



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

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

### **Chapter 6**

#### **St. Pantaleon, Physician/Martyr (Fourth Holy Helper)**



# The Legend of St. Pantaleon, Physician and Martyr

## The Fourth Holy Helper

### LEGEND

ST. PANTALEON was physician to Emperor Maximin and a Christian, but he fell through a temptation which is sometimes more dangerous than the most severe trials by the fiercest torments. This temptation was the bad example of the impious, idolatrous courtiers with whom the young physician associated. He was seduced by them and abandoned the Faith. But the grace of God called him, and he obeyed. Hermolaus, a zealous priest, by prudent exhortation awakened Pantaleon's conscience to a sense of his guilt, and brought him back into the fold of the Church. Henceforth he devoted himself ardently to the advancement of the spiritual and temporal welfare of his fellow-citizens. First of all he sought to convert his father, who was still a heathen, and had the consolation to see him die a Christian. He divided the ample fortune which he inherited amongst the poor and the sick. As a physician, he was intent on healing his patients both by physical and by spiritual means. Christians he confirmed in the practice and confession of the Faith, and the heathens he sought to convert. Many suffering from incurable diseases were restored to health by his prayer and the invocation of the holy name of Jesus. His presence was everywhere fraught with blessings and consolation.

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St. Pantaleon yearned to prove his fidelity to the Faith by shedding his blood for it, and the opportunity came to him when his heathen associates in the healing art denounced him to the emperor as a zealous propagator of Christianity. He was brought up before the emperor's tribunal and ordered to sacrifice to the idols. He replied: "The God whom I adore is Jesus Christ. He created heaven and earth, He raised the dead to life, made the blind see and healed the sick, all through the power of His word. Your idols are dead, they can not do anything. Order a sick person to be brought here, one declared incurable. Your priests shall invoke their idols for him and I shall call on the only true God, and we shall see who is able to help him." The proposal was accepted. A man sick with the palsy was brought, who could neither walk nor stand without help. The heathen priests prayed for him, but in vain. Then Pantaleon prayed, took the sick man by the hand, and said: "In the name of Jesus, the Son of God, I command thee to rise and be well." And the palsied man rose, restored to perfect health.

By this miracle a great number of those present were converted. But the emperor and the idolatrous priests were all the more enraged. Maximin now attempted to gain Pantaleon by blandishments and promises to deny the Faith, but without success. Then he had recourse to threats, and as they too availed nothing, he proceeded to have them put into execution. The brave confessor of the Faith was tortured in every conceivable manner. Finally he was nailed to a tree, and then beheaded. The priest Hermolaus and the brothers Hermippos and Hermocrates suffered death with him, in the year 308.

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.

**THIS NOVENA IS RECITED FOR NINE CONSECUTIVE DAYS**

## LESSON

HAPPY are they who, whatever may be their station or calling in life, are intent on bringing those with whom they come into contact under the influence of religion. But, alas, too many do just the reverse. They permit themselves to be led astray by bad example, and set aside the claims of the Church as too severe and exacting. How do you act in this regard? Do you shun the company of the wicked? A proverb says: "Tell me in whose company you are found, and I will tell you who you are." Bad company insensibly undermines faith and morals, overcomes the fear of evil and the aversion to it and weakens the will. "He that loveth danger shall perish in it" (*Ecclus.* iii. 27).

As soon as St. Pantaleon came to a sense of his apostasy, he repented and returned to the practice of the Faith. He did this despite the knowledge that he thereby incurred hatred and persecution. The true Christian will ever follow the dictates of conscience and please God, whether he thereby incur the displeasure of men or not. If, to please men, we become remiss in the service of God, we show that we fear and love Him less than men. What a lamentable folly! Of whom have we to expect greater benefits or to fear greater evils—from God or man? Do not act thus unwisely; rather imitate St. Pantaleon, and live for God and His service.

#### Prayer of the Church

ALMIGHTY God, grant us through the intercession of Thy blessed martyr Pantaleon to be delivered and preserved from all ills of the body, and from evil thoughts and influences in spirit. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

#### Novena in Honor of St. Pantaleon, Physician and Martyr

#### 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. PANTALEON

O GOD, who didst give to St. Pantaleon the grace of exercising charity toward his fellow-men by distributing his goods to the poor, and hast made him a special patron of the sick, grant, that we, too, show our charity by works of mercy; and through the intercession of this Thy servant preserve us from sickness. But if it be Thy will that illness should afflict us, give us the grace to bear it patiently, and let it promote our soul's salvation. Amen.

### INVOCATION OF ST. PANTALEON

ST. PANTALEON, who during life didst have great pity for the sick and with the help of God didst often relieve and cure them; I invoke thy intercession with God, that I may obtain the grace to serve Him in good health by cheerfully fulfilling the duties of my state of life. But if it be His holy will to visit me with illness, pain, and suffering, do thou aid me with thy powerful prayer to submit humbly to His chastisements, to accept sickness in the spirit of penance and to bear it patiently according to His holy will. 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 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