

Holy Gospel of Jesus Christ according to Saint Luke 12:8-12.
I tell you, everyone who acknowledges me before others the Son of Man will acknowledge before the angels of God. But whoever denies me before others will be denied before the angels of God. Everyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but the one who blasphemes against the holy Spirit will not be forgiven. When they take you before synagogues and before rulers and authorities, do not worry about how or what your defense will be or about what you are to say. For the holy Spirit will teach you at that moment what you should say."

Introductory Prayer:
Lord, I believe that you are present here as I turn to you in prayer. I trust and have confidence in your desire to give me every grace I need to receive today. Thank you for your love, thank you for your immense generosity toward me. I give you my life and my love in return.

Petition:
Grant me, Lord, the grace to stand up for my beliefs today.

1. Too Cowardly for Martyrdom:
Sometimes it's very difficult to acknowledge Jesus before others. We think of the possibility of martyrdom, and we all wonder if we would be able to be faithful to Jesus if it meant death. We may think that we witness to him pretty well in our everyday lives, but do we really? We listen to attacks on Jesus and his Church without objection. Sometimes we even kind of nod or smile as if to let on that we agree. We would never say such things ourselves, but we don't really stand up for Jesus even when there is no possibility of martyrdom. How many of us have a terrible time just making the sign of the Cross in a public place? It's a simple thing, something I do every time I come to the table to eat, but somehow, it can be incredibly difficult in a restaurant, where the only burden is that people might think I'm a Catholic.

2. Accepting the Truth:
Christ's teaching about blasphemy against the Holy Spirit may be worrisome because we

may think that there exists some unforgivable sin. Yet, there is no unforgivable sin. God's love and mercy is all-powerful against sin. Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit has been understood by the Church to mean final impenitence -- that the Holy Spirit is trying to convince us of our sins and we won't accept them. If we are finally convinced, there is no blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. However, if we die without having accepted his truth, then we will be guilty of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit. Do I let the Holy Spirit convince me of my sinfulness? Are there things that the Church teaches as wrong that I don't want to accept? Are there sins that I think aren't too bad because I want to make them a part of my life? Sins cannot be forgiven if they are not accepted as sins.

3. Witnessing with My Life:
Maybe we don't worry too much about being hauled into court for our Christianity, but we still have to testify to it every day with our lives. No matter where we go or what we do, we are witnesses to our belief in Christ. The Greek word martyr means witness. I need to let the Holy Spirit speak through me when I am in front of others. People will be judging not just me, but all Christians by my actions, so I need to live charity as the mark of a genuine Christian. I need to foster the humility of a person who looks at the greatness and holiness of God the Father and yet recognizes his own pettiness and sinfulness. I need to live all the virtues in the concrete circumstances of my daily life. The only way I can do all these things is by letting the Holy Spirit speak through the actions of my life, so that my life is the testimony that others need it to be.

Conversation with Christ:
Dear Jesus, I can hear your call to a deeper intimacy with you. I want to draw closer, yet at times, I also feel reluctance. Help my weak will. Inflame my heart with a greater love for you so that I can be a true martyr,a witness to your faithful love. Open my heart to your Holy Spirit so that I live as a true Christian.

Resolution:
When I am in front of others, I will foster the awareness that I am a witness to the truth of Christ's revelation and try to let the Holy Spirit speak through my actions.