

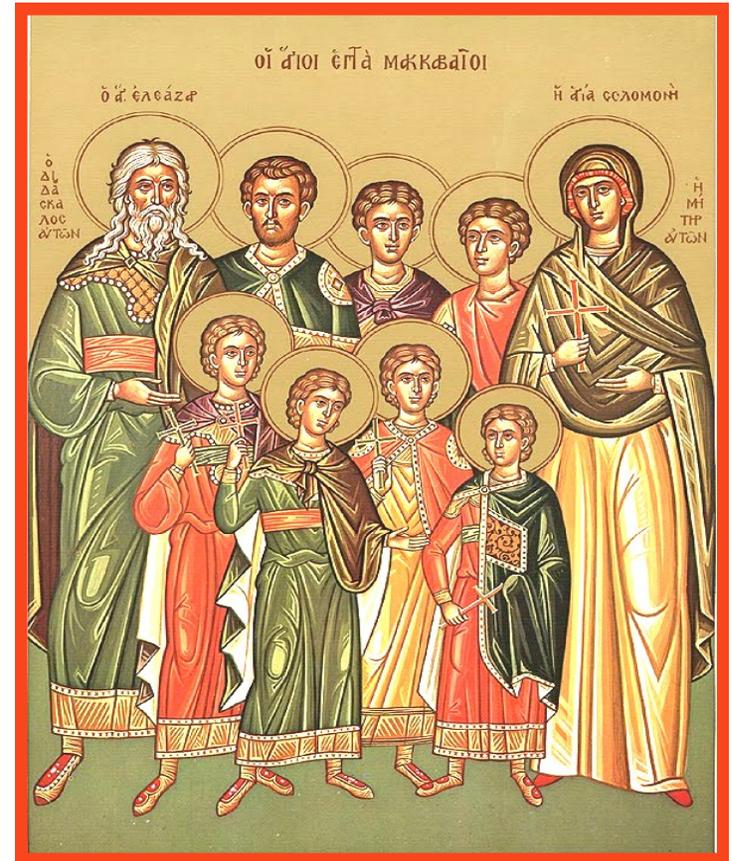
Eleazar, was brought to trial for his adherence to the Mosaic Law, and he steadfastly underwent tortures and died at Jerusalem.

Bravery was likewise shown by the disciples of Saint Eleazar-- the Seven Machabean Brothers and their mother Solomonia. They were brought to trial in Antioch by the emperor Antiochos Epiphanos. They fearlessly acknowledged themselves as followers of the True God, and refused to offer sacrifice to the pagan gods. The eldest of the lads, having been first to answer the emperor in the name of all seven brothers, was given over to fierce tortures in sight of his remaining brothers and their mother. The next five brothers one after the other underwent similar tortures. There remained the seventh brother, the very youngest. Antiochos suggested to Saint Solomonia to urge the lad into renunciation, so that at least this final son would remain for her. But the brave mother encouraged him also in the confession of the True God. The lad resolutely ignored the entreaty of the emperor and likewise firmly underwent the tortures, just like his older brothers. After the death of all seven children, Solomonia, standing over their bodies, raised up her hands in prayer to God and died.

The Martyrs Act of the Seven Machabean Brothers inspired Judas Machabee, and he led the revolt against Antiochos Epiphanos with the help of God, gaining the victory, and purifying the Jerusalem Temple of idols. All these events are related in the Book of Second Machabees, which is included within the Bible. Sermons of laudation to the holy Machabean Martyrs were offered by various fathers of the Church--SS Cyprian of Carthage, Ambrose of Mediolanum (Milan), Gregory Nazianzus and John Chrysostomos. *(excerpted from: www.holytrinityorthodox.com; //wdtprs.com)

The Seven Holy Machabees

Feast Day: August 1



**Let us praise the seven Machabees,
with their mother Solomonia and their teacher
Eleazar; they were splendid in lawful contest
as guardians of the teachings of the Law.
Now as Christ's holy martyrs
they ceaselessly intercede for the world.**

The Seven Holy Machabees

*The Machabees were Jews who rebelled against the Hellenic Seleucid dynasty in the time of Antiochus V Eupator. The Machabees founded the Hasmonean dynasty and fought for Jewish independence in Israel from 165-63 BC. In 167 BC., Mattathias (a Jewish priest and landowner) revolted against the Greek occupiers by refusing to worship the Greek gods. He killed a Hellenizing Jew who was willing to offer sacrifice to the Greek gods. Mattathias and his five sons fled to the wilderness of Judea. Later Mattathias's son Judas Machabaeus led an army against the Seleucids and won. He entered Jerusalem, cleansed the Temple, and re-established Jewish worship. Hanukkah commemorates this victory.

In the period 167-164 BC., Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175 BC-163 BC) killed and sold thousands of Jews into slavery. He violated the Jewish holy sites and set up an altar to Zeus, in the Holy of Holies (I Machabees 1: 54; Daniel 11: 31). The people revolted and Antiochus responded with slaughter. He required under the penalty of death, that Jews sacrifice to the gods and abandon kosher laws. "Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mocking's and scourging's, yes, and of chains and imprisonment" (Hebrews 11: 35-36). A chief of the scribes, Eleazar, an old man, did not flee. Pork was forced on him, into his mouth, he spat it out and was condemned to death.

Saint Ambrose, in his work *On Jacob and the blessed life* recounts Eleazar's death along with the deaths of seven sons of a mother. The work is filled with Neoplatonic (a system of idealistic, spiritualistic philosophy, tending toward mysticism, which flourished in the pagan world of Greece and Rome) and Stoic (founded in Athens by Zeno of Citium in the early third century BC. Stoics believed that destructive emotions resulted from errors in judgment, and that a sage (wise), or person of 'moral and intellectual perfection' would not suffer such emotions) themes, especially about the theory of virtue. Ambrose goes through all their deaths in detail, making commentary on them, for what they meant.

The Seven Holy Machabean Martyrs are: Habin, Antonin, Guriah, Eleazar, Eusebon, Hadim (Halim) and Marcellus, their mother Solomonia and their teacher Eleazar who suffered in the year 166 before the birth of Christ, under the impious emperor Antiochos Epiphanos. Adhering to an Hellenistic cult, as already noted Antiochos introduced pagan customs at Jerusalem and throughout all Judea. He desecrated the temple of the Lord, putting there a statue of the pagan god Zeus, and forcing Jews to worship it. Many of them then fell away from the True God. But there were also those, who were deeply sorrowed by the downfall of the people of God and who continued to believe in the coming arrival of the Savior. A ninety year old elder-- the law-teacher