



NOVENA

to **ST. BENEDICT**
for the CANONIZATION of
**SISTER ANNELLA
ZERVAS, O.S.B.**

“The order of St. Benedict, to which Anna Zervas came as an aspirant in August of 1915, was founded by St. Benedict of Norcia in Italy in the 6th century.” “There (at the monastery atop Monte Cassino) he composed his celebrated Rule for Monks, and died in 547.” “The Rule of St. Benedict, which forms the basis of Benedictine life, is one of the great documents of Christian literature.” “The monk or nun is to grow in grace under the guidance of the Rule...”

Taken from Ticket for Eternity by James Kritzeck

OPENING PRAYER:

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Holy St. Benedict, throughout the ages you have been such a powerful guide and intercessor for the Church and for all the spiritual sons and daughters who embraced the wisdom of your Holy Rule. I humbly bring to you today a request for your intercession which, if favored by God, could glorify Christ, bring sanctification for the Church and further honor to your Holy Rule. Please, blessed Benedict, I ask that you intercede for the cause of canonization for your spiritual daughter, Sister Annella Zervas, O.S.B. Thank you for listening to this appeal, wise father and trusted guide – Holy St. Benedict. Amen.

[Proceed to the day's meditation.]

DAY 1

Meditation from the Holy Rule: “Do not be daunted immediately by fear and run away from the road that leads to salvation. It is bound to be narrow at the outset. But as we progress in this way of life and in faith, we shall run on the path of God’s commandments, our hearts overflowing with the inexpressible delight of love” (*Rule of St. Benedict, prologue, 48-49*)

Prayer: Holy St. Benedict, from her earliest years, young Anna felt the “iron chain of love” drawing her ever closer to God. At the tender age of fourteen, that divine attraction took the shape of a call to become one of your daughters as a Benedictine religious. She did not shy from this calling but rather ran to it and embraced it, even when the path seemed obstructed or the experience made difficult. Pray, dearest St. Benedict, that her example of a joyful and dedicated vocation will one day be made known and imitated throughout the Church.

Our Father.....Hail Mary.....Glory Be....
[Proceed to the Prayer for Canonization.]

DAY 2

Meditation from the Holy Rule: “First of all, every time you begin a good work, you must pray to him most earnestly to bring it to perfection” (*RB, prologue, 4*).

Prayer: Holy St. Benedict, your faithful daughter, Sister Annella, once wrote to her parents telling them of the fruit of her prayer during a post-Christmas forty hours devotion. She was moved to ask them to pray that she might have “...the grace of perfect resignation and conformity to God’s holy will...” This desire flowed throughout her life into all the tasks, missions and sufferings she experienced. Pray, dearest St. Benedict, that one day Sister Annella may also be called upon in the Church to intercede to God for those who yearn to do God’s holy will in all things. Amen.

Our Father.....Hail Mary.....Glory Be....
[Proceed to the Prayer for Canonization.]

DAY 3

Meditation on the Holy Rule: “Your way of acting should be different from the world’s way; the love of Christ must come before all else” (*RB*, 4, 20-21).

Prayer: Holy St. Benedict, your daughter Sister Annella, throughout her life, moved and inspired the people around her with her unmistakable and distinctive disposition of holy devotion and piety. Her childhood pastor, like so many after him, testified that “..she sought to please God by her ardent desire and earnest will to acquire virtue and perfection, a total renunciation... of the world and all its vanities, an invincible fortitude in her sufferings.” Pray, dearest St. Benedict, that the priority of her life and love may be lifted up for the Church’s meditation so she may continue to inspire others to ‘be different from the world’s way.’ Amen.

Our Father.....Hail Mary.....Glory Be....
[Proceed to the Prayer for Canonization.]

DAY 4

Meditation on the Holy Rule: “Idleness is the enemy of the soul” (*RB*, 48, 1).

Prayer: Holy St. Benedict, your daughter Sister Annella, was determined to carry on with her tasks no matter how debilitating the pain, no matter how distracting the sufferings became. She would do whatever was necessary to stay focused on the grace of the moment and the path before her. Even in her final weeks and days when her sufferings restricted her to bed and the tasks of self-care were impossible, she would be intentional in prayer and in the Benedictine way of receiving all her visitors as she would receive Christ himself. Pray, dearest St. Benedict, that her commitment to rejecting idleness and the attending temptations should be lifted up for all in the Church to know and to imitate. Amen.

Our Father.....Hail Mary.....Glory Be....
[Proceed to the Prayer for Canonization.]

DAY 5

Meditation on the Holy Rule: “Just as there is a wicked zeal of bitterness which separates from God and leads to hell, so there is a good zeal which separates from evil and leads to God and everlasting life. This, then, is the good zeal which monks must foster with fervent love...” (RB, 72, 1-6).

Prayer: Holy St. Benedict, your beloved daughter Sister Annella, sought only to pursue you with every fiber of her being and – to the end – every ounce of her strength. This holy zealousness found its expression in her supreme act of mission and charity – her suffering – when she would frequently pray: “Lord give me more suffering. But only if you’ll help me.” Pray, dearest St. Benedict, that your daughter’s zealous pursuit of sanctity in this life may come to be recognized as having been crowned with the gift of life eternal. Amen.

Our Father.....Hail Mary.....Glory Be....
[Proceed to the Prayer for Canonization.]

DAY 6

Meditation on the Holy Rule: “Let [us] prefer nothing whatever to Christ, and may he bring us all together to everlasting life” (RB, 72, 11-12).

Prayer: Holy St. Benedict, on the day before she died, your daughter Sister Annella spoke of her deep desire to be in communion with those she loved along with all the saints of heaven. She said to her mother: “Don’t cry, Mama, I am going to see God and I would like to take you along, Mama, but I cannot. You are needed yet...” Later that day, she was heard to recite the first verse of a favorite poem: “When I am dying / How glad I shall be / That the lamp of my life / Has been burned out for Thee.” Dearest St. Benedict, I humbly ask for your powerful intercession in pleading to God to show us that Sister Annella is, indeed, joined with the communion of saints in heaven. Amen.

Our Father.....Hail Mary.....Glory Be....
[Proceed to the Prayer for Canonization.]

DAY 7

Meditation on the Holy Rule: “Do not aspire to be called holy before you really are, but first be holy so that you may more truly be called so” (*RB*, 4, 62).

Prayer: Holy St. Benedict, your devoted daughter Sister Annella, knew her place in the journey of sanctity. When her mother observed to her daughter that she had taken a name - Annella - which was not in the canon of saints, she replied, “Then I shall have to be the first.” It was a reply which revealed that she was at one and the same time fully aspirational and properly humble. She did not presume to be holy, but yearned to be made so. Dearest St. Benedict, I pray that with your intercession and in communion with the Holy Will of God, Sister’s sanctity will be recognized and that we may one day call upon her as a saintly intercessor in heaven.

Our Father.....Hail Mary.....Glory Be....
[Proceed to the Prayer for Canonization.]

DAY 8

Meditation on the Holy Rule: “Whenever we ask some favor of a powerful man, we do it humbly and respectfully, for fear of presumption. How much more important, then, to lay our petitions before the Lord God of all things with the utmost humility and sincere devotion. We must know that God regards our purity of heart and tears of compunction, not our many words” (*RB*, 20, 1-3).

Prayer: Holy St. Benedict, your prayerful daughter Sister Annella, was forged in the school of suffering into a woman of endless prayer. When her discomfort was so great and her pain so absolute that sleep was impossible, amidst the groans of agony throughout the night her family would clearly hear her pray as like a constant litany: “All for you, Jesus. All for you.” Dearest St. Benedict, I ask that you intercede to God, if it be within his Holy Will, to allow Sister Annella to continue to be a woman of constant prayer as a Saint of the Holy Church, interceding for those who would call upon her. Amen.

Our Father.....Hail Mary.....Glory Be....
[Proceed to the Prayer for Canonization.]

DAY 9

Meditation on the Holy Rule: “Yearn for everlasting life with holy desire” (*RB*, 4, 46).

Prayer: Holy St. Benedict, your beloved daughter Sister Annella prayed shortly before her death, “O my Jesus, soon I will be resting in your arms for all eternity.” Having received last rites and with the Blessed Sacrament on her bedside table, Sister died at 3:15 am on August 14th. Her father noted later: “Lying on her left side, her head slightly bent forward, her eyes partly open, her mouth...drawn in a faint smile, her knees bent, the entire form presenting a picture like the...stations where Our Lord lies prostrate under the cross...Sister Annella peacefully breathed her last.” Dearest St. Benedict, your faithful daughter sought to live her life with Christ, and at the hour of her death, she was granted the grace to die a death which resembled her Savior’s final moment. Please pray that she may be lifted up by Holy Mother Church to lead others in the ways of sanctity so as to attain the reward of eternal life. Amen.

Our Father.....Hail Mary.....Glory Be....
[Proceed to the Prayer for Canonization.]

NOVENA CLOSING PRAYER:

**Prayer for the Canonization of the Servant of God,
Sister Annella Zervas, O.S.B.**

[To conclude the prayers of each day.]

O Heavenly Father, who art the Author of all virtue and Source of all holiness, and who, through Thy faithful servant, Sister Annella Zervas O.S.B., hast been pleased to give the world an example of patience and obedient resignation under suffering, we pray Thee to grant us the grace which we ask through her mediation, and thus to manifest her sanctity, that Thy Holy Church may soon be able to proclaim it for Thy greater glory, O God, and for the glorification of the Immaculate Virgin Mary, whom Sister Annella loved so fervently. Amen.

Lord Jesus, glorify Thy Spouse, Sister Annella Zervas, O.S.B. we beg of Thee by Thy Holy Cross. Amen.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, have mercy on us.

Immaculate Heart of Mary, pray for us.

Holy St. Benedict, pray for us.

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Nihil Obstat:

Very Reverend Father Vincent Miller, STD Censor Librorum

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Bishop of Crookston

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