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19 Wednesday

WEDNESDAY 33rd WEEK of YEAR

2 Mac 7: 1, 20-31  
Ps 16: 1, 5-6, 8, 15  
Luke 19: 11-28

In the history of the Jewish people, the story of the seven Maccabee brothers and their mother is an epic of patriotic national resistance to oppression and persecution. It tells of a most moving and heroic resistance to tyranny, and of great bravery and courage in the face of violent torture and death. It's about strength of will and character, in defense of religious and cultural heritage, in defiance of a cruel tyrant. It's also an inspiration and an expression of trust, hope and faith in God the giver of all life. Persecution, opposition to God, intolerance of religious customs, beliefs, practices and traditions is not something new: it's been going on a long time. It's happening even now, in various parts of the world. There are many modern-day martyrs and people who suffer because of their hope and faith in God. It's happening, in more subtle forms, even in what people like to think of as the more modern "developed", "liberal", societies which ignore, discount or ridicule religious believers and their standards and principles. May we Christians be more aware of the subtle efforts to subvert our faith in God, the easy temptations to weaken our practice of faith, our devotion and dedication to Jesus' way. May He give us courage in proclaiming and upholding our Christian standards, faithful in following His ways and commandments. May we give witness to people around us that God does exist in our world and is with us, that He is our Father who loves and gives a fullness of life that's far beyond the worth of anything else we may desire or hope for.

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