



BASILICA OF THE FOURTEEN HOLY HELPERS—GERMANY

FOR ADDITIONAL NOVENAS AND INSPIRATIONAL STORIES

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NOVENA AND STORIES OF THE FOURTEEN HOLY HELPERS

Chapter 13

St. Giles, Hermit and Abbot (Eleventh Holy Helper)



The Legend of St. Giles, Hermit and Abbot

The Eleventh Holy Helper

THIS NOVENA IS RECITED FOR NINE CONSECUTIVE DAYS

LEGEND

ATHENS, in Greece, was the native city of St. Giles. He was of noble parentage, and devoted himself from early youth to piety and learning. After the death of his parents he distributed his rich inheritance to the poor, and to escape the applause of men for his charity left his country to bury himself in obscurity.

He sailed for France, and on his arrival there retired to a deserted country near the mouth of the river Rhone. Later he made his abode near the river Gard, and finally buried himself in a forest in the diocese of Nimes. In this solitude he passed many years, living on wild herbs and roots, with water for his drink. It is related that for some time a hind came daily to be milked by him, thus furnishing him additional sustenance. Here he lived, disengaged from earthly cares, conversing only with God, and engaged in the contemplation of heavenly things.

One day the king instituted a great hunt in the forest where Giles lived, and encountered the hind. Giving chase, the royal hunter was led to the saint's hut, where the panting animal had sought refuge. The king inquired who he was, and was greatly edified at the holiness of his life. The fame of the saintly hermit now spread far and wide, and was much increased by the many miracles wrought through his intercession. The king tried to persuade him to leave his solitude, but prevailed upon him only in so far, that Giles accepted several disciples and founded a monastery in which the rule of St. Benedict was observed, and of which he was chosen the abbot. He governed his community wisely and well, and at the earnest solicitation of his monks was ordained priest.

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The fame of St. Giles' sanctity induced the Frankish King, Charles Martel to call him to his court to relieve him of a great trouble of conscience. The saint made the journey, and told the king that he would find relief and comfort only by the sincere confession of a sin which he had hitherto concealed. The king followed his advice, found interior peace and dismissed Giles with many tokens of gratitude. On his homeward journey the saint raised the recently deceased son of a nobleman to life.

After a short stay in his monastery St. Giles went to Rome, to obtain from the Pope the confirmation of some privileges and the apostolic blessing for his community. The Pope granted his wishes, and presented him, besides, with two grand and beautifully carved doors of cedar wood for his church.

St. Giles died at a ripe old age on September 1, 725. Many miracles were wrought at his tomb.

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 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.

LESSON

ST. GILES left his native country and retired into solitude to escape the notice and applause of the world, and served God as a recluse. To lead such a life, there must be a special call from God. It is not suited to all, and even inconsistent with the duties of most men. But all are capable of disengaging their affections from the inordinate attachment to creatures, and of attaining to a pure and holy love of God. By making the service of God the motive of their thoughts and actions, they will sanctify their whole life.

In whatever conditions of life we may be placed, we have opportunities of subduing our evil inclinations and mortifying ourselves by frequent self-denials, of watching over our hearts and purifying our senses by recollection and prayer. Thus each one, in his station of life, may become a saint, by making his calling an exercise of virtue and his every act a step higher to perfection and eternal glory.

Prayer of the Church

O LORD, we beseech Thee to let us find grace through the intercession of thy blessed confessor Giles; that what we can not obtain through our merits be given us through his intercession. Through Christ our Lord Amen.

Novena in Honor of St. Giles, Hermit and Abbot

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. GILES

O GOD, we beseech Thee to grant us through the merits and intercession of St. Giles to flee from the vanity and praise of this world, to avoid carefully all occasions of sin, to cleanse our hearts from all wickedness by a sincere confession, to leave this world in Thy love and rich in good works, and to find Thee gracious on the day of judgment. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

INVOCATION OF ST. GILES

ZEALOUS follower of Christ, St. Giles; from early youth thou didst take to heart the words of our Saviour: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart." Therefore thou didst flee from the praise and honors of the world, and wast rewarded with the grace to preserve thy heart from all sin and to persevere in a holy life to a ripe old age. I, on my part, through pride, self-confidence, and negligence, yielded to my evil inclinations, and thereby sinned grievously and often, offending my God and Lord, my Creator and Redeemer, my most loving Father. Therefore I implore thee to help me through thy mighty intercession to be enlightened by the Holy Ghost, that I may know the malice, grievousness, and multitude of my sins, confess them humbly, fully, and contritely, and receive pardon, tranquility of heart, and peace of conscience from God. 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