

Prayers from the Lumen Christi Missal

A Seed of Love - Saint Teresa of Jesus (1515-1582)

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Although I have often abandoned you, O Lord, you have never abandoned me. Your hand of love is always outstretched towards me, even when I stubbornly look the other way. And your gentle voice constantly calls me, even when I obstinately refuse to listen. When the sins in my soul are increasing, I lose the taste for virtuous things. Yet even at such moments, Lord, I know I am failing you and failing myself. You alone can restore my taste for virtue. There are so many false friends willing to encourage sin. But your friendship alone can give the strength of mind to resist and defeat sin. What a good friend you are, Lord!

Prayer of Saint Thomas Aquinas

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Almighty eternal God, behold, I come to the Sacrament of you Only Begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, as one sick to the physician of life, as one unclean to the fountain of mercy, as one blind to the light of eternal brightness, as one poor and needy to the Lord of heaven and earth. I ask, therefore, for the abundance of your immense generosity, that you may graciously cure my sickness, wash away my defilement, give light to my blindness, enrich my poverty, clothe my nakedness, so that I may receive the bread of Angels, the King of kings, and Lord of lords, with such reverence and humility, such contrition and devotion, such purity and faith, such purpose and intention as are conducive to the salvation of my soul. Grant, I pray, that I may receive not only the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood, but also the reality and power of that Sacrament. O most gentle God, grant that I may so receive the Body of your Only Begotten Son our Lord Jesus Christ, which he took from the Virgin Mary, that I may be made worthy to be incorporated into his Mystical Body and to be counted among its members. O most loving Father, grant that I may at last gaze forever upon the unveiled face of your beloved Son, whom I, a wayfarer, propose to receive now veiled under these species: Who lives and reigns with you for ever and ever. Amen.

Prayer of Self Offering

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Receive, Lord, my entire freedom. Accept the whole of my memory, my intellect and my will. Whatever I have or possess, it was you who gave it to me; I restore it to you in full, and I surrender it completely to the guidance of your will. Give me only love of you together with your grace, and I am rich enough and ask for nothing more. Amen.

Reflecting Your Brightness William of Saint Thierry (ca.1085-1148)

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Loving you, O God, brings its own reward here on earth, as well as the eternal reward of heaven. And failure to love you, even when we can offer a thousand excuses, brings to its own punishment. By becoming mirrors of your love, by wearing the mask of your likeness, and by allowing you to make us perfect, we can know the joy of heaven, even while we abide here on earth. Our consciences are sullied by our many sins; cleanse them, that we may reflect your infinite brightness.

Feast of the Holy Maccabees

Feast Day: August 1

Died: circa 165 B.C.



The Feast of the Holy Maccabees commemorates the brutal martyrdom of seven brothers and their mother at the hands of Greek occupiers as recorded in the Old Testament. The martyrdom of the elderly scribe Eleazar preceded their death (2 Mac 6) and he is pictured in art with the 7 sons and their mother.

In 539 BC, the Persians conquered the Babylonian empire which had exiled the Jews from the land of Israel. The Persians were kind to the Jews and allowed them to return to their land. In 332 BC, the Greeks under Alexander the Great had conquered the Persian empire. The empire was divided into kingdoms and Antiochus IV ruled over the Jews. The Greeks demanded that the Jews worship their pagan gods. They desecrated the Jewish temple and tried to force the Jews into breaking the Mosaic Laws. The Jewish people had gained a reputation for their sacred law forbidding them to eat pork. This law was meant to set them apart from other races to show that they had a special fidelity to God.

Greek officials went to each town, forcing Jews to worship pagan gods and to eat pork. Seven brothers and their mother were brought before the king for torture because they would not comply. 2 Mac 7. One brother spoke up, "We are ready to die rather than transgress the laws of our fathers." The king was enraged and ordered him to be tortured. First his tongue was cut out. Then he was scalped. Next his hands and feet were cut off. Finally, he was burned alive. The mother encouraged her sons to "die nobly", saying, "The Lord is watching over us." The 2nd brother was tormented in like manner. Upon his death, he said, "...the King of the universe will raise us up to everlasting renewal of life because we have died for his laws." The 3rd brother willingly stretched out his hands, expressing hopefulness that he will regain his limbs in Heaven. All present, including the king, were astonished at the willingness of the brothers to be tortured for the sake of Mosaic Law. As the 4th brother was being tortured, he warned his tormenters that there would be no resurrection for them as there would be for him and his brothers. Before death, the 5th and 6th brothers warned the king that his evil acts will not go unpunished by God. The brother still alive was the youngest. The king changed his tone, offering him riches and a power. The young brother would not listen, so the king urged the mother to intervene and convince the son to eat the pork. Instead, the mother spoke to her son in their native tongue, reminding him that God who made everything out of nothing, even man, can raise him to new life. She implored him, "Accept death, so that in God's mercy I may get you back again with your brothers." The young man told the king that the Jews suffer because of their sin; but God's rebuke is for a short time before He is reconciled again to his people; but the king and his men will be judged by God and endure His punishment. The young brother then appealed to God that his suffering and death as well as his brothers' may bring an end to God's wrath toward the Jewish people. *The next chapter ushers in the Maccabean revolt that changed the tide in favor of the Jewish people.* The young brother was put to death enduring worse suffering than the others. "Last of all, the mother died, after her sons." 2 Mac 7:41.

Since seven is a Biblically symbolic number meaning "completeness," the Feast of the Seven Holy Maccabees is also a commemoration of all of the patriarchs and prophets of the Old Testament.

The relics of the Holy Maccabees was kept in a synagogue in Antioch. In 1164, they were transferred to St. Andrew's Church in Cologne, Germany where they are still venerated today.

May we be courageous in suffering for the Gospel as the Holy Maccabees were for the Law of Moses!