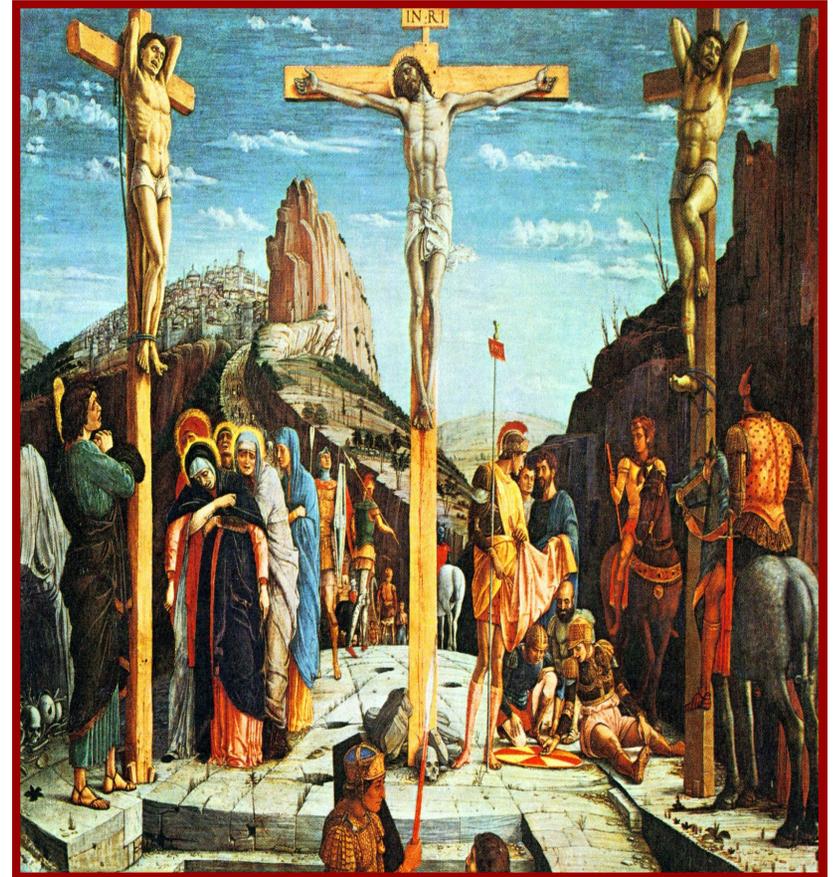


Saint Titus Dismas-Penitent Thief (The Good Thief)

Feast Day: March 25



Patronage:

Prisoners, Condemned Prisoners, Undertakers, Repentant Thieves

“Lord Remember Me When You Come into Your Kingdom”

PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE: www.pamphletstoinspire.com

Saint Titus Dismas

The Good Thief

*According to Fr. Emmanuel d'Alzon, founder of the Assumptionists, the most beautiful history of St. Dismas was written by St. Anselm in a letter to his sisters meditating on the childhood of the Savior. If this history is at times doubted by modern men, it was nevertheless unanimously accepted during the time of the great Bishop of Canterbury.

It was the time of the massacre of the Holy Innocents. St. Joseph, Our Lady, and the Divine Infant were fleeing from Herod. Leaving Bethlehem, the Holy Family entered the land of Egypt, which Sacred Scriptures calls the country of sin where God had withdrawn from His people, a country that only the sacrifice of Christ could redeem.

On this flight into the country of the Devil, Jesus, Mary and Joseph entered a forest inhabited by brigands. Among them was Dismas, a murderer and a thief. However, in the depths of his soul lay some secret graces he had not refused.

Hidden from sight, waiting for an unsuspecting victim, Dismas saw the approach of a man and a young woman carrying a Child. The three travelers had some baggage, perhaps some of the gifts of the Magi Kings reserved for this long trip. Dismas judged that this unprotected caravan would not offer resistance. The staff of St. Joseph caused him no fear, and he advanced to harm them.

However, his eyes fell on the Child Jesus and he stopped, marveling at the glorious beauty and majesty of His countenance. Deeply touched, he protected the travelers instead of harming them, and hosted them in his cave. This was the means Divine Providence used to help the Holy Family, in this instance not with an Angel, but by means of a thief who for a moment was transformed into a good Angel.

Dismas offered everything he had, and the Divine Infant allowed Himself to be caressed by that criminal. Upon seeing the respect of the thief for the Child, Mary Most Holy solemnly assured him that he would be rewarded for his action before his death. Dismas continued his life of crime, but he always conserved the memory of that promise, trusting that it would be fulfilled.

Nothing is known about the life of this thief during the 33 years of the life of Our Lord. Notwithstanding, he appears along with Gestas, another thief, carrying his cross to be crucified with Jesus Christ. His crimes, however, had so darkened his soul that he recognized neither Jesus nor Mary.

The crosses were raised on Mount Calvary, and for three hours Dismas, like Jesus, witnessed the blasphemies of the multitude, which represented the entire world. He also joined in the blasphemies. But Mary, looking at him, recognized him and prayed for him. As the sixth hour approached, the long shadow of Jesus' cross fell over the body of Dismas.

At that moment Gestas shouted: "If you are the Christ, save yourself and us." However, the shadows of the wounds of Jesus penetrated the heart of Dismas, and he responded: "Do you not even fear God, seeing that you are under the same condemnation? For we justly and deservedly have received those things which we endure, but He has done no evil."

After these incomparable words, said with contrition, the thief, transformed into a good thief, pronounced a sublime act of Faith, Hope and Charity: "Lord, remember me when You will come into Thy Kingdom."

And Jesus said to him: "Amen I say to you, this day you will be with Me in Paradise." At this moment, Jesus fulfilled the promise made by Mary, and undoubtedly before he died, Dismas recognized Our Lady at the foot of the Cross. The good thief, purified by the sacrifice of Christ, received the first fruits of the Redemption.

St. Dismas is considered the patron saint of those condemned to death, of those engaged in dishonest business who would like to make restitution before they die but do not know how, of great sinners and prodigal sons, of those near despair because of irresolvable situations. St. Dismas also assists souls so that they do not die in final impenitence.

*(Excerpted from: www.traditioninaction.org)



Flight To Egypt