

St Germanicus was a youth who was martyred for his faith in Smyrna during the reign of the Roman Emperor Antoninus. The Roman proconsul pleaded with him that he should deny his faith to obtain a pardon. But the young man refused and willingly embraced martyrdom. He is the patron saint of trainers of animals.



First Reading: (Heb 6:10-20) God is not so unjust as to overlook your work and the love which you showed for his sake in serving the saints, as you still do. And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness in realizing the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises. For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he had no one greater by whom to swear, he swore by himself, saying, "Surely I will bless you and multiply you." And thus Abraham, having patiently endured, obtained the promise. Men indeed swear by a greater than themselves, and in all their disputes an oath is final for confirmation. So when God desired to show more convincingly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of his purpose, he interposed with an oath, so that through two unchangeable things, in which it is impossible that God should prove false, we who have fled for refuge might have strong encouragement to seize the hope set before us. We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope

that enters into the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus has gone as a forerunner on our behalf, having become a high priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

Ps 100:1-2, 4-5, 9-10

R./ The Lord keeps his covenant ever in mind.

Gospel: (Mk 2:23-28) One sabbath Jesus was going through the grain fields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. And the Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?" And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did, when he was in need and was hungry, he and those who were with him: how he entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those who were with him?" And he said to them, "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; so the Son of man is lord even of the sabbath."

REFLECTION

When religion degenerates into following a set of rules rather than living a life of love and service, the heart of the religion is punctured and it dies a natural death. People then claim their righteousness based on the number of shrines visited, or the number of times fasted, or the number of prayers said, or the amount of donations made. **In fact, as Christians, we are called to follow the law but Jesus takes us beyond the law to love.**

The law of the Sabbath has to be followed but not as an end in itself. The Sabbath is made to help people in the spiritual life. Jesus reminds his disciples that people are not made for the Sabbath; they are made to love and live in harmony with one another and nature.