



**BASILICA OF THE FOURTEEN HOLY HELPERS—GERMANY**

## **NOVENA AND STORIES OF THE FOURTEEN HOLY HELPERS**

### **Chapter 3**

#### **Saint George, Martyr (First Holy Helper)**



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# The Legend of St. George, Martyr The First Holy Helper

## LEGEND

ST. GEORGE is honored throughout Christendom as one of the most illustrious martyrs of Jesus Christ. In the reign of the first Christian emperors numerous churches were erected in his honor, and his tomb in Palestine became a celebrated place of pilgrimage. But his history is involved in great obscurity, as no early records of his life and martyrdom are at present in existence. The following are the traditions concerning him which have been handed down to us by the Greek historians, and which are celebrated in verse by that illustrious saint and poet of the eighth century, St. John Damascene.

St. George is said to have been born in Cappadocia of noble Christian parents. After the death of his father, he traveled with his mother into Palestine, of which she was a native. There she possessed a considerable estate, which fell to him upon her death. Being strong and robust in body, he embraced the profession of a soldier, and was made a tribune, or colonel, in the army. His courage and fidelity attracted the attention of Emperor Diocletian, who bestowed upon him marks of special favor. When that prince declared war against the Christian religion, St. George laid aside the signs of his rank, threw up his commission, and rebuked the emperor for the severity of his bloody edicts. He was immediately cast into prison, and alternate threats and promises were employed to induce him to apostatize. As he continued firm, he was put to the torture and tormented with great cruelty. "I despise your promises," he said to the judge, "and do not fear your threats. The emperor's power is of short duration, and his reign will soon end. It were better for you, to acknowledge the true God and to seek His kingdom." Thereupon a great block of stone was placed on the breast of the brave young officer, and thus he was left in prison.

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Next day he was bound upon a wheel set with sharp knives, and it was put in motion to cut him to pieces. Whilst suffering this cruel torture, he saw a heavenly vision, which consoled and encouraged him, saying, "George, fear not; I am with thee." His patience and fortitude under the torments inflicted on him so affected the numerous pagan spectators that many of them were converted to the Faith and suffered martyrdom for it. On the next day, April 23, 303, St. George was led through the city and beheaded. This took place at Lydda, the city in which, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles (ix.), St. Peter healed a man sick with the palsy.

St. George is usually represented as a knight tilting against a dragon; but this is only emblematical of the glorious combat in which he encountered and overthrew the devil, winning for himself thereby a martyr's crown.

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 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**

Novena in Honor of St. George, Martyr

#### **PREPARATORY PRAYER**

ALMIGHTY and eternal God! With lively faith and reverently worshiping 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. GEORGE**

O GOD, who didst grant to St. George strength and constancy in the various torments which he sustained for our holy faith; we beseech Thee to preserve, through his intercession, our faith from wavering and doubt, so that we may serve Thee with a sincere heart faithfully unto death. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### **INVOCATION OF ST. GEORGE**

FAITHFUL servant of God and invincible martyr, St. George; favored by God with the gift of faith, and inflamed with an ardent love of Christ, thou didst fight valiantly against the dragon of pride, falsehood, and deceit. Neither pain nor torture, sword nor death could part thee from the love of Christ. I fervently implore thee for the sake of this love to help me by thy intercession to overcome the temptations that surround me, and to bear bravely the trials that oppress me, so that I may patiently carry the cross which is placed upon me; and let neither distress nor difficulties separate me from the love of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Valiant champion of the Faith, assist me in the combat against evil, that I may win the crown promised to them that persevere unto the end.

#### **Prayer**

MY LORD and my God! I offer up to Thee my petition in union with the bitter passion and death of Jesus Christ, Thy Son, together with the merits of His immaculate and blessed Mother, Mary ever virgin, and of all the

saints, particularly with those of the holy Helper in whose honor I make this novena.

Look down upon me, merciful Lord! Grant me Thy grace and Thy love, and graciously hear my prayer. Amen.

## **Prayers of Petition and Intercession**

### **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.

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