

Novena to Doctor Ernesto Cofiño

A new three-part novena to ask God for graces through the intercession of the Venerable Ernesto Cofiño, a Guatemalan pediatrician and father of a family. He is widely recognized for his extensive work in assisting underprivileged families and children. Dr. Cofiño was declared Venerable on 14 December 2023 by Pope Francis.

12/14/2025

Novena to Venerable Ernesto Cofiño (PDF sized for mobile)

This novena, designed to seek graces through the intercession of the Venerable Ernesto Cofiño, guides participants through a nine-day journey structured in three parts: a brief reflection, a prayer, and an invitation to take a concrete action for personal growth or service to others.

The themes explore various aspects of Christian life that Dr. Cofiño strove to live and share, including recognizing the divine value of ordinary life, learning to support one another in marriage, caring for health, cultivating friendship with colleagues, practicing responsible parenthood, and receiving the Eucharist daily.

The novena is available in an interactive PDF format for easy

reading on mobile devices, as well as in the text below.

Prayer for private devotion

O God, our Father, source of all good, You granted your son Ernesto abundant graces to be a doctor and father of a family who faithfully served the life that begins in You and belongs to You alone, and a true friend of his friends, bringing many closer to you. Grant that I too may respect and foster the gift of life, and generously fulfil my daily duties and be a better friend, out of love for Jesus Christ and for others.

Deign to glorify your servant, Ernesto, and through his intercession grant me the favour I request...
(make your request). Amen.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be.

Novena to Venerable Ernesto Cofiño in three parts

- Day 1: The greatness of ordinary life
- Day 2: Giving my life in marriage
- Day 3: Letting Christ live in me (Gal 2:20)
- Day 4: Making time for friendship with my colleagues
- Day 5: Physical health
- Day 6: Giving my life in service to those in need
- Day 7: Making time to care for others
- Day 8: Parenthood
- Day 9: Nourished by the Eucharist
- Prayer for Ernesto Cofiño's intercession

Day 1: The greatness of ordinary life

This is the life of the ‘new creation’ (2 Cor 5:17); the life of men and women who share in the life of Christ: “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:19–20).

Reflection

Ordinary life, far from being worldly or insignificant, becomes a path to holiness when we live as “new creations” in Christ. In every daily act, no matter how small it may seem, we can reflect the presence of Christ who lives in us. This reminds us that our life has a higher purpose: to live in faith, love, and self-giving, just as He did.

Prayer

Lord, thank you for dwelling in my heart and giving meaning to every moment of my life. Help me to live with the confidence of knowing that I am not alone, but that You walk with me, renewing my being and giving me the strength to love and serve as You did. Amen.

Action

Ernesto writes: “We cannot pray ‘Help me, Lord’ without first having done everything we truly can. ‘More prayer, more mortification, more love.’ Then the Lord comes and pours Himself out, making what is a mere trifle become a marvel of God.”

Choose a simple task from your daily routine today and offer it to God, aware that in its littleness it can become an act of love. Whether it is preparing a meal, working diligently,

or listening to a loved one, do it with joy and gratitude, remembering that Christ lives in you.

• Prayer to Ernesto Cofiño

Day 2: Giving my life in marriage

“The family atmosphere should be one of peace between husband and wife because peace is a necessary condition for a deep and effective education. Children should see in their parents an example of dedication, sincere love, mutual help and understanding. The small trifles of daily life should not be allowed to hide from them the reality of a love that is capable of overcoming all obstacles... In a word, the life of husband and wife should consist in loving one another and loving their

children, because by doing this they love God" (St. Josemaría, *Conversations*, no. 108).

Reflection

Marriage is a constant self-giving in which love is expressed through mutual support and being ready to face challenges together. St. Josemaría reminds us that pride is an obstacle in married life, while humility, kindness, and the effort to be a support to one another are essential for keeping love alive and strengthening the marital bond.

Prayer

Lord, teach us to live marriage as a true act of love and self-giving. Help us to be humble and kind in our daily interactions, always remembering the importance of supporting one another with patience and understanding. Amen.

Action

Ask the Lord today for the grace to show kindness and humility in your relationship with your spouse. It may be something simple: expressing gratitude for a service, helping with a minor task, or simply and sincerely listening. Let this gesture reflect your love and commitment to living marriage as a mutual self-giving.

Ernesto wrote to his children in 1969: “No life is complete without love. And this love must be deep, sincere, without seeking personal benefit or personal satisfaction. We cannot live a good life if we are incapable of understanding others, of seeking the share of truth that each person has in every situation. Solid affections cannot be built without knowing how to serve others selflessly, without waiting for recognition or a return for the service rendered. The soul cannot rise if it does not let go of

the ballast of resentment, which is like sticky mud that prevents the bird from taking flight toward heaven. We cannot expect reciprocity without knowing how to be generous. Nothing is achieved in life without bearing fruit, each according to his or her gifts and to the fullest extent of those gifts. And this fruit should not be kept only for ourselves, but shared with others.”

• Prayer to Ernesto Cofiño

Day 3: Letting Christ live in me (Gal 2:20)

“God loves us, God loves you all, and evil will not prevail! All of us are in God’s hands. So, let us move forward, without fear, together, hand in hand with God and with one another other! We are followers of Christ.

Christ goes before us" (Pope Leo XIV, First *Urbi et Orbi* blessing, 8 May 2025).

Reflection

Letting Christ live in us takes courage; the courage to let go of whatever binds us and prevents us from moving forward toward a full life in Him.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, give me the courage to let go of everything that distances me from You. Help me to abandon the fears, excuses, and distractions that keep me from living fully in your love. May your presence in my life be my strength and my guide at every step. Amen.

Action

Today, identify a habit or attitude that limits your relationship with Christ and, with God's help, decide to leave it behind. Take a moment to reflect and place it before the Lord in prayer, asking for the strength to transform it into a step toward a fuller life in union with Him.

Ernesto writes: "As you go deeper into the life of the spirit, as you sense within yourself (in your soul in a state of grace, where the Holy Spirit dwells) your actions will take on a new light, a deeper meaning. For the grace of God does not cancel out human effort; rather, it strengthens it, elevates it, and gives it the meaning of bearing the presence of God."

• Prayer to Ernesto Cofiño

Day 4: Making time for friendship with my colleagues

“Human beings are so made that they cannot live, develop and find fulfilment except ‘in the sincere gift of self to others.’ Nor can they fully know themselves apart from an encounter with other persons: ‘I communicate effectively with myself only insofar as I communicate with others.’ No one can experience the true beauty of life without relating to others, without having real faces to love. This is part of the mystery of authentic human existence. ‘Life exists where there is bonding, communion, fraternity; and life is stronger than death when it is built on true relationships and bonds of fidelity. On the contrary, there is no life when we claim to be self-sufficient and live as islands: in these attitudes, death prevails” (Pope Francis, *Fratelli tutti*, no. 87).

Reflection

The joy of the Gospel is a transformative gift that fills the hearts and lives of those who encounter Jesus. This joy not only frees us from sin and emptiness, but also renews our relationships and moves us to share it with everyone, including our colleagues. Evangelizing joyfully, even in difficult times, means sowing hope and love in the world around us.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for the joy that is born of encountering You. Help me to live in that joy, so that my witness may inspire and transform my relationships with those around me. May my words and actions always reflect your love and hope. Amen.

Action

Today, look for an opportunity to share the joy of the Gospel with someone close to you, perhaps a co-worker or a friend. It might be through a kind gesture, a conversation, or simply by showing gratitude and optimism in your interactions. May your joy become a channel for communicating Christ's love.

Ernesto writes: "It is very important to be attentive and to ask: 'What is it that I can give?' Not to be calculating: 'What do others give? What could they give in relation to me?' What matters is my effort, my generosity, not measuring, judging, or presuming the efforts of others."

• Prayer to Ernesto Cofiño

Day 5: Physical health

“Brothers and sisters, the first form of care needed in any illness is compassionate and loving closeness. To care for the sick thus means above all to care for their relationships, all of them: with God, with others – family members, friends, healthcare workers – , with creation and with themselves. Can this be done? Yes, it can be done and all of us are called to ensure that it happens. Let us look to the icon of the Good Samaritan (cf. *Lk 10:25-37*), to his ability to slow down and draw near to another person, to the tender love with which he cares for the wounds of a suffering brother” (Pope Francis, Message for the XXXIII World Day of the Sick, 11 February 2024).

Reflection

Jesus Christ, the physician of our souls and bodies, shows us his healing power both physically and spiritually. Through his love and mercy, He invites us to seek integral healing through the sacraments of Penance and the Anointing of the Sick. These are instruments through which we experience the strength of the Holy Spirit, who continues the work of salvation and healing in the Church.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for your healing love that comforts our souls and bodies. Help me to humbly approach the sacraments that offer us your grace and salvation. May your Holy Spirit renew my being and guide me toward true health and peace. Amen.

Action

Today, reflect on your spiritual and physical health. Consider going to the sacrament of Penance if you sense the need for healing in your soul, or offer support and companionship to someone who is ill, as a sign of Christ's healing love.

Ernesto writes: "Finally, we must not forget rest; one cannot ask 'the machine' to give beyond its capacity. Sleep well and enough, always. A hot bath; a walk, walking. [...] One cannot burn a candle at both ends; 'the best is the enemy of the good.' If effort is exaggerated and one goes beyond what one's capacity can and should give, *surmenage* follows, which means into discouragement, pessimism, doubt about what one is doing... and above all, an increase in

effort just to do what one ought to do.”

• Prayer to Ernesto Cofiño

Day 6: Giving my life in service to those in need

“We are asked to enter into the heart of God, who is always concerned for the needs of his children, especially those in greatest need... Christian love breaks down every barrier, brings close those who were distant, unites strangers, and reconciles enemies. It spans chasms that are humanly impossible to bridge, and it penetrates to the most hidden crevices of society. By its very nature, Christian love is prophetic: it works miracles and knows no limits. It makes what was apparently impossible happen. Love is above all

a way of looking at life and a way of living it. A Church that sets no limits to love, that knows no enemies to fight but only men and women to love, is the Church that the world needs today" (Pope Leo XIV, *Dilexi te*, no. 8 and 120).

Reflection

Serving those in need is not only about addressing material needs, but recognizing and celebrating their full dignity as persons. The encounter between those with greater opportunities and those living in poverty is an occasion for mutual enrichment, in which love and solidarity become bridges that draw us closer to Christ.

Prayer

Lord, teach me to see your face in those most in need. Help me to serve with humility and love, safeguarding

the dignity of every person you place in my path. May my life be a testimony to your mercy and goodness. Amen.

Action

Today, look for a practical way to serve someone in need. It may be by donating food, helping someone close to you with a difficult task, or simply offering your time and attention to someone who needs it. Do so with gratitude, knowing that in every act of service you are honoring Christ.

Ernesto wrote to a fellow physician: “Like your colleagues in white coats, you will go from bed to bed among your little patients, and without realizing it you will be like a beneficent dew that refreshes their little bodies battered by illness, destroyed by hunger; ‘the disease of hunger,’ which causes us such

sorrow! You see, my friend, how much good prayer will do you: when you ask the Holy Spirit to enlighten you and, through the instrument that you are, to bring God's consolation. You have — or are on the way to having — a magnificent, beautiful, worthy profession, one that you are able to raise very high on the spiritual plane. And then the burden, the weariness, takes another path: it rises like an arrow straight up to God!"

• **Prayer to Ernesto Cofiño**

Day 7: Making time to care for others

"If we think and live according to our communion with Christ, then our eyes will be opened. Then we will no longer be content to scrape a living

just for ourselves, but we will see where and how we are needed. Living and acting thus, we will soon realize that it is much better to be useful and at the disposal of others than to be concerned only with the comforts that are offered to us. I know that you as young people have great aspirations, that you want to pledge yourselves to build a better world. Let others see this, let the world see it, since this is exactly the witness that the world expects from the disciples of Jesus Christ; in this way, and through your love above all, the world will be able to discover the star that we follow as believers" (Pope Benedict XVI, Homily in the XX World Youth Day, 21 August 2005).

Reflection

When we live in communion with Christ, our eyes are opened to others' needs. True beauty is not found in

seeking comfort, but in serving others out of love for God.

Committing ourselves to building a better world is a response to the call of our faith. Through love and witness, we can lead others to hope.

Prayer

Lord, teach me to manage my time wisely, so that I may attend to the needs of those around me. Help me to live generously and to contribute, in my own place, to building a more caring and hope-filled world. May my life be a reflection of your love. Amen.

Action

Today, set aside some time to identify how you can organize your schedule in order to respond better to the needs of your family or community. Asking the Holy Spirit for light, prioritize a concrete act of service,

such as helping a family member, supporting a local cause, or educating others about the importance of a lifestyle that respects both personal and common good.

Ernesto wrote to a relative who was studying medicine: “Guatemala, 10 April 1987. My dear Federico: I received your letter full of details that pleased me, as it gave me a clear idea of how you are organizing your life in (the city). Study and practice diligently, without neglecting your formation, which is fundamental for the true goal of your profession.”

• Prayer to Ernesto Cofiño

Day 8: Parenthood

“In man and woman, fatherhood and motherhood, like the body and like

love, cannot be limited to the biological" (Pope Benedict XVI, Address the participants in the ecclesial diocesan convention of Rome, 6 June 2005).

Reflection

The true meaning of fatherhood or motherhood goes beyond the biological: it is a call to love and self-giving. United in Christ, the spouses see in all children opportunity to extend their affection and protection. Parenthood means welcoming, guiding, and building a home in which love reigns. God sows the mission of caring for the vulnerable in every willing heart.

Prayer

Lord, hear the cry of children who feel alone and abandoned. Fill their hearts with hope and love, and move ours to act with solidarity and

dedication. Make us instruments of your mercy, so that every child may feel the warmth of a family and the certainty that you never forget them. Amen.

Action

Today, take time to learn about a local organization that supports abandoned or marginalized children. Consider how you might contribute, whether by volunteering, donating, or simply sharing their mission. May your help be a sign of God's love for the vulnerable.

In the Decree on the Heroic Virtues of Ernesto, we read: "Throughout his life, the Servant of God achieved recognized professional prestige. He carried out constant work in assisting poor families, malnourished children, and rural workers. He founded a sanatorium for poor children and a rural medical center.

He was director of *Caritas* Guatemala, delegate of the Child Protection Society, and manager of the Association of Children's Dining Halls and Daycare Centers.”

- Prayer to Ernesto Cofiño

Day 9: Nourished by the Eucharist

“It is desirable to have the faithful in large numbers take an active part in the sacrifice of the Mass each and every day and receive the nourishment of Holy Communion with a pure and holy mind and offer fitting thanks to Christ the Lord for such a great gift” (St. Paul VI, *Mysterium fidei*, 3 September 1965).

Reflection

The Eucharist is a living encounter with the love and mercy of Christ. By taking part in this sacrifice, we are renewed in body, mind, and spirit, opening ourselves to new life through the Resurrection. The action of the Holy Spirit transforms us and unites us deeply with God and with our brothers and sisters, giving us strength and purpose to care for our own life and the lives of others.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, thank you for the gift of the Eucharist, where I come into contact with your love and mercy. Help me to receive You with a heart open to being transformed and renewed. May your presence move me to care for my own life and to be an instrument of love and hope for those around me. Amen.

Action

Today, take part in the celebration of the Eucharist or spend some time in adoration before the Blessed Sacrament. Reflect on how this encounter with Jesus can renew you to live with greater self-giving and dedication to others. Let that renewal take concrete form in an act such as offering help or a word of encouragement to someone in need.

Ernesto recalled at time when he participated in the Mass, in particularly difficult circumstances: “There I arrived: I was alone as a member of the faithful at Mass; tears poured from my eyes and streamed down my face, placing, as it were, a veil over my sight. And yet, through them, I contemplated on the altar a life-sized Crucified Christ. He seemed to want to detach himself from the Cross to which He was fastened, to offer me his breast; and in it, the

wound of the lance as if offering me a refuge... Little by little my tears, which did not stop flowing, became refreshing, and the steel press that was constricting my heart gradually loosened. When I went to receive the Body of our Lord, I was already calmer; trust began to emerge, and I felt that the Lord would not abandon me (ever). And it was so.”

• Prayer to Ernesto Cofiño

Prayer for Dr. Ernesto Cofiño's intercession

O God, our Father, source of all good, You granted your son Ernesto abundant graces to be a doctor and father of a family who faithfully served the life that begins in You and belongs to You alone, and a true friend of his friends, bringing many

closer to you. Grant that I too may respect and foster the gift of life, and generously fulfil my daily duties and be a better friend, out of love for Jesus Christ and for others.

Deign to glorify your servant, Ernesto, and through his intercession grant me the favour I request... (make your request). Amen.

Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be.

In conformity with the decrees of Pope Urban VIII, we declare that there is no intention of anticipating in any way the judgment of the Church, and that this prayer is not intended for public use.
