

The Cord of Saint Philomena,
by Ashlyn Doll, April, 2013

In these modern days, when sins against purity are corrupting the minds of youth, it is important for us to have a model that we can relate to. The thirteen year old martyr St. Philomena was the epitome of purity and true love of God. This bride of Christ, whose name means "Daughter of Light" in Latin, is truly a shining beacon given to us to illuminate these dark days. Another translation of Philomena (in Greek) is "Powerful Love", which shows how our love for God can be our strength in times of weakness. Her valorous example of chastity was shown when she endured many tortures for resisting temptations to betray the Divine Spouse to whom she had given herself completely. But her overflowing love of God shielded her from the evils of men, and preserved her soul for God. Now that she is in heaven, she is able to help us in many ways. Among the weapons we have to aid us in our daily battles, the cord of Saint Philomena is another strong defense against the devil.

The cord of St. Philomena was widely distributed by Saint Jean Marie Vianney, who greatly enjoyed spreading devotion to his "Dear Little Friend." It is thought that he was the first to begin the practice of wearing a cord in her honor. This devotion was approved by Pope Leo XIII, who granted many indulgences to those who use this sacramental. A list of these indulgences, as well as prayers which should be prayed by those who wear the cord, are found below.

The cord is made of linen, wool, or cotton string and must be blessed by a priest. Two knots are tied at one end to signify the saint's virginity and martyrdom, which are also symbolized by its colors: white and red. The cord is worn underneath the clothes around the waist. We should wear the cord in her honor so that she will intercede for us, to help us obtain heaven and grow in the virtues of faith, chastity, and love.

Wearing the cord can serve as a daily reminder of modesty in dress when we are tempted to follow modern fashions. But not only as a reminder, the cord also serves as a strong shield against temptation. It has been known to help Catholics more easily resist falling into sin. It can be worn by people of all ages, in all walks of life. It is recommended that children wear the cord, to gain the protection of this patroness of youth. Teenagers and young adults especially will find this devotion helpful in the struggles which will surely test their virtue. St. Philomena has also worked many miracles through the cord, by curing diseases, healing wounds, helping in difficult pregnancies, and much more. Indeed, she has proven the truth of her title, "Powerful

with God," and we would do well to take full advantage of the graces we can gain through her intercession.

Saint Philomena, New Light of the Church Militant, and Champion of Chastity, pray for us!

INDULGENCES ATTACHED TO THE CORD OF SAINT PHILOMENA

In 1893, Pope Leo XIII granted 100 days indulgence to the faithful who wear the cord of St. Philomena and recite with devotion and contrition this short daily prayer:

O Saint Philomena, Virgin and Martyr, pray for us that through thy powerful intercession we may obtain that purity of mind and heart which leads to the perfect love of God. Amen.

Plenary indulgences gained by wearing the cord of Saint Philomena

1. On the day on which the cord is worn for the first time.
2. On May 25th, the anniversary of the discovery of the body of Saint Philomena in the catacombs of Saint Priscilla.
3. On August 11, her proper feast.
4. On December 15, the anniversary of the approbation of the cord by the Holy See.
5. At the moment of death, under the ordinary conditions.

(With the exception of number 5, it is necessary for gaining the above plenary indulgences to go to confession, receive Holy Communion, make a visit to some church and there pray for the intentions of the Church.)

Another prayer for those who wear the cord of Saint Philomena

O most pure Virgin, glorious Martyr, St. Philomena, whom God in His eternal power seems to have revealed to the world in these disastrous days of ours in order to revive the faith, sustain the hope and inflame the charity of Christian hearts, I kneel at thy feet. Deign, O kindest Virgin, to receive my humble prayers and to obtain for me that purity for love of which thou didst sacrifice the most attractive pleasures of the earth; obtain for me that strength of soul which made thee resist the most terrible attack of tribulation and suffering; that ardent love for Jesus which the most fearful suffering could not extinguish in thy heart. And protect me in all the events of my life, from all dangers, spiritual and temporal. Be present with me also in my last hour, which I commend to thy loving charity and confidence, since in life I love thee and wear thy holy cord as a mark of my special devotion towards thee, the beloved of Jesus and Mary.