

conducted under heavy guard to the square of the Marina, where the execution was to take place, the Blessed Virgin Mary came to their assistance, either to protect their innocence, or in answer to their fervent prayers.

Suddenly, the skies darkened and a terrific storm broke out over the square. The people who had gathered to witness the execution fled for shelter. The guards and the prisoners found shelter in the Church of St. Mary of the Port. The storm raged all day, and the execution had to be postponed.

Precautions were taken that the prisoners might not escape. Extra chains were fastened on them and the doors of the Church were securely locked. That night, the guards that were on duty fell asleep and the three young condemned men found themselves at the foot of an Image of the Blessed Virgin Mary. They prayed fervently for deliverance. While they were praying, the chains mysteriously fell to the ground. The doors of the Church opened by themselves, and they heard these words coming from the Image of the Blessed Virgin: "Go, you are free, do not fear. The Divine Infant Whom I hold in my arms, has heard your prayers and has granted your freedom." The young men silently walked out of the Church.

The guards awakened from their sleep, not seeing their prisoners, sought them and, finally, caught up with them. The prisoners would have been chained again, had it not been for the people who interceded for them with the King. The King having heard what had happened, granted them their freedom, saying: The Blessed Virgin Mary has set them free, so will I.

The news of the miracle which occurred in the Church of St. Mary of the Port very soon reached every corner of Sicily and became known to the people all over Italy. Faithful from all parts of Sicily and Italy began their pilgrimages to the Holy Shrine to pay their homage to the miraculous image which, from then on, was given the title "Our Lady of the Chain." The devotion to Our Blessed Lady of the Chain increased rapidly, as many were the miracles and favors which were obtained from God through the intercession of Our Lady of the Chain, at the Shrine dedicated to her honor.

So dear was this devotion to the good people, that many of them, even though they had to leave their native shores to lend their strength and give their talents to this rising democracy, left everything behind them but their love for the Blessed Mother of Chain. And of all of the many immigrants, it was the people of Cefalu, Sicily, who brought with them their devotion to Baltimore, MD.

We hope and pray that many more, with the help of this story and novena prayer, will join in this rare and beautiful devotion which has brought spiritual, emotional and physical freedom to many. Devotion to our Lady of the Chain can be especially helpful for those struggling with the "chains" of addiction. Whatever chains may bind us, freedom granted by our Lord Jesus can be possible through the intercession of His Mother, venerated under the title of "Our Lady of the Chain."

This information was provided by St. Jude Shrine in Baltimore, Maryland

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NOVENA TO OUR LADY OF THE CHAIN

May be recited at any time for nine consecutive days



Novena

The word Novena derives its name from the Latin word "novem" meaning "nine." A novena can be either a private or public devotion in the Catholic Church to obtain special graces.



NOVENA TO OUR LADY OF THE CHAIN

O Blessed Lady of the Chain,
sweet hope, eternal comfort
of those who with confidence call upon you;
prostrate at your feet,
I profess my misery and nothingness.

You who are the Queen of Heaven and earth;
the Mother of Our Divine Savior;

O you who are so powerful before the throne of God,
please, obtain for me this favor which I need so much.

May the many favors and graces
which you obtain daily from Jesus
for those who invoke you
under the title of Mother of the Chain,
encourage me to have recourse to you
and present to your maternal heart all my afflictions.

O powerful Virgin,
break the chains of sin which hold me fast.
Destroy the snares of my spiritual and temporal enemies,
chain me close to you
and to Jesus with a lively faith,
a firm hope,
and a burning charity.

Encircle me with your chains and thus,
unite me to your heart.

United in such a way to you and to Jesus,
I will fear nothing.

There will be no doubt of my eternal salvation,
no fear of not being granted
all the temporal and spiritual blessings
I need to lead a devout life.

Since I am in need of help in this present affliction,
O loving Mother,
I have recourse to you with childlike faith;
and thus, I hope
to obtain the favor I am now asking.

[State your intentions here.]

I am sure that you will grant me my request
with that same love with which you did
grant the request of the three prisoners.
I am confident you will grant this favor
through your merits
and the merits of your Divine Son
and allow me to return soon
to render to you the homage of my praises
and grateful thanksgivings.

Amen

"Hail Holy Queen..."

Q: What is the historical origin of the devotion to Our Blessed Lady of the Chain?

Our Lady of the Chain

A: The devotion to Our Lady, venerated under the title of Our Lady of the Chain, had its origin in Palermo, Sicily. At the end of the fourteenth century the historian Mongitore, in his book Palermo Devoted to Mary, relates: "In the year 1392, while Martin I reigned over Sicily, three young men were condemned to die on the gallows. While these young men were being