



Forty Martyrs of England & Wales: This feast, honours the hundreds of British men and women who died for their faith in wake of the dispute between the Pope and King Henry VIII during the 16th century. Many loyal Catholics were tortured and killed by the British state from 1535 to 1679. In 1970, the Vatican selected 40 martyrs, men and women, lay and religious, to represent the full group of about 300.

First Reading: (Rom 8:12-17) Brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh -- for if you live according to the flesh you will die, but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body you will live. For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the spirit of sonship. When we cry, "Abba! Father!" it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

Ps 67:2, 4, 6-7, 20-21

R./ This God of ours is a God who saves.

Gospel: (Lk 13:10-17) Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And there was a woman who had had a

spirit of infirmity for eighteen years; she was bent over and could not fully straighten herself. And when Jesus saw her, he called her and said to her, "Woman, you are freed from your infirmity." And he laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and she praised God. But the ruler of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had healed on the sabbath, said to the people, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be healed, and not on the sabbath day." Then the Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his ass from the manger, and lead it away to water it? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the sabbath day?" As he said this, all his adversaries were put to shame; and all the people rejoiced at all the glorious things that were done by him.

REFLECTION

Jesus heals a woman with an infirmity on a Sabbath day. The people who witnessed the healing had no objection except that he healed her on a Sabbath day. For them the healing that Jesus performed was a work that should not have been done on Sabbath. True, Jesus too observed the Sabbath, but for him the priority was for life and life promoting activities. **The priority of life over the laws and rituals are to be the criterion of true religion.** Jesus had the courage to challenge the man made traditions and laws in order to promote life. The Sabbath is made for man and not man for the Sabbath.