

## Justin Martyr



Feast Day: June 1  
Canonized: Pre-Congregation

Justin was born in Palestine around the year 100. He was well educated and became a professor of philosophy. He was interested in the meaning of life and why the world and people exist. He studied and taught about the great philosophers of his day, but nothing made sense to him until he followed the advice of a wise man who told him to study the Old Testament, especially the writings of the prophets who foretold the coming of Christ.

Justin then began to learn about Jesus' teachings. He believed that Christianity was the answer to all his questions. Justin was baptized and became the first Christian philosopher. He opened a school of Christian studies in Rome. He was not able to teach about Christ from any book. Instead, he used the teachings of the Apostles that the Christian community shared with one another orally because the New Testament had not yet been written. He also relied on the example of the members of Christian community, especially the martyrs.

We owe Justin a great debt for being the first person to write about why and how the Christian community worshipped. Some of his writings still exist today and they are treasures that help us understand the early Church.

Justin was arrested for being a Christian during the persecution that occurred under Marcus Aurelius. He refused to offer a sacrifice to the pagan gods worshipped by the Romans and was executed around the year 165 with six other Christians.

The Church honors Justin as a saint. He helped us to understand that only our faith in Jesus gives meaning to our lives. Two of the gifts the Holy Spirit gives us at Baptism, wisdom and understanding, strengthen us in Christ's love and inspire us to share the truth about Jesus with others. We can pray to Saint Justin and ask him to help us to believe and live the truths of our faith.