

# Father's Notes

June 8, 2025

This past Sunday (June 1st) marked the feast day of an important saint: Justin the Martyr. Born around the year 100 A.D., about 30 miles north of Jerusalem, we learn from his writings about Justin himself. He says that he was privileged to receive an education, yet his studies left him unsatisfied, failing to answer the philosophical questions of how things came to be and who created it all. In pursuit of these answers, he went through the buffet-line of philosophical systems.

What eventually resonated within him though came from a chance encounter near the seashore with an old man, a Christian. They spoke, and the old man began to tell Justin about the ancient prophets of the Bible.

Justin was compelled by what he heard, having at last found something powerful in the connection between Christ, 'the Word' (in Greek, *logos*, meaning 'word', 'statement' or 'utterance') and the OT prophecies. Justin became a wandering teacher of this amazing truth. Given his philosophical training and way of thinking, he was among the first to apply philosophical argumentation to the Gospel.

Two of his writings remain in existence and were used in their time to address the Roman emperor and Senate. Justin defended Christianity against many distorted interpretations, including rumors of incest and cannibalism (seriously!)...that baptism and the Eucharist were black magic...that Christianity was atheistic, because Christians refused to partake in common (Roman) public worship.

After he had been in Rome for some time, having drawn attention to himself as a Christian, in 165 A.D., Justin was arrested, along with six companions, and was brought to trial. When they were told that they would be required to offer sacrifice to the Roman gods, they refused. The Roman prefect declared: "Let those who have refused to sacrifice to the gods and to obey the command of the emperor be scourged and led away to suffer capital punishment..." Justin and his companions were beheaded, witnessing to their faith in Jesus.

He shows us the importance of continuing to ask and pursue the challenging questions. Don't worry if the answers don't come easily. Don't worry if you struggle, grinding through the answers themselves. But stay in the struggle.

The problem is that too many people don't ask. They're either caught up in the lighter fare of life (social media, episodes on Hulu or Netflix, sports) or they simply take the easier way out, aligning themselves with the most common way of thinking. In either case, the important questions get lost. The education you've received up to this point—as well as the love and guidance of your parents and family—is intended to give you a framework on which to pursue these questions. Pursue and be courageous! Seek truth! St. Justin...pray for us!



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