



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

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

### **Chapter 14**

#### **St. Margaret, Virgin and Martyr (Twelfth Holy Helper)**



# The Legend of St. Margaret, Virgin and Martyr

## The Twelfth Holy Helper

### LEGEND

ST. MARGARET was the daughter of a pagan priest at Antioch. She lost her mother in infancy and was placed in the care of a nurse in the country, who was a Christian, and whose first care was to have her little charge baptized and to give the child a Christian education. Margaret grew up a modest, pious virgin, and when she returned to her father he was charmed with the grace and virtue of his daughter. He regretted only one thing; she took no part in the worship of the idols. When she told him the reason he was greatly displeased, for she stated that she was a Christian, and that nothing should separate her from the love of Christ.

Her father tried every means to change her mind, and when all his endeavors failed became enraged and drove her forth from his house. Margaret returned to her nurse and became her servant, doing all kinds of menial work, and at the same time perfecting herself in virtue.

About this time Emperor Diocletian began to persecute the Christians. One day Alybrius, the prefect of the city, saw Margaret, and fell in love with her. He sent a messenger to ask her in marriage. The pious virgin was filled with consternation at the proposal and replied to the messenger: "I can not be espoused to your master, because I am the spouse of Our Lord Jesus Christ. I am promised to Him, and to Him I wish to belong." When the prefect heard this, he became furious with rage, and gave orders to have the virgin brought to him by force. When she appeared before him he thus addressed her: "What is your name and condition?" She replied: "I am called Margaret, and belong to a noble family. I adore Christ and serve Him." The prefect now advised her to abandon the worship of a crucified God. Margaret asked him, "How do you know that we worship a crucified God?" The prefect replied: "From the books of the Christians." Margaret continued: "Why did you not read further on? The books of the Christians would have told you that the Crucified rose on the third day, and that He ascended into heaven. Is it love of truth to believe in the abasement of Christ and to reject His glorification, when both are related in the selfsame book?"

At this reproof the prefect became angry and ordered the tender virgin to be cruelly scourged, placed on the rack, and torn with iron combs. Then she was cast into prison. There Margaret fervently thanked God for the victory she had achieved and implored His help for the combat yet in store for her. Suddenly there appeared to her the arch-enemy of mankind in the shape of a furious dragon, threatening to swallow her. The brave virgin feared him not, but made the sign of the cross, and the monster vanished. Then her desolate prison cell became suffused with heavenly light, and her heart was filled with divine consolation. At the same time her terrible wounds were suddenly healed, and not the least scar was left.

### 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**

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 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.

Next day Margaret was again brought before the prefect. Surprised at her complete recovery from the effects of his cruelty, he remarked that no doubt it was due to the power of the pagan gods, and exhorted her to show her gratitude to them by sacrificing to the idols. Margaret maintained that she had been healed by the power of Christ alone and declared that she despised the heathen gods. At this, the rage of Alybrius knew no bounds. He ordered lighted torches to be applied to Margaret's body, and then had her cast into icy water to intensify her torture. But scarcely had this been done when a violent earthquake occurred. Her bonds were severed and she rose unscathed from the water, without a mark of the burns caused by the flaming torches. On witnessing this miracle, a great number of spectators were converted to the Faith.

Finally the prefect ordered Margaret to be beheaded. Her glorious martyrdom and death occurred about the year 275.

### LESSON

THE history of the virgin martyr St. Margaret teaches us that we can and ought to serve God even in youth. In the Old Law God commanded all the first-born and the first-fruits to be offered to Him. "Thou shalt not delay to pay thy tithes and first-fruits. Thou shalt give the first-born of thy sons to Me" (*Ex. xxii. 29*).

Certainly our whole life ought to be dedicated to the service of God; but from the above command we are to understand that God especially desires our service during the early years of our life. They are our first-fruits. St. Augustine calls the years of youth the blossoms, the most beautiful flowers of life, and St. Thomas Aquinas writes: "What the young give to God in their early years, they give of the bloom, of the full vigor and beauty of life."

Youth is the age beset with countless temptations. Safety is found only in the service of God, by obedience, humility, and docility. This is not so difficult as it appears, and Our Lord Himself invites you to His service, saying: "My son, give Me thy heart" (*Prov. xxiii. 26*), and, "Taste and see that the Lord is sweet" (*Ps. xxxiii. 9*).

### Prayer of the Church

WE BESEECH Thee, O Lord, grant us Thy favor through the intercession of Thy blessed virgin and martyr Margaret, who pleased Thee by the merit of her purity and by the confession of Thy might. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## Novena in Honor of St. Margaret, Virgin and Martyr

### PREPARATORY PRAYER

ALMIGHTY and eternal God! With lively faith and reverently worshipping 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. MARGARET

O GOD, grant us through the intercession of thy holy virgin and martyr Margaret, undauntedly to confess the Faith, carefully to observe the chastity of our state of life, and to overcome the temptations of the world, the devil, and the flesh, and thereby escape the punishments of eternal damnation. Amen.

### INVOCATION OF ST. MARGARET

ST. MARGARET, holy virgin and martyr, thou didst faithfully preserve the robe of holy innocence and purity, valiantly resisting all the blandishments and allurements of the world for the love of thy divine Spouse, Jesus Christ; help me to overcome all temptations against the choicest of all virtues, holy purity, and to remain steadfast in the love of Christ, in order to preserve this great gift of God. Implore for me the grace of perseverance in prayer, distrust of myself, and flight from the occasions of sin, and finally the grace of a good death, so that in heaven I may "follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." 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