

## **REMEMBER THE NOVENA!**

If you were to travel in Ireland during the month of August, you would see road side signs all over the place that read, "Remember the Novena." These signs were a reminder to everyone that the Novena of Our Lady of Knock is starting soon. For us in the United States that Novena, which can really be prayed at any time, is from August 8 through the 16. However, it is a prayerful way to prepare for the actual feast day of Our Lady of Knock, which for us, is August 17.

## **REMEMBER THE BLESSED PIER GIORGIO NOVENA**

Perhaps the same thing is happening in Turin, Italy. A personal favorite of mine and someone whom the school has been learning much about, Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, is having a feast day this week on July 4. This was the day he was born into eternal life back in 1925 on July 4 at the young age of 24. In preparation for his feast, he too, has a novena attributed to his character and quality of life. This man, raised to the title of "Blessed" by Pope Saint John Paul II, is called the man of the eight beatitudes. In his young life he was a great witness to the Catholic faith and a great witness of how the Catholic faith is relevant and leads to a life of wholeness, purpose, and peace. This was something he especially strived to offer his peers. He was a good friend to have, much fun even. He would encourage his friends to participate in the Mass, in adoration, in the rosary, and in taking up the opportunity of other moments of prayer with each other. He was called "friend to the friendless." He tried to connect his peers into that great friendship which brings meaning to all relationships, he tried to connect them to Jesus. His novena begins this week from June 25 through July 3 to prepare us for his feast on July 4.

## **THE VALUE OF HIS NOVENA**

His novena is based on the eight beatitudes along with his writings. He wrote many letters to family and friends. Most of these letters said something encouraging about faith, prayer, and offering works of charity. The prayer ends with a litany of his many titles. These titles hold in them how he lived his life with purpose, integrity, and meaning: Loving son and brother, Athlete for God's Kingdom, Loyal son of the Church, Joyful in life's circumstances, are just some. Within the novena is an opportunity to pray to God, through Pier Giorgio's intercession, for some help, some hope, some individual, some circumstance to be resolved. This is a prayer that is especially relevant for our young people - even if they don't participate in it - the prayers offered could be for their good. So many conflicting voices, so much unnecessary noise, so many distractions, too many choices are the obstacles our

young people face when it comes to listening, not only to helpful people in their lives, but also to the voice of God, the voice of the Church, and the heart of faith. As it is today, so it was in the chaotic times of Pier Giorgio having lived at the conclusion of one World War that would eventually lead to a second. Offer the prayer for your family, the young people in your life, those who have chosen to not be faithful, those who are a worry, or are just simply lost. Prayer works!

### **WHY A NOVENA?**

Novenas are not some old fashioned form of spirituality, though it is an ancient form of prayer. They are rooted in Sacred Scripture. Before Jesus ascends to the Father, he tells his Apostles and Mother Mary to go back to Jerusalem and wait for the gift of the Spirit. When they went back, they must have spent time in prayerful preparation for something to happen, for the Spirit to happen. In our liturgical calendar Ascension (when celebrated on Thursday, now Sunday) was nine days before Pentecost. Novena means nine days. Between the nine days of Ascension and Pentecost, it is a time period of our yearly prayerful preparation for the Holy Spirit to happen. There is also a Novena to the Holy Spirit that can still be prayed during this time and many do. Get ready for the feast day of Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, July 4. Yes, Independence Day as well, but perhaps he can show us the true meaning of independence through our Catholic faith. Pray and prepare for something to happen. God knows it will.

### **WHERE TO LOCATE THE BLESSED PIER GIORGIO NOVENA**

- Copies are available on the tables at the doors of the church
- You can download a copy from our parish website
- You can download a copy from the Pier Giorgio Frassati website under pray...novena prayers...documents