



Saint Justin

St. Justin the Martyr, one of the most famous of the early Church martyrs, is remembered both for his steadfast faith in the face of death and because he was one of the first thinkers to reconcile the faith with reason.

Justin lived and died in the first part of the second century (about AD 90 – AD 165) and is known as the first Christian apologist. (In Greek, the word “apology” means “to defend with speech.”)

His parents were nonbelievers, and they provided the best education of the time to Justin—he thrived in rhetoric, poetry, and history, and later studied philosophy. He spent several years seeking knowledge of God and found several teachers who eventually disappointed him. One day, he struck up a conversation with an older man who introduced him to Christianity. Justin inquired further and began to learn the faith.

He made several trips to Rome, where he engaged pagan thinkers in public debate—besting them and revealing their ignorance. In the end, his work was considered a threat to the empire’s cultural religion, and he was arrested and ordered to sacrifice to the Roman gods. He refused and was beheaded with six other Christians (five men and one woman).

At his trial he said “We ask nothing better than to suffer for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ and so to be saved. If we do this we can stand confidently and quietly before the fearful judgment seat of that same God and saviour, when in accordance with divine ordering all this world will pass away.”