

February 23rd: Memorial of Saint Polycarp, Bishop and Martyr

Gospel text (Jn 15,18-21): Jesus said to his disciples, «If the world hates you, remember that the world hated me before you. This would not be so if you belonged to the world, because the world loves its own. But you are not of the world since I have chosen you from the world; because of this the world hates you (...).».

St. Polycarp, bishop and martyr (69-155 a.C.)

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Today, when remembering St. Polycarp, a great Father of the Church, history shows us that Christ and His Gospel are always, a contradiction sign for the world. So did St. Polycarp understand it and lived by it. He was born in Smyrna, in the actual Turkey, and then a Roman province in Asia Minor, and he died a martyr in this city, having been a Bishop of the local Church.

Polycarp, whose name means "abundant fruit", had met the apostle John and had been his disciple; He wrote a letter to the Christians in Philippi (Greece) to encourage them to live by following Jesus Christ. Thus he wrote to the first Christians: "Wherefore, girding up your loins serve the Lord in fear and truth, as those who have forsaken the vain, empty talk and error of the multitude, and believed in Him who raised our Lord Jesus Christ from the dead and gave him glory and a throne at His right hand".

—Today and always, we are invited to truly know God and to follow Jesus Christ, and to help us in this purpose let us ask the intercession of St. Polycarp of Smyrna.