

NOVENA IN HONOR

of VENERABLE FATHER
JEAN GAILHAC

Son of Beziers

From early Childhood aware of God's presence in his life

Youth sensitive to the needs of the sick and the poor

Open to being led by the Spirit to respond to God's call

Centered totally on God

Man of vision and courage

Man open to the signs of the times

Willing to suffer pain and rejection for the sake of his beliefs.

Priest of integrity and fidelity to the Pope and Church

Friend of prisoners and outcasts

Ardent defender of the poor and defenseless

Man of gentleness and strength

Man of compassion

With great love and respect for all people

With a burning desire to make God known and loved

Founder of the RSHM to collaborate with him in

continuing the work of redemption begun by Jesus Christ.

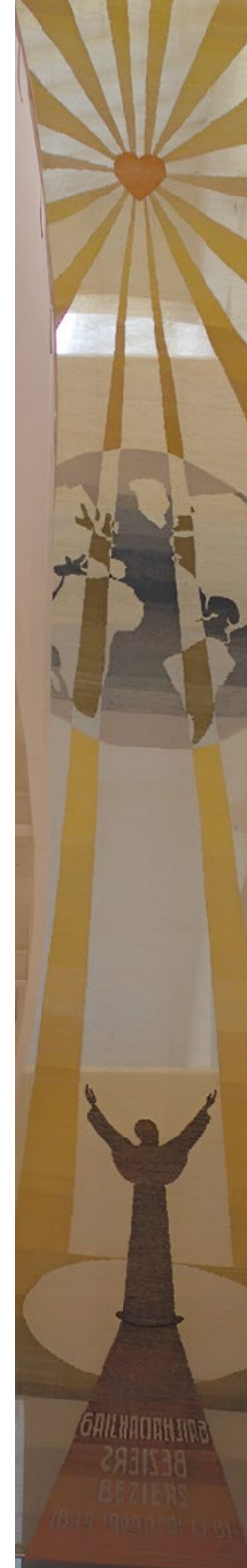
Introduction

This novena is a grace-filled opportunity to come together in prayer during nine days to mark the anniversary of Jean Gailhac's birth (13.11.1802). We will be united, hearts and minds, in thanking God once again for the gift of Venerable Jean Gailhac to the Church, and in asking for the grace to respond to God's call to us, to continue the mission that Fr. Gailhac entrusted to our Institute and to all who collaborate with us.

Taking a short time each day to pray and reflect on a text from scripture, side by side with a thought from Gailhac, and a quotation from Pope Francis or another contemporary author, to illuminate or expand the thought, will, we trust, open us to grace, help us to see with fresh eyes, and be more centered on what is important. The novena will have special significance for us as we grow in our desire to become people "of prophetic hope, walking together, risking the new..." during this year of preparation for our 2025 General Chapter.

Jean Gailhac, a contemplative steeped in the Word of God, and a man of compassionate and courageous action on behalf of those most in need, was also, as we know, a prolific writer who reached out unceasingly to the Sisters, wherever they were situated in mission, offering words of support, guidance, and encouragement in living their vocation and dealing with the challenges they encountered. We need to hear his voice again today, urging us on.

*Margaret Fielding RSHM,
Rome, November 2024*



Sister Bianca Haglich rscm

Welcome to the Novena

Our hope is that the Sisters and The Sacred Heart of Mary Family/ Extended Family will meet in groups if possible to make this Novena. Our desire is that there will be time given each day.

1. To contemplate, pray with, and reflect on selected writings of Father Jean Gailhac related to the theme of the day in light of Scripture, contemporary writings, and present-day global and local situations. We strongly recommend a contemplative pause after each reading.
2. To reflect on one or two questions related to the theme and to share what has surfaced in your prayer with the group.
3. To gather together the findings of the group and make note of a final response or action.
4. Together, pray the blessing of the day or perhaps the other prayers included in the leaflet.
5. On the final day, 16th of November, we will have a final prayer, via Zoom, with all the sisters and members of the Extended Family.



Day 1 – 7th November

ROOTED IN CHRIST

BIBLICAL TEXT: COL. 2:6-7

«As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.»

FATHER GAILHAC TEXT: (GS/9/XI/1877)

»Your father always has a model before his eyes; this model is Jesus Christ. He studies Him continually and, as much as he can with the help of grace, he tries to imitate Him. Let us be holy and let us work to leave behind people holy enough to carry on our work, based on the examples and teachings we shall have left. May what God has begun in us live, grow, and become ever more perfect.»

POPE FRANCIS: JAN. 2024

«Each baptized person is a member of the one body of Christ; what is more, everyone in this world is my brother or my sister, and all together we compose that ‘symphony of humanity’ of which Christ is the firstborn and redeemer.»

REFLECTION AND SHARING

How may we, as The Sacred Heart of Mary Family rooted in Christ, be in harmony with each other and be ardent witnesses and agents of the Gospel in our lives today?

CONCLUDING PRAYER: (GS/20/II/77/C.)

«May Jesus, patient, always kind, reign forever in your heart, in your words, in your tone of voice, and in your whole way of proceeding. May your face be serene and let goodness shine through. In everything, be the image of Jesus Christ.»



Day 2 – 8th November

FAITH AND ZEAL

BIBLICAL TEXT: 2 TIMOTHY 1:6

«I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands.»

FATHER GAILHAC TEXT: (G/S/30/III/1884)

«The real aim of your work and devotion is to make God known and loved, rooting Him deeply in the people who are entrusted to you... Fire is not lighted with ice; one cannot enkindle a fire by throwing water. Fire is lighted only with fire. A dead coal will never burn a house. You are called to love God, so be the fire and the flame.»

SISTER MARIA NATALIA AJAYI

«What the Lord expects from us is to make a difference in our ordinary duties by passionately going one step further: by doing them with extraordinary love, attention, dedication, commitment, and wholehearted humility.»

REFLECTION AND SHARING

*As you ponder these passages, notice what stands out for you.
How can we be the flame of extraordinary love to make a difference to help women, children, or other people on the margins of our societies?*

CONCLUDING PRAYER: (GS/8/III/71/A.)

«May a living faith guide you, may a firm hope in God sustain you, may a boundless love inflame you with a holy zeal for personal holiness and for success in the mission where you find yourselves. May humility embellish your attitudes and lives.»

Day 3 – 9th November

MARY OF ALL

BIBLICAL TEXT: LUKE 1:39-56

«In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, and she exclaimed with a loud cry, ‘Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?’»

FATHER GAILHAC TEXT: 21ST MAY 1886 B

«You are Mary’s daughter, born in her forever blessed Heart. Mary is the most beautiful image of Jesus; she has all his features. Sacred Scripture says that she is beautiful like the dawn, identified with the sun, and it also says that she is beautiful and gentle like the moon, whose light is a reflection of the sun’s light. Therefore, as a daughter of Mary, born in her Heart, you must be her image.»

POPE FRANCIS

«The courageous women who are present in the Church: they are like Mary. Courageous: they get up and help other people. Serving others is a Christian sign. Whoever doesn’t live to serve other people doesn’t deserve to live.»



REFLECTION AND SHARING

*Who are the courageous women, the Marys and Elizabeths, that I admire?
How can I/we ‘get up and serve other people,’ and be there for others with the utmost generosity and care?*

CONCLUDING PRAYER: MAGNIFICAT

«My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior...»



Day 4 – 10th November

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

BIBLICAL TEXT: JOHN 17:23

«I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.»

MARY MILLIGAN TEXT: (THE PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS OF GAILHAC'S SPIRITUALITY)

*«Union, Union, Charity; All, All, Always» - Fr. Gailhac's dying words.
The work of God is to be done by a group united in the same Spirit—the Spirit of Jesus Christ himself. Such unity demands relationships based on simplicity, respect, care, and love. For our Institute, a diversity of works is a way of accomplishing the ONE work for which we are sent (mission): to make God known and loved, to reveal God, and to call others to recognize God's glory in Jesus Christ.*

EVANGELII GAUDIUM 131 TEXT

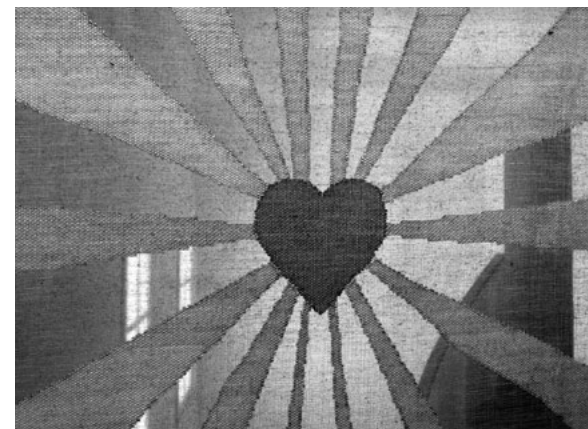
«Diversity must always be reconciled by the help of the Holy Spirit; He alone can raise up diversity, plurality, and multiplicity while at the same time bringing about unity.»

REFLECTION AND SHARING

*How may we, as the Sacred Heart of Mary Family, be united in mind, heart, and spirit as we endeavor to answer God's call so that all may have life?
Is there something—a project we can create together in our diversity as the Sacred Heart of Mary Family—that will bring unity, healing, or liberation both to ourselves and others?*

CONCLUDING PRAYER: (GS/23/VII/1886)

«If all the members of the small Institute, full of faith, hope, and love, always live united to Jesus Christ, if each one is his image and likeness, what great joy! Live in perfect charity and unity, and if you are faithful in following these counsels, God will live in all of you! Be strong to the end!»



Day 5 – 11th November

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

BIBLICAL TEXT: JOHN 1:1-3

«In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made.»

FATHER GAILHAC TEXT: (GS/ND/1873 B)

«Creation in its entirety was made in God's image. God created the heavens, the trees, the plants, the animals that roam the earth, and the birds that fly. Then God created the human person in whom all created matter is united. Creation in its entirety was made in his image.»

RAINER MARIA RILKE:

«For the Creator, there is no poverty. Everything is flourishing more recklessly.»

REFLECTION AND SHARING

*I'm taking some time to savor the phrase that touched me the most.
How can we respond to climate change, which leaves so many people displaced and suffering unthinkable consequences?*

CONCLUDING PRAYER: (GS/19/XI/77/A.)

*«May God, good and merciful, be forever blessed and glorified by us all.
May He live forever in your heart, may He keep you strong and vigorous to do all His works and establish them solidly.»*



Day 6 – 12th November

HOLINESS AND HOSPITALITY

BIBLICAL TEXT: GENESIS 18:1-8

«And the LORD appeared to him by the oaks of Mamre, as he sat at the door of his tent in the heat of the day. He lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, three men were standing in front of him. When he saw them, he ran from the tent door to meet them and bowed himself to the earth and said, ‘O Lord, if I have found favor in your sight, do not pass by your servant. Let a little water be brought, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree, while I bring a morsel of bread...’»

FATHER GAILHAC TEXT: (GS/2/VIII/77/A)

«To be holy is to copy Jesus Christ, to be clothed with Him. To copy Jesus Christ, you must have Him before your eyes. We cannot copy what we do not see. It is not sufficient to look at Him for a moment; you must see Him always. It is not enough to see Him; you must study Him.»

JOSÉ FRAZÃO CORREIA SJ (“NOTAS DE SANTIDADE”)

«The theologian Christoph Theobald identifies Jesus’ holiness in two major traits: hospitality and detachment from self. His willingness to let himself be surprised and learn from whoever he meets along the way.»

REFLECTION AND SHARING

Reflect slowly on the above passages. Notice the one that touches you deeply. Why is that so?

How can I/we be like Abraham and Jesus and have an open mind and heart for all those, no matter who or how they are, who come our way to ‘our place’ today? In reality, does this attitude call for change, and if so, how can this change come about?

CONCLUDING PRAYER: (GS/16/II/82/A.)

«May Jesus, who loves you with eternal love, dwell in your heart and shower you with all kinds of graces, bless you and lead you to holiness.»



Day 7 – 13th November

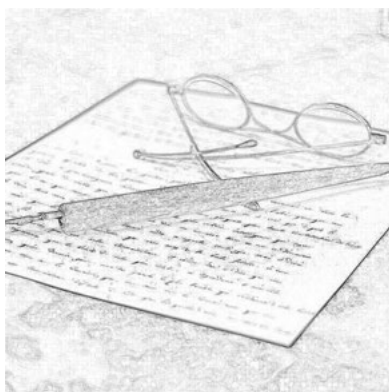
BIRTHDAY OF FATHER GAILHAC

BIBLICAL TEXT: MATTHEW 5:3-9

«Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.»

FATHER GAILHAC TEXT: (GS/28/VIII/1878 A)

«I want to dedicate myself to the glory of God, to my own sanctification, and to the sanctification of my neighbor. I want to love God in everything and everywhere, to make Him loved. I want the last thought in my heart and the last words out of my mouth to be: I love Jesus, and I want to make Him loved.»



REFLECTION/SHARING

«Father Gailhac wrote these resolutions during his retreat in preparation for his ordination to the priesthood, and they contain the essence of what had always moved him in life.» (Sr. Maria Antonia, RSCM, 'A Salvação em Jesus Cristo', p. 49)

On his birthday today, let's give thanks for this remarkable man! Perhaps it's also time to reflect on what my fundamental resolutions are that motivate me to get up every day.

CONCLUDING PRAYER: (GS/16/II/82/A.)

Loving God, on this day when we celebrate the birth of Jean Gailhac, we give thanks for the particular gift of the Spirit that has been given to him and which we share as an Institute for the service of the Church and the life of the world. We look back in gratitude for the many people who have been part of the mission you entrusted to Jean Gailhac of making you known and loved and of proclaiming that Jesus, your Son, came so that all may have life.

May the fire of zeal that you inspired in Gailhac continue to live in the hearts of all members of the Institute and all those inspired by the grace of our charism. May Mary, who treasured all things and pondered them in her heart, accompany us in a special way as we celebrate the life of Jean Gailhac, a faithful disciple of your Son, Jesus. Amen.

Day 8 – 14th November

COMPASSION AND GENTLENESS

BIBLICAL TEXT: MATTHEW 11:29

«Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.»

FATHER GAILHAC TEXT: (GS/15/III/1877/A)

«It is through holiness of life accompanied by goodness, gentleness, evenness of temper, and a heavenly determination to reach the end, which is that God be known, loved, and glorified.»

GAUDETE ET EXSULTATE 131

«Look at Jesus. His deep compassion reached out to others. It did not make him hesitant, timid, or self-conscious, as often happens with us. Quite the opposite, His compassion made him go out actively to preach and to send others on a mission of healing and liberation.»

REFLECTION/SHARING

As I mull over these readings, I notice what is stirring within me.

How can I take on the yoke of gentleness and compassion of Christ today?

Is there a person or a group of people that I/we can actively reach out to, to listen, help, or pray for today? What change is needed to come about?

CONCLUDING PRAYER: (GS/10/IX/1881)

«O God, fulfill your image in us. Give us your gentleness and that of Jesus Christ who is one with you. Lord, give us your gentleness. We will use it only for your glory and to make you loved, blessed, and glorified by all those entrusted to us. We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son. Amen.»



Day 9 – 15th November

GRATITUDE/JOY/ HOPE

BIBLICAL TEXT: LUKE 4:18-19

«The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.»

ILT LETTER: 24 FEB. 2024

«The effectiveness of our mission depends on each one of us living it with responsibility and integrity. As Jean Gailhac often reminded us, the Sister's mission is God's work. Our strength is in God, who called Father Gailhac, Mère Saint Jean, and all the sisters who have gone before us and sent them to be bearers of the Light in their time and place: God calls us today to continue that dream.»



REFLECTION/SHARING

Today, with joyful hearts, unfailing hope, and deep gratitude, we, The Sacred Heart of Mary Family in Mission, continue to follow God's call to go forth and fulfill Father Gailhac's dream for us. We do so as we open a new foundation in Angola, prepare for the General Chapter, and celebrate the Jubilee Year in 2025.

Let's share the reasons for joy and hope in our mission.

CONCLUDING PRAYER: (GS/10/IX/1881)

«Oh God, You who find Your glory in the merits of Your saints and delight Yourself when exalting their virtues, listen favourably to the prayers we address to You in favour of Your faithful Servant Father Jean Gailhac, Founder of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary.

*Reminding You of the ardent zeal which he testified by the salvation of people, by such generous charity that he exercised in favour of the poor, by a love so strong that united him to the church and by his filial devotion to the Sacred Heart of Mary. May he be glorified on earth and favour us with the grace of his **beatification**. May we be his faithful imitators.»*



Prayer to Fr Gailhac

Father Gailhac, your compassion for women and orphans prompted you to invite Appollonie and companions to come together 175 years ago to found the Institute of the Religious of the Sacred Heart of Mary. We wish to celebrate that moment, grateful for your openness and receptivity to the Spirit in hearing the cry of the poor so that 'All might have life'.

Today we, your Sacred Heart of Mary Family in Mission, in many countries, in various ministries, ask you to intercede for us so that we too, elderly, middle aged and younger, may be sensitive to the movements of the Spirit and respond generously to the needs of our time.

We ask you to pray a blessing on our RSHM and wider Communities, that we may have a great sense of belonging to God, to each other and to our beautiful world. We ask a blessing especially on our war-torn countries, and on all people in need, including those who are lonely, sick, homeless, fleeing from abuse or torture... so that

ALL MAY HAVE LIFE

Amen

