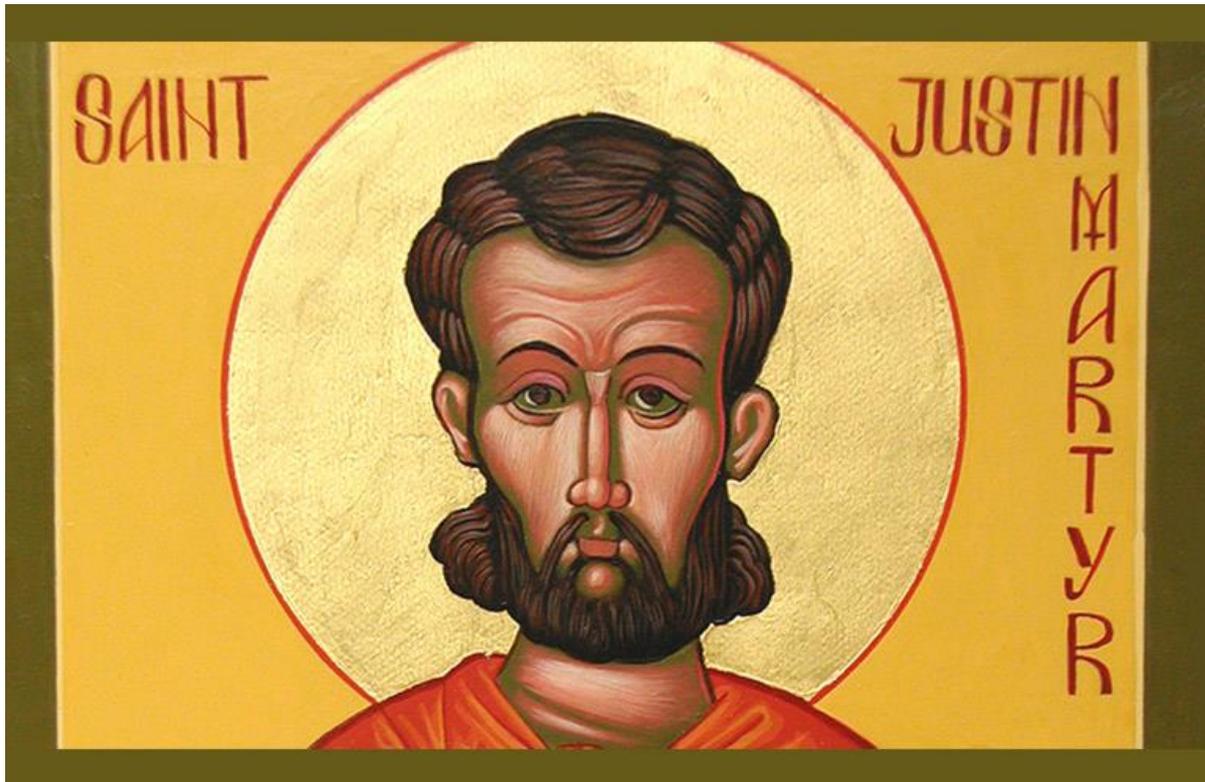


Wednesday 1 June 2022

Justin Martyr



Justin was born of a pagan family at the beginning of the second century in Palestine.

As a young man he explored many different philosophies before at the age of thirty embracing Christianity. He became an outstanding apologist for the Christian faith and is honoured as the first Christian thinker to enter into serious dialogue with the other intellectual disciplines of his day, including Judaism. He sought to reconcile the claims of faith and reason.

It was at Rome in about 165 AD that he and some of his disciples were denounced as Christians, and beheaded. The authentic record of their martyrdom based on an official court report has survived. Traditionally, Justin is often surnamed 'Martyr' because of his two-fold witness to Christ, through his apologetic writings and his manner of death.

Sermon © Revd Denise Owen.

Liturgy and prayers of intercession © 2000 The Archbishops' Council.

Bible readings © the publishers of the NRSV translation.

The liturgy assumes the service is Eucharistic. The prayers of consecration appear at the end.

The hymns are YouTube links. To hear the hymns please hover the mouse over each link, press Ctrl and then return.

To see service transcripts from previous weeks, please visit the page,
<http://www.medlockhead.co.uk/resources/index.htm>

Introduction and welcome

HYMN 1 [Will you come and follow me](#) (click on this link to hear the hymn)
[Will you come and follow me](#) (different version)

The Welcome

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit

All Amen.

The Lord be with you

All And also with you.

The Preparation

**All Almighty God,
to whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hidden:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love you,
and worthily magnify your holy name;
through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

Our Lord Jesus Christ said:

The first commandment is this:

‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is the only Lord.

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,
with all your soul, with all your mind,
and with all your strength.’

And the second is this: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’

There is no other commandment greater than these.

On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

All Amen. Lord, have mercy.

The saints were faithful unto death

and now dwell in the heavenly kingdom for ever.

As we celebrate their joy,

let us bring to the Lord our sins and weaknesses,
and ask for his mercy.

All Almighty God, our heavenly Father,
we have sinned against you
and against our neighbour
in thought and word and deed,
through negligence, through weakness,
through our own deliberate fault.
We are truly sorry
and repent of all our sins.
For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,
who died for us,
forgive us all that is past
and grant that we may serve you in newness of life
to the glory of your name. Amen.

Almighty God,
who forgives all who truly repent, have mercy upon you,
pardon and deliver you from all your sins,
confirm and strengthen you in all goodness,
and keep you in life eternal;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen.

The Gloria

This Gloria is sung to the tune of 'Cwm Rhondda'. Click [here](#) for the tune.

All Glory be to God in Heaven,
Songs of joy and peace we bring,
Thankful hearts and voices raising,
To creation's Lord we sing.
Lord we thank you, Lord we praise you,
Glory be to God our King:
Glory be to God our King.

Lamb of God, who on our shoulders,
Bore the load of this world's sin;
Only Son of God the Father,
You have brought us peace within.
Lord, have mercy, Christ have mercy,
Now your glorious reign begin:
Now your glorious reign begin.

**You O Son of God are Holy,
You we praise with one accord.
None in heav'n or earth is like you,
Only you are Christ the Lord.
With the Father and the Spirit,
Ever worshipped and adored:
Ever worshipped and adored.**

The Collect for Justin Martyr

God our Redeemer,
who through the folly of the cross taught your martyr Justin
the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ:
remove from us every kind of error
that we, like him, may be firmly grounded in the faith,
and make your name known to all peoples;
through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord,
who is alive and reigns with you,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

All Amen.

First reading

A reading from the First Book of the Maccabees

The officers of King Antiochus Epiphanes, who were enforcing apostasy, came to the town of Modein to make the Israelites offer sacrifice. Many from Israel came to them; and Mattathias and his sons were assembled. Then the king's officers spoke to Mattathias as follows: 'You are a leader, honoured and great in this town, and supported by sons and brothers. Now be the first to come and do what the king commands, as all the Gentiles and the people of Judah and those that are left in Jerusalem have done. Then you and your sons will be numbered among the Friends of the king, and you and your sons will be honoured with silver and gold and many gifts.'

But Mattathias answered and said in a loud voice: 'Even if all the nations that live under the rule of the king obey him, and have chosen to obey his commandments, everyone of them abandoning the religion of their ancestors, I and my sons and my brothers will continue to live by the covenant of our ancestors. Far be it from us to desert the law and the ordinances. We will not obey the king's words by

turning aside from our religion to the right hand or to the left.'

1 Maccabees 2:15-22

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

Second reading

A reading from St Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians

The message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.' Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, God decided, through the foolishness of our proclamation, to save those who believe. For Jews demand signs and Greeks desire wisdom, but we proclaim Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those who are the called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. For God's foolishness is wiser than human wisdom, and God's weakness is stronger than human strength.

1 Corinthians 1:18-25

This is the Word of the Lord

All Thanks be to God.

HYMN 2 I have decided to follow Jesus

I have decided to follow Jesus

I have decided to follow Jesus

[\(Please click to hear the link\)](#)

[\(different version\)](#)

[\(instrumental version\)](#)

Gospel reading

Hear the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John

All Glory to you O Lord.

Jesus said to his disciples, 'If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you. Remember the word that I said to you, "Servants are not greater than their master." If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. But they will do all these things to

you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me.'

John 15:18-21

This is the Gospel of the Lord

All Praise to you O Christ.

Sermon

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen

In 'First Apology', one of Justin Martyr's early writings, he acknowledges that Christians are atheists. Quite a startling admission perhaps, but true in the context of the time. Christians were viewed as atheists. For example, most Christians would not take part in the sacrifices made to the Roman gods; ceremonies which were a large part of public life. These ceremonies would have been very public, in fact all of daily life was lived out in public, so non-attendance at these events would have been noticed and questioned. Rejection of these rites and sacrifices was akin to defiance of the secular authorities and therefore dangerous. Hence, Christians were sometimes called atheists because they were openly rejecting the 'state' religion.

Christians were also seen as strange for the reason St Paul articulates in today's Epistle *the message of the cross is foolishness ...* etc. Today we may think that the message of the cross is foolishness because we believe Christ rose from the dead, but at the time, this wouldn't have seemed so outlandish. It was the fact that the Son of God died on the cross which was completely unacceptable to those who considered themselves 'wise' at the time, i.e. the philosophers and many others in society. The cross was universally seen as the most humiliating death imaginable, and was frequently made deliberately more humiliating. Crucifixion was reserved for the lowest of the low, rebellious slaves and the like, so for Christians to believe that God Godself submitted to death on the cross was outrageous for most.

This is the context into which Justin was speaking, but he also knew how much Greeks and to a certain extent Romans loved philosophy and debate, and so used this to try to persuade them of the truth. This was not an easy task, as what Christianity taught was very much counter to the culture of the time: a crucified God; an honoured place for women in the Church; treat slaves with respect; care for the poor and sick; share wealth; be ready to forgive, and many other core teachings. In fact, it's testimony to how much the influence of Christianity has permeated western society that today (apart from faith in God!) these things are now accepted as obviously just and right.

I wonder what Justin Martyr would have made of that? Mixed feelings, probably. Yes, society in the west has become more 'Christian' in how it works and what it feels is important, but has become much less 'Christian' in active faith. For some

today, being 'atheist' is as much a mark of honour and rationality as it was all those years ago for Justin, but with a very different meaning.

Perhaps today's celebration of Justin should prompt us to take back the faith. Perhaps we should take seriously the prayers we have been praying during Easter-tide: *That we may live as those who believe in the triumph of the cross; That all people may receive the good news of his victory; That those born to new life in the waters of baptism may know the power of his resurrection.* These prayers reflect the confidence we as Christians should feel about our faith. No doubt, they reflect the confidence that Justin had in his Christian faith; a certainty, amidst the dangers of the time, that this was true and that the Truth was worth pursuing despite the peril.

As Christians we should be confident in asserting the benefits the faith has brought to the world, and the benefits it brings to individual people. I've named some of them above but there are many more, and we should be proud of what Christianity and Christians have achieved. We should take back the faith from those who denigrate the Church and only speak of Christianity in derogatory terms. They are wrong and should be challenged, as Justin Martyr did and gave his life. That isn't to say that we deny the many wrongs that have been done in the name of Christ, but we should equally say that those wrongs are acknowledged and repented, and then go on to correct the many ignorant and uninformed views people have of Christianity.

This is what Justin did, and what our sisters and brothers have done throughout the centuries since his martyrdom. It is an ongoing task, although thankfully for us in the west at least, it is far less dangerous. If as Christians we believe that Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life and that following him is the best and most joyous way to live, then we should be confident in proclaiming the gospel and celebrating the Church and what the Church has done and continues to do to this day.

Amen

The Creed

Do you believe and trust in God the Father,
the source of all being and life,
the one for whom we exist?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Son,
who took our human nature,
died for us and rose again?

All We believe and trust in him.

Do you believe and trust in God the Holy Spirit,
who gives life to the people of God
and makes Christ known in the world?

All We believe and trust in him.

This is the faith of the Church.

All This is our faith.

**We believe and trust in one God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
Amen.**

Prayers of intercession

We pray for strength to follow Jesus.
Saviour, we hear your call.

All Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant.'
Saviour, we hear your call.

All Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Unless you change
and become humble like little children,
you can never enter the kingdom of heaven.'
Saviour, we hear your call.

All Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Happy are the humble;
they will receive what God has promised.'
Saviour, we hear your call.

All Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Be merciful as your Father is merciful;
love your enemies and do good to them.'
Saviour, we hear your call.

All Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Love one another, as I love you;
there is no greater love than this,
to lay down your life for your friends.'
Saviour, we hear your call.

All Help us to follow.

Jesus said: 'Go to people everywhere
and make them my disciples,
and I will be with you always, to the end of time.'

Saviour, we hear your call.

All Help us to follow.

Merciful Father,

**All accept these prayers
for the sake of your Son,
our Saviour Jesus Christ.
Amen.**

The peace

Once we were far off,
but now in union with Christ Jesus we have been brought near through the
shedding of Christ's blood,
for he is our peace.

The peace of the Lord be always with you,

All And also with you.

**HYMN 3 Turn your eyes upon Jesus
Turn your eyes upon Jesus**

[\(click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)
[\(Celtic version\)](#)

The liturgy of the Communion Service appears below

The Dismissal

God give you grace to follow his saints
in faith and love and steadfastness;
and the blessing of God the Almighty,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be with you now and remain with you always.

All Amen.

HYMN 4 There is a redeemer

[\(please click on this link to hear the hymn\)](#)

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

All In the name of Christ. Amen.

The Liturgy of the Sacrament

Eucharistic Prayer (prayer E)

The Lord be with you

All and also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

All We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All It is right to give thanks and praise.

It is indeed right and good,
our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
holy Father, almighty and eternal God.
For following the example of your Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ,
your holy martyr Justin shed his blood for the glory of your name.
His death reveals your power made perfect in our human frailty.
You choose the weak and make them strong
in bearing witness to you
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
With joyful hearts we echo on earth
the song of the angels in heaven
as they praise your glory without end:

**All Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

We praise and bless you, loving Father,
through Jesus Christ, our Lord;
and as we obey his command,
send your Holy Spirit,
that broken bread and wine outpoured
may be for us the body and blood of your dear Son.

On the night before he died he had supper with his friends
and, taking bread, he praised you.

He broke the bread, gave it to them and said:
Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you;
do this in remembrance of me.

When supper was ended he took the cup of wine.
Again he praised you, gave it to them and said:
Drink this, all of you;
this is my blood of the new covenant,
which is shed for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins.
Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

So, Father, we remember all that Jesus did,
in him we plead with confidence his sacrifice made once for all upon the cross.

Bringing before you the bread of life and cup of salvation,
we proclaim his death and resurrection
until he comes in glory.

Great is the mystery of faith:

All Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

Lord of all life,
help us to work together for that day
when your kingdom comes
and justice and mercy will be seen in all the earth.

Look with favour on your people,
gather us in your loving arms
and bring us with Justin Martyr and all the saints
to feast at your table in heaven.

Through Christ, and with Christ, and in Christ,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all honour and glory are yours, O loving Father,
for ever and ever.

All Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

As our Saviour taught us, so we pray

**All Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever. Amen.**

Breaking of the Bread

We break this bread to share in the body of Christ.

**All Though we are many, we are one body,
because we all share in one bread.**

**All Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.**

**Lamb of God,
you take away the sin of the world,
grant us peace.**

Draw near with faith.

Receive the body of our Lord Jesus Christ
which he gave for you,
and his blood which he shed for you.

Eat and drink in remembrance that he died for you,
and feed on him in your hearts
by faith with thanksgiving.

All We do not presume
to come to this your table, merciful Lord,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but in your manifold and great mercies.
We are not worthy
so much as to gather up the crumbs under your table.
But you are the same Lord
whose nature is always to have mercy.
Grant us therefore, gracious Lord,
so to eat the flesh of your dear Son Jesus Christ
and to drink his blood,
that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body
and our souls washed through his most precious blood,
and that we may evermore dwell in him,
and he in us.
Amen.

Communion is distributed.

Prayer after Communion

God, who gave us this holy meal
in which we have celebrated the glory of the cross
and the victory of your martyr Justin:
by our communion with Christ
in his saving death and resurrection,
give us with all your saints the courage to conquer evil
and so to share the fruit of the tree of life;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

All Amen

All Almighty God,
we thank you for feeding us
with the body and blood of your Son Jesus Christ.
Through him we offer you our souls and bodies
to be a living sacrifice.
Send us out in the power of your Spirit
to live and work
to your praise and glory.
Amen.