

Our Lady of England Priory, Storrington.



**NOVENA TO
ST PETER OF ALCANTARA**

11th – 19th October

Hymn or chant

Presider: Almighty God, Father of mercies
and giver of all good gifts,
we come before you to honour you in your servant,
Peter of Alcantara,
and to ask his help in our many needs.
You promised those who ask would receive,
those who seek would find,
those who knock would have doors opened to them.
Hear the prayers of your church
and grant the requests we make
as we trust in your love for us.
We ask this in the name of Jesus the Lord.

All: Amen.

*We keep silence as we bring before God our needs and
concerns.*

Presider: St Peter of Alcantara

All: Pray for us.

Presider: Loving God, hear our prayers and the prayers of all
those, near and far, who are joining in this novena.
Bless them and all our friends and benefactors with
health and happiness; be with them when life is hard
and enfold us all in your love.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

We keep silence as we pray for our dead.

De Profundis (Psalm 129)

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord, Lord, hear my voice.

O let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleading.

If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt, Lord, who would survive?

But with you is found forgiveness: for this we revere you.

My soul is waiting for the Lord, I count on his word.

My soul is longing for the Lord more than watchman for daybreak.

Let the watchman count on daybreak and Israel on the Lord.

Because with the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.

Israel indeed he will redeem from all its iniquity.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord

And let perpetual light shine upon them

May they rest in peace.

Amen.

Presider:

Let us pray.

Loving God,

with your help, St Peter of Alcantara persevered in imitation of Christ's humility, patience and poverty: through his prayers may we continue faithfully our journey through life

and come, one day, to the new life of heaven.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All:

Amen.

Truly, matters in the world are in a bad state; but if you and I begin in earnest to reform ourselves, a really good beginning will have been made.

St Peter of Alcantara

St Peter of Alcantara (1499-1562)

Born in the Spanish border town of Alcantara, Peter Garavito was the son of the town's Governor. After studying law at Salamanca, he joined the Franciscans, choosing the severely penitential branch of the Conventuals known as the Observants. His gifts for administration gave him a leadership role in the Order even before his ordination to the priesthood in 1524.

Inspired by the tradition of the Desert Fathers, Peter wanted to live his religious life according to the ancient practice of prayer, hardships, contemplation, fasting and penance. The Observant Franciscans provided him with the monastic setting to live out his vocation. His was a personal Way of the Cross - a way of voluntary austerity - and the daily poverty and deprivations soon marked him out as a holy man. He attracted the attention of rich and poor, kings and popes, and his reputation as a spiritual advisor spread beyond his native Spain. He spent some time as spiritual guide in the court of King John III in Portugal. In 1538 he was elected Minister Provincial of the Observants in the Spanish province of Estramadura. The strict observance of the Friaries under his guidance gave them the name 'Alcantarines'.

St Peter of Alcantara had a special love for the sick who came to him for healing. He was always quick to point out that only God could cure sick people, but that he would pray with them and for them. In our annual Novena that is all we ask him to do - to pray with us and for us for our own needs and the needs of those dear to us.

In 1560 St Peter met St Theresa of Avila, who was trying to reform the Carmelite ideal: she found in Peter a kindred spirit. Both favoured an austere religious life - no easy options for either of them. St Peter became St Theresa's spiritual director and about this time wrote his 'Treatise on Prayer and Meditation'.

St Peter knew that in the Catholic mystical tradition there was a difference between 'knowing God' and 'knowing *about* God'. Intellectual study, philosophy and theology might help us to know *about* God, but only a deep, inner personal relationship with the God who reveals himself as the person of Jesus Christ could lead us to know him.

In this sense the message of St Peter of Alcantara is timeless. Our annual Novena in his honour is a time to ask God for the grace to know Him better, and knowing him, to love and serve Him.