

## PRAYER OF THE SOCIETY OF SAINT TARCISIUS

Lord Jesus, I profoundly adore Thee, really present in  
the Most Holy Sacrament of the altar.

I love Thee, and desire to love and serve Thee more perfectly.  
I do reparation to Thy Sacred Heart, for the negligence and indifference  
which is often shown to Thy true Body and Blood.

I thank Thee for the great privilege  
of serving Thee on the Sanctuary,  
and resolve for the future to serve Thee with  
greater fervor, devotion, attention, and exactness.

O Lord, let my example when on the Sanctuary  
never be an occasion for scandal to my neighbor,  
but rather encourage others to greater reverence.

May I always act as I believe,  
and show by my example my belief  
in the great truths of our Faith.

Most Blessed Mary, Mother of our Lord,  
obtain for me by thy prayers the grace  
to serve thy Son with reverence and devotion.

Saint Tarcisus, pray for me,  
that I may follow thy example  
by defending the honor of the Blessed Sacrament  
all the days of my life and even unto death.

Amen.



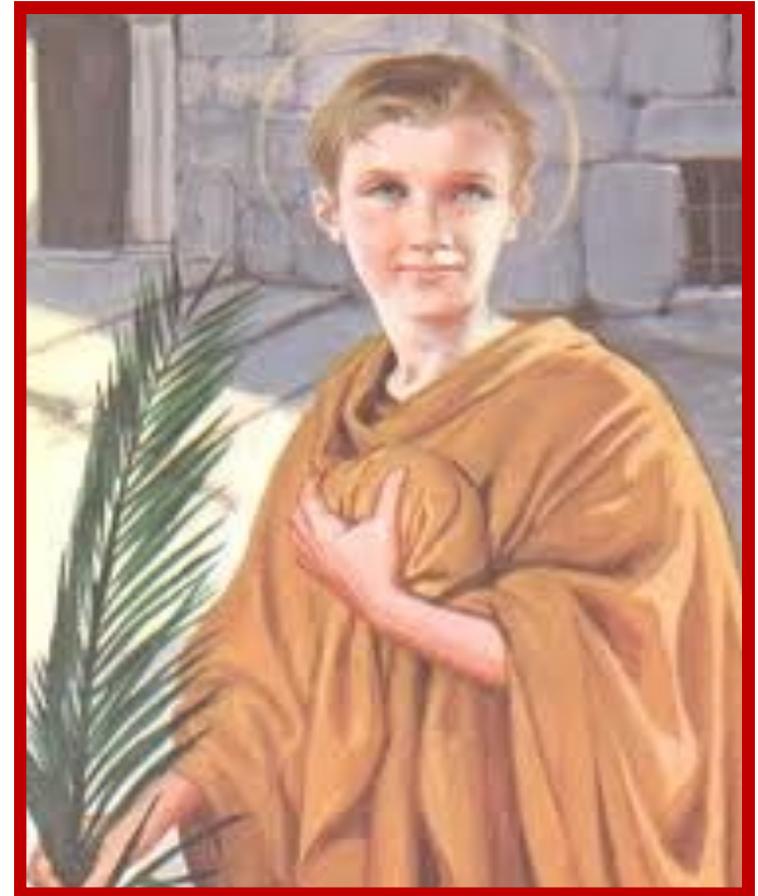
The body of St. Tarcisus was most probably  
laid to rest with those of Pope St. Zephyrinus  
and others in the Basilica of Sts. Sixtus and  
Cecilia, but at present it is said to be in the  
Church of San Silvestro in Capite.

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## *Saint Tarcisus*

*Patron of Altar Servers*

*Feast Day: August 15*



***"Faithful even unto death"***

***Saint Tarcisus, Martyr of the Blessed Sacrament,  
pray for us.***

## ***Saint Tarcisus***

\*Tarcisus was a twelve-year-old acolyte during one of the fierce Roman persecutions of the third century, probably during that of Valerian. Each day, from a secret meeting place in the catacombs where Christians gathered for Mass, a deacon would be sent to the prisons to carry the Eucharist to those Christians condemned to die. At one point, there was no deacon to send and so St. Tarcisus, an acolyte, was sent carrying the "Holy Mysteries" to those in prison.

On the way, he was stopped by boys his own age who were not Christians but knew him as a playmate and lover of games. He was asked to join their games, but this time he refused and the crowd of boys noticed that he was carrying something. Somehow, he was also recognized as a Christian, and the small gang of boys, anxious to view the Christian "Mysteries," became a mob and turned upon Tarcisus with fury. He went down under the blows, and it is believed that a fellow Christian drove off the mob and rescued the young acolyte.



The mangled body of Tarcisus was carried back to the catacombs, but the boy died on the way from his injuries. He was buried in the cemetery of St. Callistus, and his relics are claimed by the church of San Silvestro in Capite.

In the fourth century, Pope St. Damasus wrote a poem about this "boy-martyr of the Eucharist" and says that, like another, St. Stephen, he suffered a violent death at the hands of a mob rather than give up the Sacred Body to "raging dogs." His story became well known when Cardinal Wiseman made it a part of his novel *Fabiola*, in which

the story of the young acolyte is dramatized and a very moving account given of his martyrdom and death.

Tarcisus, one of the patron saints of altar boys, has always been an example of youthful courage and devotion, and his story was one that was told again and again to urge others to a like heroism in suffering for their faith. In the *Passion of Pope Stephen*, written in the sixth century, Tarcisus is said to be an acolyte of the pope himself and, if so, this explains the great veneration in which he was held and the reason why he was chosen for so difficult a mission.

### **REFLECTION**

Mere boys can become saints, and youth is no barrier to holiness. The call to holiness begins at baptism, and we do not have to wait for old age and gray hair to serve God. Youthful saints tell us something about sanctity, and their example is especially luminous as they dedicate their young lives to God.

\*(excerpted from: <http://turntowardsthelord>)

### **SERVING OUR LORD**

\*\*St. Mary Magdalen deserves a high place of respect among the saints to be revered by altar servers. As the words of the Gospel make clear, she served Him in person, with great attentiveness, in the days before His Passion and death. She served Him with great love, with great penitence, and with deep devotion. She did not spare cost, but offered up the alabaster box and the precious ointment - worth almost a year's wages to a laborer—to show honor to Our Lord.

Good altar servers serve Our Lord with attentiveness, penitence, love and deep devotion. In this way, they may imitate St. Mary Magdalen.

A Sodality sponsored by the Latin Mass Society of England and Wales has taken "*fidelis usque ad mortem*" (faithful even unto death) as its motto. This Sodality seeks to inculcate in servers an intense devotion and reverence to Our Lord in the Eucharist, as well as a precise attention to the ceremonies of Mass.

\*\* (excerpted from: <http://www.newliturgicalmovement.org>)