June 5th: Memorial of Saint Boniface, Bishop and Martyr

Gospel text (*Jn* 10:11-16): «I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives his life for the sheep».

Saint Boniface, bishop and martyr (VIIIth century)

EDITORIAL TEAM evangeli.net (based on texts by Benedict XVI)
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Today, we shall reflect on a great eighth-century missionary (was born in Great Britain) who spread Christianity in Central Europe: St Boniface, who has gone down in history as “the Apostle of the Germans”. He entered the monastery at a very early age, attracted by the monastic ideal. He was ordained a priest at the age of about 30 and felt called to an apostolate among the pagans on the continent. Comforted and sustained by the Pope's support, Boniface embarked on the preaching of the Gospel in those regions, fighting against pagan worship and reinforcing the foundations of human and Christian morality. Boniface obtained great results.

The Pope then declared that he wished to confer upon him the episcopal dignity. The Successors of Pope Gregory II also held him in the highest esteem. He rightly considered that work for the Gospel must also be work for a true human culture, which is inseparable from faith and reveals its beauty. While he was beginning the celebration of Mass at Dokkum (in what today is northern Holland) on 5 June 754, he was assaulted by a band of pagans.

—Boniface's courageous witness is an invitation to us all to welcome God's word into our lives as an essential reference point, to love the Church passionately. At the same time, he reminds us that Christianity, by encouraging the dissemination of culture, furthers human progress.