

# NOVENA



In Honour of  
Father Engelmar Unzeitig CMM

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Our Lady of Grace Monastery  
23715 Ann Arbor Trail  
Dearborn Heights  
MI 48127-1479  
U.S.A.

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Rev. Msgr. John P. Zenz  
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Adam J. Maida, J.C.L., J.D., S.T.L.  
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# Day 1

## Acceptance of God's Will

### The Word of God

Your heavenly Father knows all that you need. Seek first his kingship over you, his way of holiness, and all these things will be given to you besides. Mt 6:32-33.

Jesus was known to be of human estate, and it was thus that he humbled himself, obediently accepting even death, death on a cross! Phil 2:8

### Father Engelmar Unzeitig

"God directs everything with wonderful wisdom. Only we don't always know immediately what everything is good for"

(August 10, 1941)

"Walter (Father Engelmar's pseudonym) tries therefore to attain to the most generous attitude possible and to exercise perfect obedience. That, in the end, is all that counts. Didn't Christ do for so long a time unpretentious work that had little to do with his mission but was His Father's will?"

(August 9, 1942)

### Prayer

O Jesus, Father Engelmar also found it difficult in the beginning to accept Your Father's will for him, so different from what he had planned and imagined. Through his intercession, assist us in our present need and, above all, grant us the grace of loving and accepting what You have in store for us. You live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

### Petitions

Lord, as we begin this novena, we come before you with many wishes, needs and worries. We ask you to show us your will and to grant us the desire to do what you want:

- For each one of us, that, through the intercession of Father Engelmar, we may know the will of God for us, let us pray to the Lord.
- For the gift of wisdom and humility, that we may be able to discern and love God's guidance in our lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- That the Lord may forgive us for the times we have not accepted his will and have gone our own way, let us pray to the Lord.
- That He may strengthen us to follow His Son Jesus in carrying our cross every day, let us pray to the Lord.

- That we may one day reach our heavenly home, where we will praise God's providence for us for all eternity, let us pray to the Lord.

**Let us pray:**

O Lord, you direct our ways with your providence. We come to you today with this our special intention... Grant us our request, if it is in harmony with your will. Teach us to accept from Your loving hands whatever you have prepared for us, whether prosperity or tribulation, sickness or health, knowing that whatever you do is best for us. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ Your Son who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

# Day 2

## Faith

### **The Word of God**

Faith is confident assurance concerning what we hope for, and conviction about things we do not see. Because of faith the men of old were approved by God.

Heb 11:1-2

For if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Faith in the heart leads to justification, confession on the lips to salvation.

(Rom 10:9-10)

### **Father Engelmar Unzeitig**

"None of us humans has a lasting place on this earth. We are all looking for our eternal home in heaven. How many now have come homeless on the western front! Yes, the daily events are powerful preachers of the transitoriness of earthly things and the calls of God that we set our whole hope on Him and form all our thoughts and desires according to His will and praise Him in happiness and suffering for His great love."

(July 18, 1943)

### **Prayer**

O Christ, the terrible fate which Father Engelmar and his companions suffered in captivity did not cause them to lose faith in You. On the contrary, it strengthened them in conviction that all things of this world are passing and that You have prepared a better place for those who love You. Through their intercession, grant us the gift of always trusting in Your loving presence and providence in our lives. You live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

### **Petitions**

Lord, You filled Father Engelmar with faith even in the concentration camp of Dachau; through his intercession, grant us also this gift:

- For all the members of the Church, that in their passage through this world, they may not lose sight of their eternal goal, let us pray to the Lord.
- For those with material wealth, that they may open their hearts to the needs of others and so gain eternal life, let us pray to the Lord.
- For all who are to die today, that they may not die unprepared to

meet their Creator, let us pray to the Lord.

- For the sick and suffering, that they may remain strong in their trust of God's goodness, let us pray to the Lord.

- For those who do not know Christ, that God may grant them the gift of faith and a full share in the richness of His redemption, let us pray to the Lord.

**Let us pray:**

Father in Heaven, You promised eternal life to those who believe in Your Son Jesus Christ; with trust be come to You in our present need ... Hear our prayer and grant us what we ask through the intercession of Father Engelmar, so that we may praise your goodness and mercy. Was ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

# Day 3

## Sorrow for Sin

### **The Word of God**

The other man, however, kept his distance, not even daring to raise his eyes to heaven. All he did was beat his breast and say, 'O God, be merciful to me, a sinner.'

Lk 18:13

"Let us lay aside every encumbrance of sin which clings to us and persevere in running the race which lies ahead; let us keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, who inspires and perfects our faith. For the sake of the joy which lay before him he endured the cross, heedless of its shame."

Heb 12:1-2

### **Father Engelmar Unzeitig**

"Oh, if God's goodness would only bring it about that all our relatives and countrymen and many others would find their way back to God and thereby to true happiness! How gladly I would give my life for that; then too, as I recognize more and more, I also have so much neglect and guilt to make up for. For the rest, I turn everything over to the mercy of God and try simply day by day and hour by hour to fulfil the holy and truly adorable will of God as well as I possibly can. The Saviour gives the most beautiful example of this in these Holy Week days with the words, 'Father, not my will but yours be done!'"  
(April 18, 1943)

### **Prayer**

O God, one of the reasons for Father Engelmar's great love of You and his desire to have all men love You was his experience of Your mercy in the forgiveness of his own sins and failings. Grant us, we beseech You, through his intercession, the humility to return to You when we have sinned and to trust in Your forgiveness. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### **Petitions**

O God, in the hard school of the concentration camp, Father Engelmar came to understand his own sinfulness but never forgot Your desire to forgive and raise him up. Grant us the gift of true repentance for our sins:

- For all who have turned away from God and His law, that, touched

by His grace, they may return to their Father's house, let us pray to the Lord.

- For ourselves, that our hearts may more and more lose their hardness and become attuned to His will, let us pray to the Lord.

- For priests and confessors, that they may show God's goodness and mercy to all who come to them in the sacrament of reconciliation, let us pray to the Lord.

- For those who are suffering, that their trials may not turn them away from God but bring them to a greater realization of His love for them, let us pray to the Lord.

- For those who have received God's forgiveness, that they may thank Him by a life of service to Him and to their brothers and sisters, let us pray to the Lord.

**Let us pray:**

God, Your fatherly goodness fills the universe; grant us, through the intercession of Father Engelmar, the favour we ask for ... Give us a great hatred of sin as an offence against You who love us most and the grace to return to You whenever we fall. We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ Your Son who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

# Day 4

## Trust in God

### **The Word of God**

Since we have a great priest who is over the house of God, let us draw near in utter sincerity and absolute confidence. Let us hold unwaveringly to our profession which gives us hope, for he who made the promise deserves our trust.

(Heb 10:21-23)

So strengthen your drooping hands and your weak knees. Make straight the paths you walk on, that you halting limbs may not be dislocated but healed.

(Heb 12:12)

### **Father Engelmar Unzeitig**

"God speaks again a very clear language in our day with great signs and wonders and does not abandon those who put their trust in Him, so that, as I learned from Walter, even His enemies must admit that, whenever His loyal ones were in need, they prayed and were heard. Therefore, what is needed is courage and trust!"

(April 5, 1942)

### **Prayer**

Almighty God, Father Engelmar's letters show that he often experienced Your goodness in prison. This gave him great trust that You would continue to care for and protect him and his dear ones. Through his prayers, may we, in all our necessities, have a full and loving confidence in Your love for us and Your desire to grant us all that is helpful for our eternal salvation. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### **Petitions**

Lord, you filled your servant Engelmar with great trust in You even in the seeming hopelessness of a prison. Grant us confidence in Your goodness at all times:

- For Christians, that they may believe more firmly in God's love for them at all times and show it in their lives, let us pray to the Lord.
- For all those in prison, that they may not succumb to despair or bitterness, let us pray to the Lord.
- For those burdened with sin and guilt, that they may return to the Lord with great trust in His kindness and forgiveness, let us pray to the Lord.

- For those who feel their lives have been wasted or useless, that they may be strengthened and comforted by the thought of God's love and willingness to forgive, let us pray to the Lord.
- For those who have decisions to make, that they make them according to God's will and with the assurance that God will help those who try to serve Him, let us pray to the Lord.

**Let us pray:**

O eternal Father, You love us far more than we can imagine and desire our welfare more than we do ourselves; we ask You, through the intercession of Father Engelmar, to hear our petition in our present need ... Increase our faith and trust in Your love for us, so that we may never doubt Your providence. We ask this through Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

# Day 5

## Peace

### **The Word of God**

Turn from evil, and do good; seek peace, and follow after it" (Ps 34:15)

Dismiss all anxiety from your minds. Present your needs to God in every form of prayer and in petitions full of gratitude. Then God's own peace, which is beyond all understanding, will stand guard over your hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus."

(Phil 4:6-7)

### **Father Engelmar Unzeitig**

"If only people would at least internally find the way to peace, seeing that externally they must do without this happiness! We will gladly offer up everything for this in the new year. We must never forget, you see, that everything which God sends or permits is meant to contribute to our good."

(January 14, 1945)

"For the rest, all my thoughts and actions are still directed solely to begging for, and obtaining, God's peace for men."

(September 2, 1944)

### **Prayer**

O Jesus, through his union with You in prayer and the Eucharist, Father Engelmar arrived at such a degree of inner strength, gentleness and peace that it was noticeable to his fellow prisoners. May his prayer win for us the grace that we, too, will become instruments of peace by being open to Your grace. You live and reign forever and ever. Amen.

### **Petitions**

God, You are found rather in the soft breeze than in the storm wind; we pray for your peace in our hearts:

- For our church throughout the world, that it may enjoy that peace that is the result of unity of faith and perfect charity among its members, let us pray to the Lord.
- For national and international leaders, that they may put the interests of international peace and solidarity before selfish national interests, let us pray to the Lord.
- For those caught up in ethnic, racial and religious conflicts, that they

may be given the courage to work toward a solution of their differences in mutual respect and cooperation, let us pray to the Lord.

- For families, that parents and children may live together in harmony according to God's law, let us pray to the Lord.

- For ourselves, that, rid of pride and selfishness, we may become persons of peace within ourselves and to those around us, let us pray to the Lord.

**Let us pray:**

Father in Heaven, You gave your servant Engelmar peace of heart even in the face of imprisonment and death to show us that union with You brings peace, no matter what conditions we live in. Hear our request for aid ... Grant us what we ask for, if it is in accord with Your will and if it will further that peace with You and with our brothers and sisters that Your Son came to bring us. We ask this through Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

# Day 6

## Joy

### **The Word of God**

Rejoice in the Lord always! I say it again. Rejoice! Everyone should see how unselfish you are. The Lord is near. Dismiss all anxiety from your minds. Present your needs to God in every form of prayer and in petitions full of gratitude. Then God's own peace, which is beyond all understanding, will stand guard over your hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. (Phil 4:4-7)

### **Father Engelmar Unzeitig**

"How sweet everything is and everything becomes when you try to do it to please someone. Yes, it is almost inexpressible how good and pleasing it is to serve God, to give thanks for everything, whether pleasant or painful, and to offer up everything for those sorely tried on the western front, etc. How easy everything becomes when you do it for the intention of imploring spiritual comfort and help for others in need! The only trouble is that you then feel so much your own misery and unworthiness; but we trust completely that God is satisfied with (our) good will."  
(July 4, 1943)

### **Prayer**

Almighty God, Father Engelmar's joy in the concentration camp astounds us. Amid the hardships and despair of that place of suffering, he found happiness. His life shows us that, whatever circumstances we live in, You can fill us with happiness if we love and serve You. May Father Engelmar's prayers win for us the gift of trust in Your love and care for us at all times, so that we may go through life praising Your goodness. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

### **Petitions**

O Lord, You sent Your Son into the world to save us from the sadness of sin. Hear us as we pray for the gift of Christian joy:

- For all those far from God, that, by returning to Him, they may soon experience the joy of living in His grace, let us pray to the Lord.
- For the members of our Church, that, by their trust in God's mercy and forgiveness, they may be signs of joy in the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- For the sick, the suffering and the imprisoned, that they may find

happiness in the knowledge of Christ's closeness to them in their afflictions, let us pray to the Lord.

- For families, that they may be havens of love and acceptance for all their members, let us pray to the Lord.

- For children, that they may experience God's love in the joyful service of their parents and guardians, let us pray to the Lord.

**Let us pray:**

Father in Heaven, You have promised to Your faithful children a share in Your happiness; grant us what we ask for ... if it be according to Your will. If not, give us through the intercession of Father Engelmar what will be best lead us to You, the true source of joy. We ask this through Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

# Day 7

## Love of Neighbour

### The Word of God

My command to you is: love your enemies, pray for your persecutors. This will prove that you are sons of your heavenly Father, for his sun rises on the bad and the good, he rains on the just and the unjust. If you love those who love you, what merit is there in that? Do not tax collectors do as much? And if you greet your brothers only, what is so praiseworthy about that? Do not pagans do as much? In a word, you must be made perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.

(Mt 5:44-48)

### Father Engelmar Unzeitig

"God does not need us; (He needs) only our love, our dedication, our sacrifice. So I too hope to be of some assistance to the innumerable homeless people, to all the helpless and despairing, especially those in the sorely afflicted cities."

(August 15, 1943)

"But how beautiful it would be if everyone were to use God's gifts with gratitude and love for Him and were willing to put up with one another! We hope, through our prayer and sacrifice, to move our Father to mercifully grant this gift to His children."

(October 3, 1943)

### Prayer

O Jesus, Father Engelmar was outstanding in his kindness to his fellow prisoners and his desire to help all men by his prayers. Hear his plea for us and grant us a like spirit of Christian love for our brothers and sisters, that we may gain eternal life by joyfully serving them in Your name. Amen.

### Petitions

Let us ask God, through the intercession of Father Engelmar, to grant us a genuine love of neighbour:

- For those who have suffered at the hands of others, that they may be given the grace to forgive all injuries against them, let us pray to the Lord.
- For the areas of the world where war is raging, that hatred may be replaced by compassion, the desire for revenge by a willingness to forgive, and the will to dominate by mutual respect, let us pray to the

Lord.

- For the members of our Church, that by our humility, kindness and works of mercy we may give witness to the world of God's great love for all men, let us pray to the Lord.

- For married people, that their love for one another may grow stronger in Christ as the years go by, let us pray to the Lord.

- For all of us, that, like Father Engelmar, we may come to realize how much good we can do for others by prayer, let us pray to the Lord.

**Let us pray:**

Lord Jesus, You inseparably joined the command to love our neighbour to the command to love God; through the intercession of Father Engelmar, we ask for the following favour ... We beg for it, believing it will increase our love for You and help us to serve our neighbour better. You, however, know our hearts and, if what we desire should be harmful to us or to others, we beseech you to grant us instead whatever will draw us closer to You and to our brothers and sisters. You live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

# Day 8

## Apostolic Zeal

### **The Word of God**

Even now I find my joy in the suffering I endure for you. In my own flesh I fill up what is lacking in the sufferings of Christ for the sake of his body, the church. (Col 1:24)

While we have the opportunity, let us do good to all men, but especially those of the household of the faith. (Eph 6:10)

I urge that petitions, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be offered for all men. Prayer of this kind is good, and God our saviour is pleased with it, for he wants all men to be saved and come to know the truth.

(1 Tim 2:1,3-4)

### **Father Engelmar Unzeitig**

"From Otto, I once again received a beautiful small package on November 8. I thank him cordially and always remember him and his intentions, as well as those of the other confreres, exactly as I do your cares and intentions and those of the worldwide Church. That keeps giving apostolic breadth to the narrowness of our view and union with all the many people praying and sacrificing at home and elsewhere. I received news about Adelhilde (Father Engelmar's sister, a member of the Missionary Sisters of the Precious Blood) from a confrere. Everything is still going on there as usual. They are sharing intimately in the sufferings of their brothers and sisters at home and on the front lines, whether they want to shorten the divine punishment by reparation and sacrifice or plead for the grace of people's conversion and salvation. In this way she can be an active missionary even if she is not in the missions, for only God's grace can convert anyone."

(November 14, 1943)

### **Prayer**

O Christ, in the hardships of the concentration camp You forged in Father Engelmar such a zeal for the salvation of souls that he gladly sacrificed his life in order to bring the sacraments to his sick confreres. Grant us, we beseech you, through his prayers the grace of apostolic zeal, so that we will shirk no sacrifice in bringing our brothers and sisters to You, who are Lord for ever and ever. Amen.

## **Petitions**

With Father Engelmar, let us pray to the Lord for a strengthening of the apostolic spirit among God's people:

- For the whole Church, that Catholics everywhere may be inflamed with a desire to announce the Gospel to all the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- For missionaries, that, consoled and fortified by the Holy Spirit, they will continue to preach the Word of God to the nations, let us pray to the Lord.
- For the sick and suffering, that they will be given the faith and love to offer their sufferings to the conversion of the world, let us pray to the Lord.
- For those countries where the Church is well established, that Catholics may be filled with the desire to share their faith with others, let us pray to the Lord.
- For ourselves, that, like Fr. Engelmar, our whole life will become a continual prayer for God's mercy on mankind, let us pray to the Lord.

## **Let us pray:**

Father in heaven, You made your church the sign and source of salvation for all mankind; help us to appreciate what You have given us in making us members of Your Church. We come to you with many needs in our weakness. Hear our prayer, especially for ... Grant the gift of Faith to all our brothers and sisters in the whole world and teach us to do what we can to bring about their conversion. We ask this through Our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

# Day 9

## Love of God

### **The Word of God**

May Christ dwell in your hearts through faith, and may charity be the root and foundation of your life. Thus you will be able to grasp fully, with all the holy ones, the breadth and length and height and depth of Christ's love, and experience this love which surpasses all knowledge, so that you may attain to the fullness of God himself. (Eph 3:17-19)

Eye has not seen, ear has not heard, nor has it so much as dawned on man what God has prepared for those who love him. Yet God has revealed his wisdom to us through the Spirit. (1 Cor 2:9-10)

### **Father Engelmar Unzeitig**

"Love doubles one's strength, makes one inventive, renders one inwardly free and happy. It has really not entered into the heart of any man what God has prepared for those who love Him. Of course, they too are buffeted by the harsh reality of this world with all its haste and chase and tumultuous wishes and demands, with its dissension and hate like a biting frost, but the rays of the warming sun of the love of the all-good Father are stronger and will triumph. The Good is undying and victory must remain with God, even if it sometimes seems useless for us to spread love in the world. Nevertheless, one sees again and again that the human heart is attuned to love, and it cannot withstand its power in the long run."  
(undated letter to his sister)

### **Prayer**

O Jesus, through his cooperation with your grace, all the hardships of the concentration camp only helped Father Engelmar to grow more in humility and kindness toward his brothers and, finally, to a greater love of You. He knew the difficulties we have with the virtue of charity, especially within our own hearts. Through his intercessions, we ask You go grant us an increase in this virtue, so that we can love You with our whole heart and soul and love our neighbour as ourselves. You are Lord forever and ever. Amen.

### **Petitions**

Lord, we come before you to ask you, through the intercession of Father Engelmar, for Your greatest gift, the gift of love, which Jesus called "the gift of the Holy Spirit" (cf Lk 11:13):

- For the members of our Church, that their love for Christ in the Holy Eucharist may grow, leading them to a greater love of their brothers and sisters, let us pray to the Lord.
- For Christian families, that they may once again become places of individual and communal prayer, let us pray to the Lord.
- For religious communities, that they may lead their members to an ever greater love of God and service of their brothers and sisters, let us pray to the Lord.
- For priestly vocations, that there will never lack men filled with the love of God to preach the word of God and guide His People on their journey toward the Father, let us pray to the Lord.
- For those who do not believe, that they may come to know the goodness and mercy of God who calls them to a personal friendship with Himself, let us pray to the Lord.

**Let us pray:**

Father, through your Son you taught us that to love You and our neighbour is the fulfilment of the Law and the prophets; through the intercession of Father Engelmar, teach us to respond to Your love for us by giving our whole heart to You and to our brothers and sisters. We have many wishes, but we know that love is the one thing necessary, the pearl of great price. Grant us that gift and we will be satisfied. Was ask this through Our Lord Jesus Christ, Your Son, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

## Biography

Father Engelmar (Hubert) Unzeitig was born on March 1, 1911, in Greifendorf, a little village in the Czech Republic. He entered the seminary at age 17, and on August 6, 1939, he was ordained a priest for the Missionaries of Mariannahill. A year later he was appointed administrator of the parish in Glöckelberg, a small village in his home country. It was already World War II.

Father Engelmar was not silenced by fear of the Nazi; instead, he courageously spoke out what faith and reason prompted him to say. Eventually what he preached in church and taught in school got back to the civil authorities, and on April 21, 1941, they arrested him and carted him off to prison. Six weeks later they transferred him to Dachau concentration camp. Some of their charges against him were that he insisted one must obey God more than men and that he defended the Jews.

When typhus entered the camp and there were no medicines and disinfectants to check it, when the SS guards kept clear of the quarantined barracks and thousands of prisoners died unattended, twenty priests – Father Engelmar one of them – volunteered in February 1945 to enter the infected quarters and succor the dying. Eighteen of them died quickly, Father Engelmar on March 2.

Priests who were his fellow inmates in the camp readily testified later to his exceptional holiness. They called him the personification of love, the Angel of Dachau, a martyr of charity, a saint. In July 1991 the process of his beatification was formally opened in Germany.

Whoever receives favors through the intercession of Father Engelmar is asked to report them to:

Postulator General  
Missionari di Mariannahill  
Via S. Giovanni Eudes, 91  
00163 Roma, Italia

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