



A great cloud of Witnesses



God started saving his work to the cloud ages ago.

Remembering the *Saints* that have gone before

- Not perfect (check out the true lives of them in Heb 11) but faithful (Heb 12:1-3)
- Easy to Judge those in previous generations with the knowledge we now have. But beware, our children may do the same to us. They knew only what they knew
- Every Generation needs to learn from the previous one or they will be destined to make the same mistakes, rather than new ones!
- God progressively reveals his way and truth through the stories of those that have gone before – that's why it is called HISTORY

As the 'Way' took hold

Christianity was questioned because it

1. Talked of eating the flesh and blood of the Lord at "love feasts".
2. Rejected the so called gods of the society and had no sacrifices, no temples and no sacred cities
3. Challenged the social order by accepting slaves, women and children into their communities and stating they were equal inheritors of God's grace (Gal 3:28) and that every human life was sacred

Misunderstandings

A Description of Christian Worship by an early Roman observer quoted by Minucius Felix, Octavius 9

“An infant is covered in dough to deceive the innocent. The infant is placed before the person who is to be stained by these rites. The young person slays the infant. Thirstily, they lick up its blood! Eagerly they tear apart its limbs. After much feasting they turn off the lights. Then the connections of depraved lust involve them in an uncertain fate.”

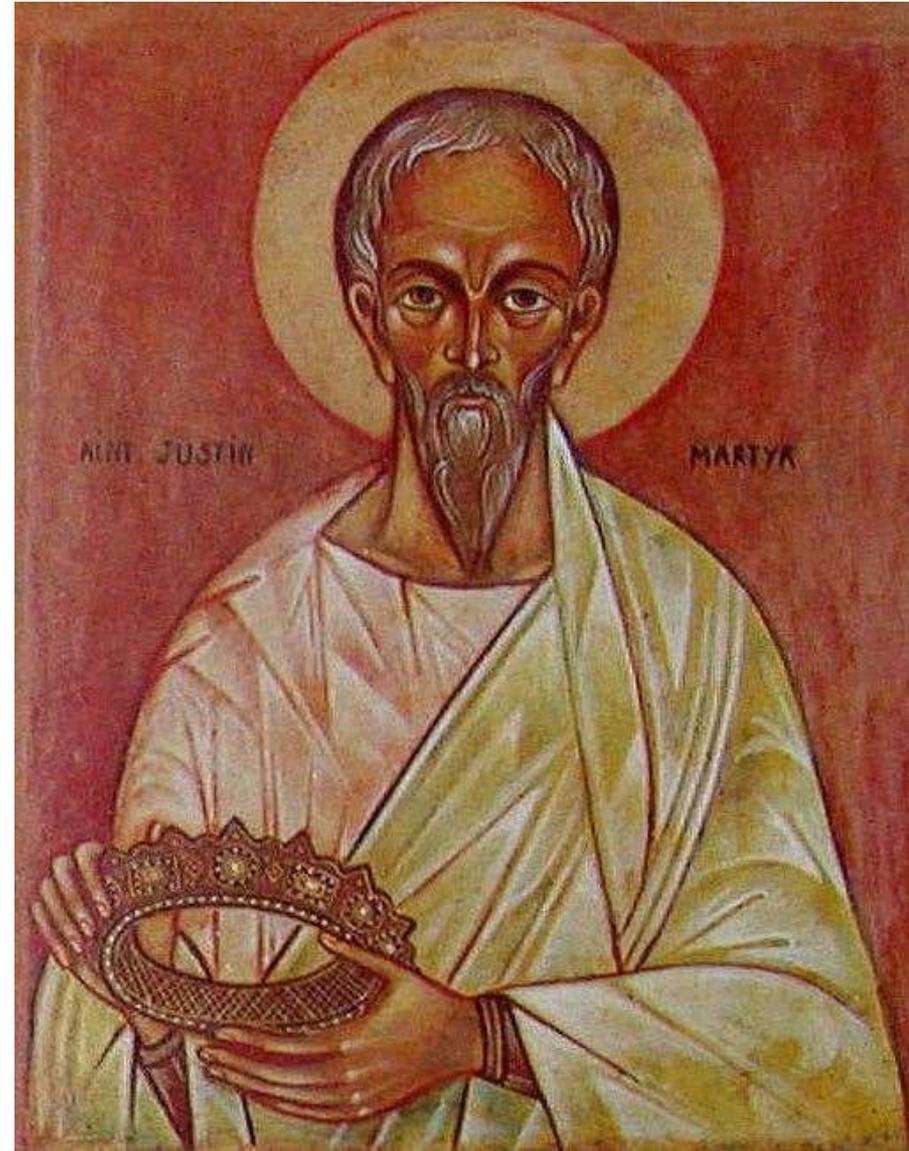
Meet some of the Saints

Justin (Martyr) 100 – 165 AD

"Straightway a flame was kindled in my soul; and a love of the prophets, and of those men who are friends of Christ, possessed me; and whilst revolving his words in my mind, I found this philosophy alone to be safe and profitable."

The Prefect Rusticus says:
Approach and sacrifice, all of you, to the gods.

Justin replied: **No one in his right mind gives up piety for impiety.**



Epistle to Diognetus (c138AD)

In a word, what the soul is to the body, Christians are to the world. The soul is dispersed through all the members of the body, and Christians throughout the cities of the world. The soul dwells in the body, but is not of the body; likewise Christians dwell in the world, but are not of the world. The soul, which is invisible, is confined in the body, which is visible, in the same way, Christians are recognized as being in the world, and yet their religion remains invisible. ...

Epistle to Diognetus (c138AD)

...The flesh hates the soul and wages war against it, even though it has suffered no wrong, because it is hindered from indulging in its pleasures, so also the world hates the Christians, even though it has suffered no wrong, because they set themselves against its pleasures. The soul loves the flesh that hates it, and its members, and Christians love those who hate them. The soul is enclosed in the body, but it holds the body together; and though Christians are detained, in the world as if in a prison, they in fact hold the world together. The soul, which is immortal, lives in a mortal dwelling; similarly Christians live as strangers amidst perishable things, while waiting for the imperishable in heaven....Such is the important position to which God has appointed them.

Polycarp (69-155)

At his trial Polycarp said – Eighty Six years I have served Christ and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my king who as saved me?



Olympias



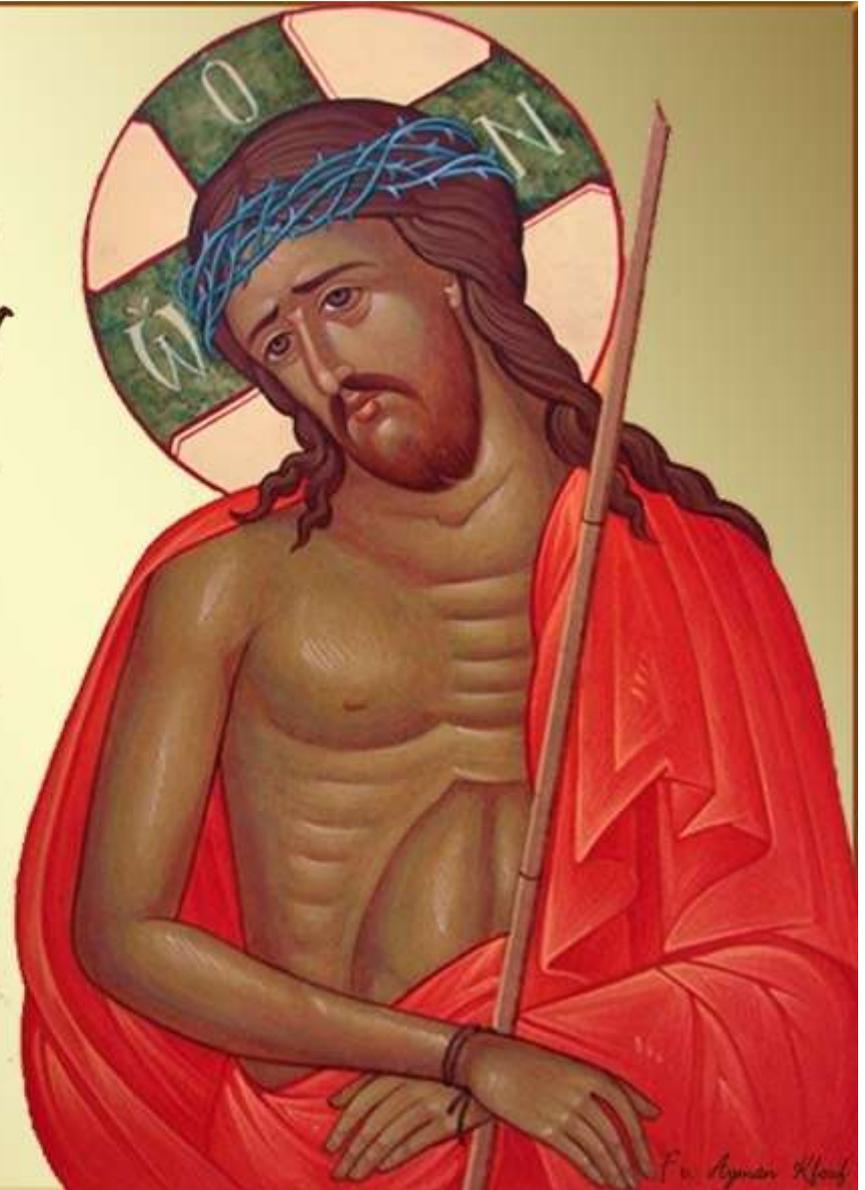
- Married a wealthy merchant who died two years later
- Instead of remarrying, devoted her self to Christ and used her wealth to free slaves
- Rejected a Roman ruler's "proposal" who then confiscated her wealth
- She responded with Praise to God for protecting her from "falling prey to pride"

John Chrysostom c. 349 – 407

IC XC
NI KA
ON
ORTHODOXNOTES

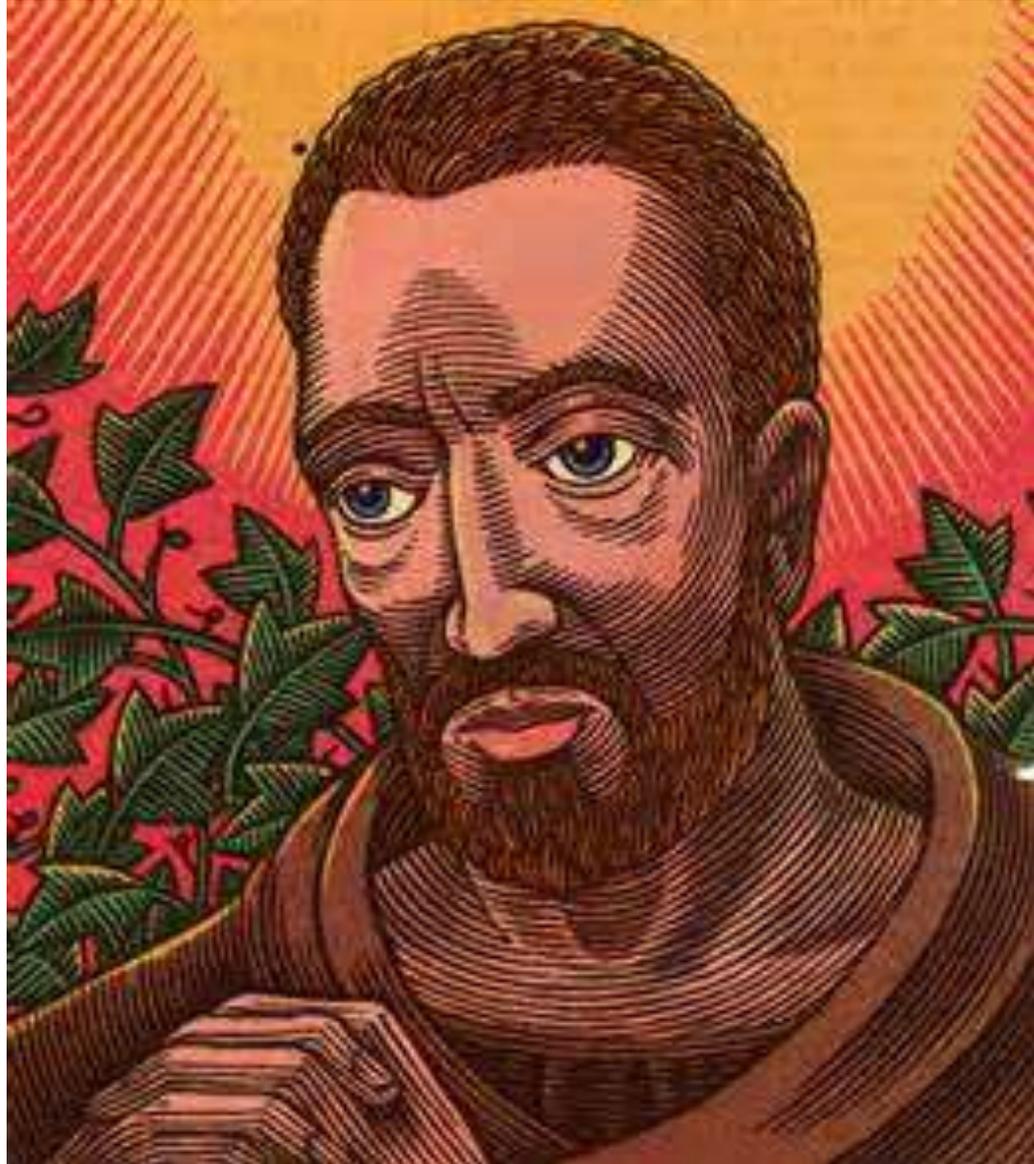
*"Did you commit sin?
Enter the Church and
repent for your sin;
for here is the physi-
cian, not the judge;
here one is not investi-
gated, one receives re-
mission of sins"*

(St. John Chrysostom)



Augustine of Hippo

- Son of a Christian woman
- Rejected Christ for “pleasures of the flesh”
- Converted in a park hearing a girl singing
- Significant in developing Christian understanding of Sin and Grace
- City of God versus City of mankind



Benedict and Scholastica 480 – 543



Benedictine purpose

- the renunciation of one's own will and arming oneself "with the strong and noble weapons of obedience" under the banner of "the true King, Christ the Lord"
- The motto, is,
 - *Ora et labora*
 - = "pray and work!",



St Hilda of Whitby c. 614–680



Bede describes Hilda as a woman of great energy, who was a skilled administrator and teacher. As a landowner she had many in her employ to care for sheep and cattle, farming and woodcutting. She gained such a reputation for wisdom that kings and princes sought her advice. And she also had a concern for ordinary folk.

St Francis of Assisi 1182 – 1226

- Came to Christ ~ 1204
- Became committed to the life of poverty
- His order of Monks began in 1209 and was authorised in 1210
- His rule was “To follow the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ and to walk in his footsteps.” (Matt 10:9)
- In 1219 he tried unsuccessfully to see the Sultan of Egypt converted and stop the crusades
- In 1223 he set up the first Christmas Nativity scene



Further about Francis

- Francis considered himself no friend of Christ if he did not cherish those for whom Christ died.
- He called all creatures his “brothers” and “sisters,” and even preached to the bird



His attempt at negotiating peace during the crusades meant that after his death the Muslim overlords granted the Franciscans to stay on in the Holy Land and be recognized as "[Custodians of the Holy Land](#)"

So What?

- Get to know the family – recognise the incredible sacrifice they made for us
 - Christian History made Easy – T P Jones
 - The New Lion History Of Christianity – J Hill
 - Foxes Book of Martyrs
- Learn what they learnt, be encouraged and inspired by their lives
- Hebrews 12:1-3
- And take heart (2 Cor 4:16-18)

- "St Hilda" by Weglinde - Own work. Licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0 via Wikimedia Commons -
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:St_Hilda.JPG#/media/File:St_Hilda.JPG
- <http://dominisumus.myspx.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/francis-of-assisi.jpg>
- <http://img.aquinasandmore.com/items/Francis-of-Assisi-Poster62803lg.jpg>