

October 16th

Saint LONGINUS, Soldier and Martyr

Optional Memorial

St. Longinus, according to Eastern tradition, was the centurion who commanded the detachment of Roman soldiers responsible for crucifying Jesus. A witness of the extraordinary signs that accompanied the death of Christ, he exclaimed: "Truly this man was the Son of God" (Mk 15, 39).

In the West, St. Longinus is identified with the soldier who "thrust a lance into the side" of Jesus from where "there came out blood and water" (John 19: 34). According to St Gregory of Nyssa, Longinus, having become a Christian, evangelized Cappadocia and died in Caesarea. His cult is attested already in Jerusalem in the 10th century.

Christ's side pierced by the lance of the soldier is the most telling symbol of the love God has for us and is the source from which spring all graces. According to the Gospels, the primary beneficiaries of these graces were those who persecuted Jesus, as Longinus, who, seeing Him die and, illumined by faith, gave glory to God (Luke 23: 47). And after him, from one generation to the next, men and women will be attracted to this extreme love of Christ. This will be the realization of Jesus' words: "When I am lifted up from earth I will draw all men to myself." (John 12: 33).

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON: Rev 5: 9b

With your blood you purchased for God those from every tribe and tongue, people and nation.

COLLECT

Lord Jesus Christ, who said: 'When I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all people to myself,' grant that through the intercession of Saint Longinus we may always feel cloaked in your mercy. Who live and reign...

FIRST READING

A reading from the Book of Zechariah 12: 10-11a. 13: 6-7

Thus says the LORD. On that day I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and petition; and they shall look on him whom they have thrust through, and they shall mourn for him as one mourns for an only son, and they shall grieve over him as one grieves over a first-born. On that day the mourning in Jerusalem shall be great.

And if anyone asks him, "What are these wounds on your chest?" he shall answer, "With these I was wounded in the house of my dear ones." Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who is my associate, says the LORD of hosts. Strike the shepherd that the sheep may be dispersed, and I will turn my hand against the little ones.

The Word of the Lord.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 22: 1a. 7-9. 17c-18. 19-20 (R. 17b-18a)

R. They tear holes in my hands and my feet; I can count every one of my bones.

1. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
But I am a worm and no man,

scorned by everyone, despised by the people.

2. All who see me deride me;
they curl their lips, they toss their heads:
"He trusted in the LORD, let him save him;
let him release him, for in him he delights."

3. They tear holes in my hands and my feet;
I can count every one of my bones.
They stare at me and gloat.

4. They divide my clothing among them,
they cast lots for my robe.
But you, O LORD, do not stay afar off;
my strength, make haste to help me!

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION John 19: 36. 37b

R. Alleluia. Alleluia.

This happened so that the scripture passage might be fulfilled: "They will look upon him whom they have pierced."

R. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

A reading from the holy Gospel according to St. John 19: 30b-37

And bowing his head, Jesus handed over the spirit. Now since it was preparation day, in order that the bodies might not remain on the cross on the sabbath, for the sabbath day of that week was a solemn one, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs be broken and they be taken down.

So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and then of the other one who was crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs, but one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out.

An eyewitness has testified, and his testimony is true; he knows that he is speaking the truth, so that you also may come to believe.

For this happened so that the scripture passage might be fulfilled: "Not a bone of it will be broken."

And again another passage says: "They will look upon him whom they have pierced."

The Gospel of the Lord.

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord, you wanted to save the world by the sacrifice of your Son. We pray that the offering placed before you may obtain for us the grace to be always attracted to the open heart of the Saviour, and to draw with joy from the wellsprings of salvation.

Through Christ our Lord.

PREFACE

It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks, Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God through Christ our Lord.

For, in His great love, when He was raised up on the cross, he offered Himself for us, and from His pierced side, shedding blood and water, He gave rise to the sacraments of the Church so that all people, being attracted to His heart, might draw with joy from the wellsprings of salvation.

And so, with the Angels and all the Saints, we sing the song of your glory as without end we acclaim:

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts...

COMMUNION ANTIPHON John 19: 34

But one soldier thrust his lance into his side, and immediately blood and water flowed out.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Lord, you love purity and you can restore it in us; draw to yourself the hearts of your servants, and grant that, strengthened by this Eucharistic banquet we may remain firm in faith and ready to do good to others.

Through Christ our Lord.