



GUIDE FOR THE CELEBRATION

ST. MAGDALENA OF NAGASAKI



CALLED TO BE SAINTS

SAINT MAGDALENA OF NAGASAKI MEMORIAL

READINGS:

Ecl. 51, 1-12

Ps. 123,2-3.4-5.7b8

Lc 9,23-26

MONITION

Let us rejoice in the Lord! Let us celebrate the feast of Saint Magdalene, who shed her blood for the name of Christ, who did not fear the threats of the judges, and thus reached the kingdom of heaven!

Saint Magdalena was born in Nagasaki (Japan) in 1611. Spiritually guided by the Augustinian Recollects Francisco de Jesus and Vicente de San Antonio, she entered the Order as a tertiary. Once both missionaries were martyred on September 3, 1632, Magdalena dedicated herself to encouraging Christians who were hiding in the mountains. In 1634 she surrendered to the judges by proclaiming herself a Christian. Her martyrdom made a great impact on the city of Nagasaki. She was canonized by John Paul II on October 18, 1987.

The Secular Augustinian Recollect Fraternity (SARF) has her as patroness, and entrusts to her the task of revitalization, both of the Fraternity and of the whole Order.

Celebrating 30 years of her canonization, we recall with great admiration the testimony of her firm faith proven in martyrdom. May we also learn from those who have come before us, and imitate their evangelical zeal.

INTRODUCTION TO THE READINGS

The liturgy of the Word, in this feast of St. Magdalene of Nagasaki, presents the narrow path in following Christ, which is marked by persecution and suffering, following the example of the Master who suffered and died on the cross, faithful to the mission entrusted to him by the Father. In this way, he recalls the book of the Ecclesiasticus, that *the compassion of the Lord and his eternal mercy frees those who accept him and rescues them from all evil*; with the hope that he himself will give to his faithful the prize deserved and will crown all their sufferings.

HOMILY POINTERS

- Daughter of nobles and fervent Christians, she was born in 1611 in the vicinity of the Japanese city of Nagasaki. Magdalena's parents and brothers had been condemned to death and martyred for their Catholic faith when she was still very young.
- In 1624 she met the Blessed Francisco de Jesus and Vicente de San Antonio, Augustinian Recollects, and attracted by their spirituality, consecrated herself to God as a tertiary of the Order. The Blessed entrusted to her the teaching of the catechism to the children and she would ask for alms from the Portuguese merchants to help the poor.
- Dressed in her tertiary habit, in September 1634, she courageously stood before the judges. Seeing that she was a young woman of twenty or twenty-two years, they tried to win her

over with flattery which she rejected. They subjected her to the worst tortures. Finally, she was hung for thirteen days on her stomach with half-body tucked into a hole, until heavy rain flooded the pit and Magdalena drowned. The soldiers burned the body and spread the ashes in the sea so that they would not fall into the hands of the Christians.

- The death of Magdalena caused a deep impact on both the Nagasaki and pagan Christians, to the point that the soldiers who guarded her during the martyrdom told the Portuguese, full of stupor, the prodigious behavior of the young woman. Christians will remember for a long time the martyrdom and example of this young Tertiary Augustinian Recollect.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

God the Father offers us in St. Magdalene an example of a perfect love for Jesus. Let us ask the Father so that our lives may be filled with the same love and pray together saying:

Make us perfect in charity, Lord.

1. You who strengthened with your Spirit the holy Magdalene of Nagasaki to overcome the test of martyrdom, infuse that same Spirit in our missionaries so that, at all times and places, they may proclaim with courage the Gospel of your Son, we pray to the Lord.
2. You who want the salvation of all peoples, send workers into your harvest, watered by the blood of Saint Magdalene, and grant us the power to work effectively for the edification of your Church, we pray to the Lord.
3. You who called Saint Magdalene to preach the Gospel, bless, through her intercession, our lay fraternities and make them respond to your vocation and contribute to the construction of your kingdom in the world, we pray to the Lord.
4. You who granted to Saint Magdalene the grace to shed her blood for your glory and as an inspiration to the Christians of her land, may we give ourselves to others for your sake, we pray to the Lord.
5. You who have crowned your martyr Magdalene with glory, grant to all the members of our religious family who have departed from this world, the grace to enjoy Christ and the full communion of life in heaven, we pray to the Lord.

O God, the prize and crown of the martyrs, who wanted to save the world by the sacrifice of Christ, your Son, help us so that like St. Magdalene of Nagasaki we may learn to offer our lives for others. Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

FOR REFLECTION

Excerpts from the homily of Pope John Paul II in the canonization of Magdalena de Nagasaki

Sunday, October 18, 1987

Today's canonization of Blessed Lorenzo Ruiz and his martyred companions near Nagasaki between 1633 and 1637 is an eloquent confirmation of these words. Sixteen men and women testified, with their heroic suffering and death, their belief in the message of salvation through Christ that came to them after being proclaimed from generation to generation from the time of the apostles.

In their sufferings, their love and imitation of Jesus they achieved their fulfillment, and their configuration with Him, the only mediator, was brought to perfection. "For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his" (Rom 6: 5). These holy martyrs of different origin, language, race and social status are united with each other with the whole people of God in the mystery of salvation of Christ the Redeemer. Together with them, we too, gathered here with the synod fathers of almost every country in the world, sing to the Lamb the new song of the Book of Revelation:

"You are worthy to take the book and open its seals, because you were slain, and you have redeemed us for God with your blood, of every kind, language, people and nation, and made us kings and priests for our God, and we will reign on the earth "(Rev 5: 9-10).

The new Saints speak today to all the missionaries who, urged by Christ's command "go and teach all nations" (Mt 28, 19), 5), have gone out on the roads of the world to proclaim the Good News of salvation to all men, particularly to those most in need. They, with their message and their martyrdom, speak to the catechists, the pastoral agents, the laity, to whom the Church is giving particular attention and solicitude in the present Synod of Bishops. They remind us that "to die by faith is a gift that is given to some; but to live the faith is a call addressed to all ".

The missionaries who are now canonized speak to all the faithful Christians in this day of prayer for the missions and exhort them to rekindle their missionary conscience. "All Christians," says the Council, "wherever they live, are obliged to manifest by the example of their life and the testimony of the word the new man that they were clothed by baptism." Every baptized person must feel, therefore, urged by his vocation to holiness.

PRAYER FOR CONTEMPLATION

The afternoon blushes
With Christian ambience,
Nagasaki puts on the color
of Magdalena;
a tertiary habit, for a Japanese soul.

How they grow in the hills
the tortures, the chains,
the gallows and holes
are blurring the imprints of God
printed in prisons, in towns,
on the streets and sidewalks
of the pagan horizon that
surrounds Nagasaki.

The afternoon blushes
the song of a maiden,
like red rose gardens in spring.

When Magdalene is silent,
when her song mutes,
when in the sea,
her ashes meekly dissolve,
as Augustinian Recollect
Nagasaki is dressed.

Glory to the Father, glory to the Son,
Who sustains us,
glory to the Holy Spirit,
who comforted Magdalene, Amen.

