



BASILICA OF THE FOURTEEN HOLY HELPERS—GERMANY

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NOVENA AND STORIES OF THE FOURTEEN HOLY HELPERS

Chapter 4

St. Blase, Bishop and Martyr (Second Holy Helper)



The Legend of St. Blase, Bishop and Martyr

The Second Holy Helper

LEGEND

ST. BLASE was born at Sebaste, Armenia. He became a physician, but at the same time devoted himself zealously to the practice of his Christian duties. His virtuous conduct gained for him the esteem of the Christian clergy and people to such a degree, that he was elected bishop of his native city. Henceforth he devoted himself to ward off the dangers of soul from the faithful, as he had hitherto been intent on healing their bodily ills. To all, he was a shining example of virtue.

During the reign of Emperor Licinius a cruel persecution of Christians broke out. The persecutors directed their fury principally against the bishops, well knowing that when the shepherd is stricken the flock is dispersed. Listening to the entreaties of the faithful, and mindful of the words of Our Lord, "When they shall persecute you in this city, flee into another" (*Matt. x. 23*), St. Blase hid himself in a cave. But one day the prefect Agricola instituted a chase, and his party discovered the holy bishop and brought him before their master.

St. Blase remained steadfast in the Faith, and by its able confession and defense attracted the attention of the attendants at his trial. The cruel tyrant had him bound and tortured with iron combs. After suffering these torments with great patience and meekness, the saint was cast into prison. He was kept there a long time, because the prefect hoped to exhaust his powers of endurance, and to bring him to sacrifice to the idols. His jailer permitted the holy bishop to receive visitors in his prison, and many sick and suffering availed themselves of this privilege. He cured some of them and gave good advice to others.

One day a mother brought to him her boy, who, while eating, had swallowed a fishbone, which remained in his throat, and, causing great pain, threatened suffocation. St. Blase prayed and made the sign of the cross over the boy, and behold, he was cured. For this reason the saint is invoked in throat troubles.

At length the holy bishop was again brought before the judge and commanded to sacrifice to the idols. But he said: "Thou art blind, because thou art not illuminated by the true light. How can a man sacrifice to idols, when he adores the true God alone? I do not fear thy threats. Do with me according to thy pleasure. My body is in thy power, but God alone has power over my soul. Thou seekest salvation with the idols; I hope and trust to receive it from the only true and living God whom I adore."

Then the prefect sentenced him to death. St. Blase was beheaded, suffering death for the Faith February 3, 316.

good care of them, to edify them by good example, to punish their faults wisely, to preserve their innocence, and to instruct them unto piety, so that they and I may together enjoy the eternal happiness of heaven. Amen.

V. Prayer of Children for Their Parents

HOLY Helpers, mighty intercessors with God in all necessities; God strictly commanded that children should love, honor, and obey their parents. Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself gave them the example of submission and obedience by being subject to His mother and foster-father. I commend myself to your powerful intercession and implore you to obtain for me the grace to follow His example. For my parents I implore protection from all evil of body and soul, a long and prosperous life, and a happy death. Reward them for all the care, anxiety, labor, and trouble which they underwent patiently for my sake with the eternal crown of heavenly glory. Amen.

VI. Prayer of Married People

HOLY Helpers, powerful intercessors at the throne of God, by whose providence we were indissolubly joined in holy wedlock through the sacramental bonds of matrimony; obtain for us, through your intercession, the grace to dwell together in mutual love and peace, and to fulfil faithfully the duties of our state of life; that following the example of the saints and elect who lived in wedlock, we may merit God's grace and blessing by a virtuous life here on earth, and united in heaven praise and bless Him for ever. Amen.

THIS NOVENA IS RECITED FOR NINE CONSECUTIVE DAYS

Therefore I implore your assistance, powerful Holy Helpers, in my dire distress. By the penitential life you led, by the cruel tortures you suffered, and by your holy death I entreat you to pray for me. Obtain for me the remission of my sins and perseverance to the end in God's grace. Assist me in my agony and protect me against the wily assaults of Satan, that through your help I may die a happy death and enter a blissful eternity. Amen.

II. Prayer in Illness

COMPASSIONATE Holy Helpers, who restored health to so many through the power of the name of Jesus; behold me suffering from bodily illness and from wounds of the soul. Implore the kind, merciful Good Samaritan, your and my Lord Jesus Christ, to heal the wounds of my soul by washing them in His most precious blood, and to quicken my spirit by His sanctifying grace. If it, then, be God's holy will and for the welfare of my soul, let me experience the powerful effect of your intercession, that, restored to health, I may serve God with greater fervor, and promote your veneration together with so many who experienced your help in illness and suffering. Amen.

III. Prayer for the Sick

MERCIFUL Holy Helpers, look benignly upon me, who implore your intercession for a sick person. Our Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ, who Himself went about healing and doing good, appointed you the special protectors and intercessors of the sick, and restored to bodily and spiritual health many for whom you prayed. Encouraged thereby to invoke you, I implore you to offer up to His sacred Heart all the pains and torments He suffered during His bitter passion. Offer up to Him also your own sufferings for God's glory, which you underwent during life, and in death; offer up to Him all the anguish and distress suffered by the sick person for whom I invoke your intercession. Ask Him to restore him to health of body, and to infuse into his soul the grace of salvation, so that he may devote his life with renewed vigor to the service of God and to the fulfilment of his duties, and thereby gather rich merits for eternity.

But if God, in the designs of His providence, should otherwise dispose, implore for the sick person patience in his illness, resignation to the divine will, and the grace of a happy death. Assist him in his agony, and conduct his soul to the throne of the Almighty. Amen.

IV. Prayer of Parents for Their Children

HOLY Helpers, assist me to give thanks to God for blessing me with children. Having received them from Him, it is my duty to train them for His service. Therefore I commend them to your special protection. Guard them from sin, help them to know and fulfil their duties, preserve them from all harm of body and soul; pray for them that they may be and remain children of God, For me, obtain the grace always to take

LESSON

ST. BLASE gave us a glorious example of fortitude in the confession of the Faith. According to the teaching of St. Paul, confession of the Faith is necessary for our salvation. He says, "For if thou confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in thy heart that God hath raised Him up from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart we believe unto justice, but with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (*Rom. x. 9, 10*). We are, therefore, not permitted to be silent, much less to agree, when our Faith, and whatever is connected therewith, as the sacraments, ceremonies, priests, etc., are ridiculed and reviled. Parents especially must be most careful in speaking of these subjects before their children and servants, and do so only with due reverence.

On the contrary, we must confess our Faith, and if necessary, defend it against all attacks. Often one serious word will suffice to silence a calumniator of the Faith and cause him to blush. We must confess our Faith not only in the bosom of our family, but also in public. We must let our fellow-men know that we are true Catholics, who adhere to our Faith from conviction, without regard to what others say of us, or how they judge us, remembering the words of Our Lord, "Every one, therefore, that shall confess me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven" (*Matt. x. 32*).

It was remarked above that St. Blase is the patron invoked in throat troubles. Therefore the Church, on his feast, February 3, gives a special blessing, at which she prays over those receiving it: "By the intercession of St. Blase, bishop and martyr, may God deliver thee from all ills of the throat and from all other ills; in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. Amen." Do not neglect to receive this blessing, if you have the opportunity. The blessings of the Church are powerful and effective, for she is God's representative on earth. Therefore her blessing is God's blessing, and is always effective, except we ourselves place an obstacle in its way.

Prayer of the Church

O God, who dost rejoice us through the memory of Thy blessed bishop and martyr Blase: graciously grant us, that we, who honor his memory, may experience his protection. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Novena in Honor of St. Blase, Bishop and Martyr

PREPARATORY PRAYER

ALMIGHTY and eternal God! With lively faith and reverently worshipping Thy divine Majesty, I prostrate myself before Thee and invoke with filial trust Thy supreme bounty and mercy. Illumine the darkness of my intellect with a ray of Thy heavenly light and inflame my heart with the fire of Thy divine love, that I may contemplate the great virtues and merits of the saint in whose honor I make this novena, and following his example imitate, like him, the life of Thy divine Son.

Moreover, I beseech Thee to grant graciously, through the merits and intercession of this powerful Helper, the petition which through him I humbly place before Thee, devoutly saying, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." Vouchsafe graciously to hear it, if it redounds to Thy greater glory and to the salvation of my soul. Amen.

PRAYER IN HONOR OF ST. BLASE

O GOD, deliver us through the intercession of Thy holy bishop and martyr Blase, from all evil of soul and body, especially from all ills of the throat; and grant us the grace to make a good confession in the confident hope of obtaining Thy pardon, and ever to praise with worthy lips Thy most holy name. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

INVOCATION OF ST. BLASE

ST. BLASE, gracious benefactor of mankind and faithful servant of God, who for the love of our Saviour didst suffer so many tortures with patience and resignation; I invoke thy powerful intercession. Preserve me from all evils of soul and body. Because of thy great merits God endowed thee with the special grace to help those that suffer from ills of the throat; relieve and preserve me from them, so that I may always be able to fulfil my duties, and with the aid of God's grace perform good works. I invoke thy help as special physician of souls, that I may confess my sins sincerely in the holy sacrament of Penance and obtain their forgiveness. I recommend to thy merciful intercession also those who unfortunately concealed a sin in confession. Obtain for them the grace to accuse themselves sincerely and contritely of the sin they concealed, of the sacrilegious confessions and communions they made, and of all the sins they committed since then, so that they may receive pardon, the grace of God, and the remission of the eternal punishment. Amen.

I. Three Invocations

1. GREAT friends of God, Holy Helpers, humbly saluting and venerating you, I implore your help and intercession. Bring my prayers before the throne of the Most Holy Trinity, so that I may experience in all the difficulties and trials of life the mercy of the eternal Father, the love of the incarnate divine Son, and the assistance of the Holy Ghost; that despondency may not depress me when God's wise decree imposes on my shoulders a heavy burden. Above all, I implore your assistance at the hour of death. Help me then to gain the victory over the temptations and assaults of Satan, and to leave this world hopefully trusting in God's mercy, to join you in heaven, there to praise Him for ever and ever. Amen.

2. With confiding trust I turn to you, Holy Helpers, who were selected by God before many other saints to be the special intercessors and advocates of the distressed. Obtain for me strength and courage to struggle and suffer on earth for the glory of God, for the propagation of our holy faith, and for my own perfection. You are fruitful branches of the true and living vine, Jesus Christ, for whom you heroically suffered hunger and thirst, persecution and ignominy, afflictions and adversity, tortures and death. Here on earth you were true disciples and dauntless martyrs of Christ. Assist me to follow your example and to suffer for His sake, so that I may not be parted from Him as a useless member, but persevere in His service despite all trials and tribulations of life. Knowing my inconstancy and weakness, I have recourse to you, O glorious members of the Church triumphant, and implore you to support my feeble prayers, and to bear them before the throne of the Almighty, who, for your sake, will hear them. Amen.

3. Great friends and servants of God, Holy Helpers! Humbly saluting and venerating you, I implore your help and intercession. God has promised and granted that whosoever invokes your aid shall be relieved in his needs and succored at the hour of death. Therefore I have recourse to you and confidently implore your aid. I am surrounded by difficulties and my soul is oppressed with grief. Burdened with sins, the fear of God's rigorous judgment appalls me, whilst Satan ceases not to exert all his power to accomplish my eternal ruin.