearts an abiding love for You, so that the desires we conceive by Your inspiration may ever remain unchanged in spite of every temptation, through Christ Our Lord.

R. Amen.

P. St. Isidore.

R. Pray for us.

Prayer in Honor of Saint Isidore

All: O God, * who taught Adam the simple art of tilling the soil, / and who through Jesus Christ, the true vine, / revealed yourself the husbandman of our souls, / deign, we pray, through the merits of blessed Isidore, / to instill into our hearts a horror of sin and a love of prayer, / so that, working the soil in the sweat of our brow, / we may enjoy eternal happiness in heaven, through the same Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

P. Let us bless the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

P. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

R. Amen.

REFLECTION

To express the unity of His Mystical Body, Christ chose the striking farm symbol of the vine and the branches. And immediately thereafter, He reminded us of the hard farm reality that the barren plant must be destroyed: "If anyone does not abide in me, he shall be cast outside as the branch and wither; and they shall gather them up and cast them into the fire, and they shall burn." (John 15:6) The test that our Lord applied to distinguish the good grain from the bad is love of neighbor: "This is my commandment that you love one another, as I have loved you." (John 15:12)

Each profession has its own peculiar way of helping its members to manifest love for neighbor, and it is the honorable lot of the farmer to provide the basic food and fiber and shelter for man's daily needs. From the example of St. Isidore we learn that our daily life is not to be a selfish quest for profit, but an opportunity to serve. It makes us realize that we need the help of others to continue this way of life.

Rural people can well apply to themselves these words of Pope Pius XI: "All the institutions for the establishment of peace and the promotion of mutual help among men, however perfect these may seem, have the principal foundation of their stability in the mutual bond of minds and hearts whereby the members are united one with another. If this bond is lacking, the best of regulations are useless. And so, then only will true cooperation be possible for a single common good, when the various parts of society deeply feel themselves members of one great family and children of the same heavenly Father; we are one body in Christ, 'but severally members one of another,' so that 'if one member suffers anything, all the members suffer with it.'"

Recite the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be (etc.), three times, followed by a prayer of your choice for special needs.

FOURTH DAY: Dignity of Work

Hymn:

Lord, our God, whose mighty hand Carved out the seas and built the land;
Who, by the labors of our Lord, The honor Adam lost, restored:

Let us be joined to Christ, Your Son, That in His work we may be one;
So we shall in our work partake Of God, whom we by sloth forsake.

Through Jesus Christ let this be done Who lives and reigns, our Lord,
Your Son, Whom with the Spirit we adore, One God with You forevermore.

Antiphon

P. The work of the just * is unto life: / but the fruit of the wicked unto sin.

(Psalm 126)

All: Unless the Lord built the house, * they labor in vain who build it.

Unless the Lord guard the city, / in vain does the guard keep vigil.

It is vain for you to rise early, / or put off your rest,

You that eat hard-earned bread, / for he gives to his beloved in sleep.

Behold, sons are a gift from the Lord; / the fruit of the womb is a reward.

Like arrows in the hand of a warrior / are the sons of one's youth.

Happy the man whose quiver is filled with them; / he shall not be put to shame when they contend with enemies at the gate.

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

Antiphon

All: The work of the just is unto life: / but the fruit of the wicked
unto sin.

P. (Chapter--II Thessalonians 3:8-12) Neither did we eat any man's
bread at his cost, but we worked night and day in labor and toil, so
that we might not burden any of you. Not that we did not have the
right to do so, but that we might make ourselves an example for you
to imitate us. For, indeed when we were with you we used to charge
you: if any man will not work, neither let him eat. For we have heard
that some among you are living irregularly, doing no work but busy
at meddling. Now such persons we charge and exhort in the Lord
Jesus Christ that with quietness they work and eat their own bread.

R. Thanks be to God.

P. Honor the Lord with your substance.

R. And give him of the first of all your fruits.

P. Let us pray.

O Lord, let us follow the blessed farmer Isidore's example of
patience and humility, and walk so faithfully in his footsteps that by
his intercession in the evening of life, we can offer You a rich harvest
of merits and good works, through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

P. St. Isidore.

R. Pray for us.

Prayer in Honor of Saint Isidore

All: O God, * who taught Adam the simple art of tilling the soil, / and who through Jesus Christ, the true vine, / revealed Yourself the husbandman of our souls, / deign, we pray, through the merits of blessed Isidore, / to instill into our hearts a horror of sin and a love of prayer, / so that, working the soil in the sweat of our brow, / we may enjoy eternal happiness in heaven, through the same Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

P. Let us bless the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

P. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

R. Amen.

REFLECTION

St. Paul in his first epistle to the Thessalonians (4:11) says, "Strive to live peacefully, minding your own affairs, working with your own hands, as we charged you, so that you may walk becomingly towards outsiders, and may need nothing."

The nobility of physical labor is praised both in the Old and New Testaments. The humble workshop of Nazareth and the little hillside and stony field where the Holy Family worked and earned its sustenance are shining examples of the regard in which Christ Himself held physical labor. "Christ took for granted the duty of labor. His parables presuppose the law of work. They have for their protagonist, a sower, a vineyard planter, a shepherd, a fisherman, a housebuilder, an employer, a housekeeper. They allude to their work as something natural, something presupposed." (*"The Attitude Towards Labor in Early Christianity and Ancient Culture," Geohegan*)

Throughout the centuries the most prominent Church writers taught the nobility of labor while great saints, by their personal example, pointed the way for all of us to follow. "Manual labor is

absolutely necessary for the preservation of the human race. The earth does not give up her many fruits except by the labor of men. Since man needs the fruits of the earth to sustain life, it follows that he must work to get them." (*"The Philosophy of Labor According to Thomas Aquinas," Killeen.*)

One of the greatest evils in the world today is the dislike for physical labor and the effort many people make to avoid it. In

so doing they go counter to the teaching and example of Christ, the saints, and the repeated urgings of our great Pontiffs in Rome. Pius XII stated most emphatically, "As an indispensable means toward gaining over the world that mastery which God wishes, for His glory, all work has an inherent dignity and at the same time a close connection with the perfection of the person; this is the noble dignity and privilege of work, which is not in any way cheapened by the fatigue and the burden, which have to be borne as the effect of original sin, in obedience and submission to the will of God."

Recite the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be (etc.), three times, followed by a prayer of your choice for special needs.

FIFTH DAY: Walking in the Presence of God

Hymn

As we, if we should ride upon The golden wings (O God) of dawn,
And seek the ends of earth and sky, Could not escape Your loving
eye:

We beg that we by faith may see Your sweet and fierce ubiquity, And
may deserve at last by grace To see You always face to face.

Through Jesus Christ let this be done, Who lives and reigns, our
Lord, Your son, Whom with the Spirit we adore, One God with You
forevermore.

Antiphon

P. O taste, and see * that the Lord is sweet: / blessed is the man who
hopes in him.

(Psalm 1)

All: Happy the man who follows not * the counsel of the wicked,

Nor walks in the way of sinners, / nor sits in the company of the
insolent,

But delights in the law of the Lord / and meditates on his law day
and night.

He is like a tree planted near running water, that yields fruit in due
season, / and whose leaves never fade.

Whatever he does prospers. Not so the wicked, not so; / they are like
chaff which the wind drives away.

Therefore in judgment the wicked shall not stand, / nor shall
sinners, in the assembly of the just.

For the Lord watches over the way of the just, / but the way of the
wicked vanishes.

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.

Antiphon

All: O taste, and see that the Lord is sweet blessed is the man who hopes in him.

P. (Chapter--I Timothy 4:15-16) Meditate on these things, give yourself entirely to them, that your progress may be manifest to all. Take heed to yourself and to your teaching, be earnest in them. For in so doing you will save both yourself and those who hear you.

R. Thanks be to God.

P. The law of the Lord is perfect, refreshing the soul.

R. The decree of the Lord is trustworthy, giving wisdom to the simple.

P. Let us pray.

Breathe into our hearts, we beg You, O Lord, a desire for heavenly glory, and grant that we may come, bearing in Our hands the sheaves of justice, to where the blessed Isidore is resplendent with You in glory, through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

P. St. Isidore.

R. Pray for us.

Prayer in Honor of Saint Isidore

All: O God, * who taught Adam the simple art of tilling the soil, / and who through Jesus Christ, the true vine, / revealed Yourself the husbandman of our souls, / deign, we pray, through the merits of blessed Isidore, / to instill into our hearts a horror of sin and a love of prayer, / so that, working the soil in the sweat of our brow, / we may enjoy eternal happiness in heaven, through the same Christ our

Lord.

R. Amen.

P. Let us bless the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

P. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

R. Amen.

REFLECTION

"In the realm of nature, the farmer lives and works with God. He has abundant reasons to thank God for the independence and liberty granted him through the soil he calls his own. He has the right to the genuine respect of others, for without him others cannot live. And he ought to have a high sense of self-respect, based on the nobility of his work, which is so vital to humanity. Living close to nature, rural people do not find it difficult to live close to God, the Author of Nature.

"Moreover, they are blessed in this that they are free from so many occasions of sin and temptation, which abound elsewhere. Therefore, the supernatural life should flourish best in rural surroundings. There, men and women can best know, love and serve God, and save their immortal souls."

(From Pastoral Letter of the Archbishops and Bishops of the Ecclesiastical Provinces of Toronto and Kingston, Canada.)

However, communion with God and high esteem for their work are not enjoyed by farmers without a constant effort. Many of them seem to be unaware of the many beauties and advantages of rural living and consider their lives uninteresting and their work drudgery. It is the purpose of novenas such as this, and

other prayers and rural religious customs and practices, to inspire rural people anew with the dignity of their vocation and the fruitfulness of their work, so that they can continue to be worthy of being called collaborators with God.

My farm is not where I must soil My hands in endless, dreary toil. But where, through seed and swelling pod, I've learned to walk, and talk, with God.

Recite the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be (etc.), three times, followed by a prayer of your choice for special needs.

SIXTH DAY: Stewardship of the Soil

Hymn:

O Lord, as You by Your command
For all men's use have made the
land, Yet have allowed man's wise decree
Rule it be cared for
privately;

Let us know that what we control
Is made for mankind as a whole,
And we must an accounting give
Of what God lends us while we live.

Through Jesus Christ let this be done,
Who lives and reigns, our
Lord, Your Son, Whom with the Spirit we adore,
One God with You
forevermore.

Antiphon

P. And other seeds fell upon good ground, * and yielded fruit, / some
a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold.

(Psalm 64:10-14)

All: You have visited the land and watered it; * greatly have you
enriched it.

God's watercourses are filled; / you have prepared the grain.

Thus have you prepared the land, / drenching its furrows, /
breaking up its clods.

Softening it with showers, / blessing its yield.

You have crowned the year with your bounty, / and your paths
overflow with a rich harvest;

The untilled meadows overflow with it, / and rejoicing clothes the
hills.

The fields are garmented with flocks / and the valleys blanketed
with grain. / They shout and sing for joy.

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.

Antiphon

All: And other seeds fell upon good ground, and yielded fruit, / some a hundred fold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold.

P. (Chapter--James 5:7-10) Be patient therefore, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the farmer waits for the precious fruits of the earth, being patient until it receives the early and late rain. Do you also be patient; strengthen your hearts; for the coming of the Lord is at hand.

R. Thanks be to God.

P. Prepare your work outdoors, and diligently till the ground.

R. That afterwards you may build your house.

P. Let us pray.

Pour down Your blessing, we beg of You, O Lord, upon Your people, and upon all the fruits of the earth, so that when collected they may be mercifully distributed to the honor and glory of Your holy name, through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

P. St. Isidore.

R. Pray for us.

Prayer in Honor of Saint Isidore

All: O God, * who taught Adam the simple art of tilling the soil, / and who through Jesus Christ, the true vine, / revealed Yourself the husbandman of our souls, / deign, we pray, through the merits of blessed Isidore, / to instill into our hearts a horror of sin and a love of prayer, / so that working the soil in the sweat of our brow, / we may enjoy eternal happiness in heaven,

through the same Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

P. Let us bless the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

P. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

R. Amen.

REFLECTION

The surface of the earth is particularly within the care of the farmer. He keeps it for his own sustenance and gain, but his gain is also the gain of all the rest of us. At best, he accumulates little to himself. The successful farmer is the one who produces more than he needs for his support; and the surplus he does not keep; moreover, his own needs are easily satisfied. It is of the utmost consequence that the man next to the earth shall lead a fair and simple life; for in riotous living he might halt many good supplies that now go to his fellows.

It is a public duty so to train the farmer that he shall appreciate his guardianship. He is engaged in a quasi-public business. He really does not even own his land. He does not take his land with him, but only the personal development that he gains from it. He cannot annihilate his land, as another might destroy all his belongings.

He is God's partner, the representative of society to guard and to subdue the surface of the earth. He must exercise his dominion with due regard to all these obligations. He is a trustee. The productiveness of the earth must increase from generation to generation: this also is his obligation. He must handle all his materials, remembering man and remembering God. (*"The Holy Earth,"* by L. H. Bailey.) *Recite the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be (etc.), three times, followed by a prayer of your choice for special needs.*

SEVENTH DAY: Rural Works of Mercy

Hymn

O God, as Jesus by His birth Became our fellow man on earth, And raised man, by His brotherhood, To His divine similitude:

We beg that we in men may see The form of Your divinity, What good for fellow men we do Accept as being done for You.

Through Jesus Christ let this be done Who lives and reigns, our Lord, Your Son, Whom with the Spirit we adore, One God with You forevermore.

Antiphon

P. Blessed are the poor in spirit, * for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

(Psalm 111)

All: Happy is the man who fears the Lord, * who greatly delights in his commands.

His posterity shall be mighty upon the earth; / the upright generation shall be blessed.

Wealth and riches shall be in his house; / his generosity shall endure forever.

He draws through the darkness, a light for the upright; / he is gracious and merciful and just.

Well for the man who is gracious and lends, / who conducts his affairs with justice;

He shall never be moved; / the just man shall be in everlasting remembrance.

An evil report he shall not fear; / his heart is firm, trusting in the Lord.

His heart is steadfast; / he shall not fear till he looks down upon his foes.

Lavishly he gives to the poor; his generosity shall endure forever; / his horn shall be exalted in glory.

The wicked man shall see it and be vested; he shall gnash his teeth and pine away; / the desire of the wicked shall perish.

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.

Antiphon

All: Blessed are the poor in spirit, / for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

P. (Chapter--Matthew 6:19-20) Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where rust and moth consume, where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither rust nor moth consumes, nor thieves break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart also will be.

R. Thanks be to God.

P. He who trusts in his riches shall fall.

R. But the just shall spring up as a green leaf.

Let us pray.

P. May the grace of the Holy Spirit, we beg You, O Lord, enlighten our hearts, and refresh them abundantly with the sweetness of perfect charity, through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

P. St. Isidore.

R. Pray for us.

Prayer in Honor of Saint Isidore

All: O God, * who taught Adam the simple art of tilling the soil, / and who through Jesus Christ, the true vine, / revealed Yourself the husbandman of our souls, / deign, we pray, through the merits of blessed Isidore, / to instill into our hearts a horror of sin and a love of prayer, / so that working the soil in the sweat of our brow, / we may enjoy eternal happiness in heaven, through the same Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

P. Let us bless the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

P. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

R. Amen.

REFLECTION

Although St. Isidore and his wife, S. Maria de la Cabeza, were very poor, they gave of what they had to those who were poorer than themselves. Every Saturday they would serve a meal to the poor whom they had met in their daily visits to the churches of Madrid. One day after all the food had been given out, a latecomer arrived, hungry and destitute. Although St. Isidore knew that his wife had already served all the food they had in the house, he asked her to look again into the kettle to see if there might not be just one more serving left. S. Maria obediently lifted up the kettle to see if there were anything remaining, and was surprised to find that it was as heavy as if nothing had been taken out of it.

Works of mercy take on different forms in different times and countries. In the frontier days in America, typical ways of helping one's neighbors were: wholehearted hospitality to strangers and travelers; quick assistance to sick and bereaved families,

even to the extent of doing the plowing or harvesting for them if necessary; helping other families with greater than family-size projects like barn-raising or butchering; and special help at times of crisis like drought, hail, prairie fire, etc.

Many opportunities like these still occur in rural communities, but in addition, new ways of helping one's neighbor are constantly arising. For instance, it may often be possible for older farmers to help inexperienced farmers in adopting new and better farming methods, or it may be possible to be of service to one's community as a whole by helping to organize a

soil conservation district, improve the school system, or provide better roads or other means of communication.

A Christian farmer will also be on the alert to help his pastor in parish projects for adult education, recreation, or in expanding parish facilities. Finally, many opportunities will arise for the modern farmer to give of his abundance to the less fortunate farmers, who comprise three-fourths of the world's population, in other lands.

Recite the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be (etc.), three times, followed by a prayer of your choice for special needs.

EIGHTH DAY: Trust in Prayer

Hymn:

O God, as You by Your pure gift By grace our nature do uplift, And
make it possible to be What You, God, are essentially.

We pray You then to hear our prayer, For it is Christ's, whose life we
share; And since we share Christ's nature, we Can pray, like Christ,
almightily.

Through Jesus Christ let this be done, Who lives and reigns, our
Lord, Your Son, Whom with the Spirit we adore, One God with You
forevermore.

Antiphon

P. Therefore I say to you, * all things whatever you ask for in prayer,
/ believe that you shall receive, and they shall come to you.

(Psalm 85:1-10)

All: Incline your ear, O Lord; answer me * for I am afflicted and poor.

Keep my life, for I am devoted to you; / save your servant who trusts
in you.

You are my God; have pity on me, O Lord, / for to you I call all the
day.

Gladden the soul of your servant, / for to You, O Lord, I lift up my
soul;

For you, O Lord, are good and forgiving, / abounding in kindness to
all who call upon You,

Hearken, O Lord, to my prayer / and attend to the sound of my
pleading.

In the day of my distress I call upon you, / for you will answer me.

There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, / and there are no works like yours.

All the nations you have made shall come and worship you, O Lord, / and glorify your name.

For you are great, and you do wondrous deeds; / you alone are God.

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.

Antiphon

All: Therefore I say to you, all things whatever you ask for in prayer, / believe that you shall receive, and they shall come to you.

P. (Chapter--Philippians 4:47) Rejoice in the Lord always: again I say, rejoice. Let your moderation be known to all men. The Lord is near. Have no anxiety, but in every prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God. And may the peace of God which surpasses all understanding guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

R. Thanks be to God.

P. I will sing praise to You in the sight of the angels.

R. I will worship toward Your holy temple, and I will give glory to Your name.

P. Let us pray.

O Lord Jesus Christ, You have said: Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. Grant, we beg of You, to us Your supplicants, the gift of Your most divine love, so that we may love You with our whole heart and in all our words and works, and never cease praising You, who live and are King world without end.

R. Amen.

P. St. Isidore.

R. Pray for us.

Prayer in Honor of Saint Isidore

All: O God, * who taught Adam the simple art of tilling the soil, / and who through Jesus Christ, the true vine, / revealed Yourself the husbandman of our souls, / deign, we pray, through the merits of blessed Isidore, / to instill into our hearts a horror of sin and a love of prayer, / so that, working the soil in the sweat of our brow, / we may enjoy eternal happiness in heaven, through the same Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

P. Let us bless the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

P. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

R. Amen.

REFLECTION

A farmer daily sees the handiwork of God in the world of nature about him and recognizes that he is utterly dependent upon God's bounty for the success of his harvest and deliverance from calamities. It is therefore the most obvious and natural thing for him to call upon the Lord of the harvest to obtain His blessing upon everything he undertakes. Trust in prayer was the most distinguishing trait in the life of St. Isidore. It was his custom to rise before dawn and spend the early part of the day making visits to churches in and about

Madrid. The story is told that his employer, Master de Vargas, became disturbed about the amount of time St. Isidore was taking from his work, and decided to see for himself if reports which had come to him were as bad as they sounded. One morning he hid himself in the field where the saint was supposed to be plowing. When the saint returned even later than usual from his morning pilgrimage, the other workers had finished their jobs and had left the field, while St. Isidore's work was still untouched. Master de Vargas was about to rebuke the saint, but something told him to wait and see what would happen. The saint set to work and seemed to be making a great deal of progress. As the employer watched, he saw the reason: two angels were working side by side with the saint, each guiding a plow and racing in holy rivalry to see who could get the most done. After that whenever anyone asked the Master de Vargas about St. Isidore's work, he would answer simply, "Angels are his helpers."

While rural people will follow St. Isidore's example of combining prayer with work, their religious life in general will be centered about the rural parish. The parish church is the center of life's important moments -- baptism, confirmation, penance, marriage and, above all, the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and Holy Communion. The cemetery recalls the labors of the pioneers who went before, and the catechism classroom is the place of training future workers for Christ.

Father of all, the rural pastor has been called "God's sacred gift to mankind sent by divine appointment on a mission whose field is not a given parish or diocese, but the world; whose end is the glory of God and the salvation of souls everywhere; whose means are the sacraments and the preaching of the Gospel; the object of whose teaching is everything knowable, from the deep things in God to all things outside of God." (*Most Reverend William A. Griffin.*) *Recite the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be (etc.) three times, followed by a prayer of your choice for special needs.*

NINTH DAY: Sacrifice of Praise

Hymn:

Lord, who before Your praise was heard
Were praised in silence by the Word,
And whom, from all eternity Your Son has praised
sufficiently:

Please deign to be our hallowing,
And we in Christ Your Son will sing,
Then Your poor creatures' prayers will rise
Sufficient praise before Your eyes.

Through Jesus Christ let this be done,
Who lives and reigns, our Lord,
Your Son, Whom with the Spirit we adore,
One God with You forevermore.

Antiphon

P. Whatever you do in word or in work, * do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, / giving thanks to God the Father through him.

(Psalm 22)

All: The Lord is my shepherd: I shall not want. * In verdant pastures he gives me repose.

Beside restful waters he leads me; / he refreshes my soul. He guides me in right paths; / for his name's sake.

Even though I walk in the dark valley I fear no evil; / for you are at my side
With your rod and your staff / that give me courage.

You spread the table before me / in the sight of my foes; You anoint my head with oil, / my cup overflows.

Only goodness and kindness follow me / all the days of my life;

And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord / for years to come. 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.

Antiphon

All: Whatever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, / giving thanks to God the Father through him.

P. (Chapter--Hebrews 10:12-14) Jesus, having offered one sacrifice for sins, has taken his seat forever at the right hand of God, waiting thenceforth until his enemies be made the footstool under his feet. For by one offering he has perfected forever those who are sanctified.

R. Thanks be to God.

P. Offer to God the sacrifice of praise.

R. And pay your vows to the Most High.

P. Let us pray

Protect us, O Lord; who offer holocausts to You, and sear our hearts with the flame of Your divine charity, so that they may be ever more fervently prepared for sacrifice, through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

P. St. Isidore.

R. Pray for us.

Prayer in Honor of Saint Isidore

All: O God, * who taught Adam the simple art of tilling the soil, / and who through Jesus Christ, the true vine, / revealed Yourself the husbandman of our souls, / deign, we pray, through the merits of blessed Isidore, / to instill into our hearts a horror of sin and a love of prayer, / so that working the soil in the sweat of our brow, / we may enjoy eternal happiness in heaven, through the same Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

P. Let us bless the Lord.

R. Thanks be to God.

P. May the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace.

R. Amen.

REFLECTION

A farmer can justly take pride in the fact that his work is a very special contribution to the Sacrifice of the Mass, and he should meditate upon this truth with humility and gratitude.

"The Lord used the product of wheat and of grapes, bread and wine, for the institution of the august sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. Bread and wine are the substances changed into the substance of the Body and Blood of our blessed Savior. Their sense appearances are the carriers of the most precious gifts of our Lord's love to us.

"In the consecrated elements of bread and wine, Jesus Christ makes Himself present to be the spiritual food of men. He is the bread that has come down from heaven, of which if men eat they shall not die. With good reason, then, has Christian tradition used the sheaf of wheat and the vine with grapes, these precious products of the toil of the farmer, as the symbols of the Holy Eucharist.

"Both adorn tabernacle and altar as symbols to give vivid expression to this great and loving mystery of our Catholic faith; both play their part in beautifying art and architecture; both enrich hymns and sacred songs composed to give honor to our Lord in the Holy Eucharist. As he kneels in prayer before the tabernacle the farmer indeed has reason to glory in all this and to give profound thanks to his Lord and Master for having honored his calling in so exalted a manner." *(From "Partnership with God," by the Most Reverend Aloysius J. Muench.) Recite the Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory be (etc.) three times, followed by a prayer of your choice for special needs.*

LITANY OF ST. ISIDORE

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, have mercy on us.

Lord, have mercy on us.

Christ, hear us.

Christ, graciously hear us.

God the Father of Heaven, **have mercy on us.**

God the Son, Redeemer of the world, **have mercy on us.**

God, the Holy Spirit, **have mercy on us.**

Holy Trinity, one God, **have mercy on us.**

Holy Mary, **pray for us.**

St. Isidore, **pray for us.**

St. Isidore, patron of farmers, **pray for us.**

St. Isidore, illustrious tiller of the soil, **pray for us.**

St. Isidore, model of laborers, **pray for us.**

St. Isidore, devoted to duty, **pray for us.**

St. Isidore, loaded down with labors of the field, **pray for us.**

St. Isidore, model of filial piety, **pray for us.**

St. Isidore, support family life, **pray for us.**

St. Isidore, confessor the faith, **pray for us.**

St. Isidore, example mortification, **pray for us.**

St. Isidore, assisted by angels, **pray for us.**

St. Isidore, possessor of the gift of miracles, **pray for us.**

St. Isidore, burning with lively faith, **pray for us.**

St. Isidore, zealous in prayer, **pray for us.**

St. Isidore, ardent lover of the Blessed Sacrament, **pray for us.**

St. Isidore, lover of God's earth, **pray for us.**

St. Isidore, lover of poverty, **pray for us.**

St. Isidore, lover of fellowmen, **pray for us.**

St. Isidore, most patient, **pray for us.**

St. Isidore, most humble, **pray for us.**

St. Isidore, most pure, **pray for us.**

St. Isidore, most just, **pray for us.**
St. Isidore, most obedient, **pray for us.**
St. Isidore, most faithful, **pray for us.**
St. Isidore, most grateful, **pray for us.**

Jesus, our Lord, We beg of You, **hear us.**
That You would protect all tillers of the soil, We beg of You, **hear us.**
That You would bring to all a true knowledge of the stewardship of
the land, We beg of You, **hear us.**
That You would preserve and increase our fields and flocks, We beg
of You, **hear us.**
That You would give and preserve the fruits of the earth, We beg of
You, **hear us.**
That You would bless our fields, We beg of You, **hear us.**
That You would preserve all rural pastors, We beg of You, **hear us.**
That You would grant peace and harmony in our homes, We beg of
You, **hear us.**
That You would lift up our hearts to You, We beg of You, **hear us.**

Be merciful, **spare us, O Lord.**
Be merciful, **graciously hear us, O Lord.**

From lightning and tempest, **deliver us, O Lord.**
From pestilence and floods, **deliver us, O Lord.**
From winds and drought, **deliver us, O Lord.**
From hail and storm, **deliver us, O Lord.**
From the scourge of insects, **deliver us, O Lord.**
From the spirit of selfishness, **deliver us, O Lord.**

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.

Christ hear us. **Christ graciously hear us.**

Let us pray.

Grant, O Lord, that through the intercession of blessed Isidore, the husbandman, we may follow his example of patience and humility, and so walk faithfully in his footsteps that in the evening of life we may be able to present to You an abundant harvest of merit and good works, who live and are King world without end.

R. Amen.

Hymn for the Novena to St. Isidore

O Lord, as You have made the earth, To man and beast have given
birth Have given sun and rain that thence The soil might give them
sustenance:

We beg You make us willing to Perform the law we get from You,
That work of ours and grace of Yours May bring the increase that
endures.

Through Jesus Christ let this be done Who lives and reigns, our Lord,
Your Son, Whom with the Spirit we adore, One God with You
forevermore.

DEVOTIONS FOR THE FEAST OF ST. ISIDORE

Prayer of the Christian Farmer

All: O God, source and giver of all things, / who manifests Your infinite majesty, power and goodness in the earth about us, / we give You honor and glory.

For the sun and the rain, / for the manifold fruits of our fields, / for the increase of our herds and flocks we thank You. For the enrichment of our souls with divine grace, we are grateful.

Supreme Lord of the harvest / graciously accept us and the fruits of our toil / in union with Christ Your Son, as atonement for our sins, / for the growth of Your Church, for peace and charity in our homes, / for salvation to all. Amen.

Prayer of a Rural Family

All: Wise and compassionate God, accept this our prayer; Sheltered from storm and darkness, under this roof, This family kneels to adore You.

For the day just past, For keeping us safely, body and soul, Now we most humbly thank You.

For hilltops and verdure, For sunlight and wind and boundless space, For rain and the sky's rich color, For boughs and blossoms and cold clean snow, We are eternally grateful.

For birds and beasts, For the good black earth and the seeds producing The plenteous harvest--for times without number When we have eaten of that same harvest, We thank You and bless You forever.

Deliver us safely, if such be Your will, From deluge and drought, From famine and war and disaster.

Give us tomorrow, as yesterday and today, All things most needed
for rightful living; And move our hearts that we may have sorrow
For sinning against You.

God of the hearth and the harvest, Your children, here kneeling,
adore You. Bless now our rest and cherish us safe till the morrow.
Amen.

Blessing of Seeds and Soil

*(Following the General Instruction for norms of "The Blessing of Seeds
& Soil" are to be followed)*

(After the procession & blessing the faithful may pray the following)

Antiphon

P. And other seeds fell upon good ground, * and yielded fruit, / some
a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold.

PSALM 64: 10-14

All: You have visited the land and watered it; * greatly have you
enriched it.

God's watercourses are filled; / you have prepared the grain.

Thus have you prepared the land, / drenching its furrows, /
breaking up its clods.

Softening it with showers, / blessing its yield.

You have crowned the year with your bounty, / and your paths
overflow with a rich harvest;

The untilled meadows overflow with it, / and rejoicing clothes the
hills.

The fields are garmented with flocks, / and the valleys blanketed
with grain. / They shout and sing with joy.

P. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, / and to the Holy Spirit.

R. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be /world without end. Amen.

Antiphon

P. And other seeds fell upon good ground, and yielded fruit, / some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold.

Hymn to the Holy Spirit

Let us pray.

Come, Holy Ghost, Creator blest, And in our hearts take up Thy rest.
Come with Thy grace and heavenly aid To fill the hearts which Thou
hast made, To fill the hearts which Thou hast made.

O Comforter, to Thee we cry, Thou heav'nly gift of God most high;
Thou fount of life, and fire of love, and sweet anointing from above,
and sweet anointing from above.

MASS OF SAINT ISIDORE COLLECT

Grant, we beg of You, O merciful Lord, that through the intercession of blessed Isidore the farmer, Your confessor, we may forego the pride of worldly wisdom; and that, through his merits and exemplary life, we may, with all humility, ever perform works pleasing to You, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and is King and God with You, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, for ever and ever. Amen.



Dear St. Isidore we are told that your devotion to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass was so great that you would rise before it was light in order to be able to attend Mass before beginning your work in the fields.

Obtain for us, we pray you, some of that loving devotion to the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

There it is that the fruits of our farm labor, bread and wine, are brought and offered to God by the priest.

Then, in the consecration, Christ Himself, Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity, becomes present on our altars under the appearances of this same bread and wine.

And in what was the altar bread, He comes to us to be the very food of our souls.

If we deeply realize the value and beauty of Holy Mass, we will be very happy to attend as often as we possibly can.

Help us to understand that in the Mass we offer ourselves to God with Christ by the hands of the priest. There we can bring to God all that we do, and offer it to Him in union with His Holy Sacrifice. The oftener we do this now, the happier we shall be hereafter. Good Saint Isidore, bless us and our labors, that we may some day reap the reward of good works with you in heaven.

Amen.

Sancti Isidori ad Labourer, ora pro nobis!
(Saint Isidore, the laborer, pray for us!)