

Ne Martyr Booklet and Cards.doc

Printing instructions to make a booklet.

Print page 2 on Red card stock—this is the cover.

Print page 3 which is one sided (Stephen).

Print page 4, then on the back print page 5.

Print page 6 and print page 7 on the back.

Print page 8 with page 9 on the back and
print page 10 with page 11 on the back.

Stack the pages in the following order

11 on top, then 9, then 7, 5, 3 (page 2 is the
blank side of 3 and page 1 is the cover.

Martyrs
of the
First Three
Centuries

Stephen

In the temple of Jerusalem Stephen witnessed to and preached the saving power of Jesus. The listeners refused to accept Stephen's message. They forced him out of the city where they could kill him by throwing stones. As he was dying Stephen begged God to forgive those who were killing him. He said "Lord, do not hold this sin against them" (Acts 7:60). Stephen is the Christian community's first martyr. He died a year after Pentecost.

First Martyrs of Rome

The First Martyrs of Rome refers to the nameless Christians who were killed by Emperor Nero in Rome. The Christians were blamed for and condemned because of the fire which destroyed Rome. Historians doubt Christians had anything to do with setting the fire. Tacitus, the historian, and St. Cletus of Rome referred to August 15, A. D. 64 as a night of horror. Christians, sent into the arena dressed in animal skins, became food for starved beasts.

Peter

After Pentecost, Peter traveled about proclaiming the Gospel and building up the Christian community. The last part of his life was spent in Rome. He died around 64 A. D. under Emperor Nero's persecution after almost 30 years of leading the Church.

Paul

Paul was arrested during the persecution of Christians by Emperor Nero and beheaded. This happened around the year 67 A. D. on the same day as St. Peter's martyrdom.

Bishop Ignatius of Antioch

“I am the wheat of Christ, ground by the teeth of beasts to become pure bread.” This is what Ignatius of Antioch said in the sixth of his seven letters written to early Christian communities while on the way to his execution in Rome. While on his way to Rome Bishop Ignatius met with Bishop Polycarp who was then a young man. Bishop Ignatius of Antioch’s important letters tell us of life during the first century after Jesus’ Ascension. From these letters we learn of the importance of the unity of Christians meeting for the Eucharist. The most well know letter, sent to Rome before he arrived there, was to ask that the Christians there do not prevent his execution in the arena games. “Let me follow the example of the suffering of my God.”

Lucy

Lucy was a martyr under Emperor Diocletian. Soon after her death she was venerated; her name is listed in the First Eucharistic Prayer of the Roman Mass. The name Lucy is connected to the word ‘light’. Many people with eye problems ask Lucy to bring their prayer to God for them.

Maximilian

As the son of a soldier in the Roman army Maximilian was expected to go into the army like his father. But Maximilian had become a Christian; he wanted to love his enemies. No one could force him to change his mind. "I am a Christian. I cannot fight. I cannot do what is wrong." Maximilian was executed under Emperor Maximian.

Polycarp

Polycarp was taught by John the Apostle and is a link from the apostles in the first century to the disciples of the second century. As a young man Bishop Polycarp witnessed Ignatius of Antioch's great faith on his way to his execution. The *Martyrdom of Polycarp* is the first authentic narrative (story) of a martyrdom after St. Stephen's. This story records how the 86 year old Polycarp went to his death in the amphitheatre.

Justin

Justin was a convert from paganism around the age of 30. He traveled throughout the Roman Empire proclaiming the Gospel. Justin's writings are the earliest writings that still exist. Through his writings we have the earliest descriptions of the baptismal rite and the Eucharist. His trial under the official Rusticus is a genuine historical document. When he was commanded to sacrifice to the gods he said, "No right-minded man forsakes truth for falsehood." His companions said, "Do with us as you will. We are Christians, and we cannot sacrifice to idols." Justin died under Marcus Aurelius.

Cyprian

Cyprian converted to Christianity around the age of 46. Within a short time he was made the bishop of Carthage, which is in northern Africa. During the persecution of Emperor Decius, Cyprian went into hiding so he could continue to take care of his people. Cyprian confronted improper teachings (heresies) and disagreed with the Pope. But these issues were not resolved. When the outbreak of the plague was blamed on the Christians Cyprian was put to death.

Lawrence

Since the Fourth century St. Lawrence has been the most well-known of the martyrs of Rome. He had been a deacon there. An official told him to bring the valuables of the Church. So Lawrence gathered together the poor and the sick to bring to the official. For this he was martyred.

Martyrs of Lyon

The Martyrs of Lyon refers to the many martyrs under Marcus Aurelius in the year 177. We have record of 48 names. The famous historian Eusebuis recorded the story. A young slave girl, Blandina, was the last to die. She had been tortured over several days, but she never gave up the faith.

Perpetua

Perpetua was a married woman with a child in her arms. When she was placed under 'house arrest', her baby was taken away to be raised by another Christian. House arrest meant she was locked in a private home. Perpetua and the others with her were not yet baptized; they were catechumens, or preparing to become Christian. While under house arrest all the catechumens were baptized. Then they were sent to jail. While in jail Perpetua had visions of a ladder to heaven. She saw herself arrive into heaven. She knew she had been happy on earth but she was happier still in heaven. Perpetua wrote some of the story of her martyrdom. She was sent to the arena but the beasts did not kill her. She and Felicity, a slave companion, helped each other while in the arena. They were later killed with a sword.

Felicity

Felicity was a young, pregnant, slave girl who was baptized while under house arrest with Perpetua. She went into labor and had a baby girl while in jail. The baby was taken away to be raised by another Christian. Felicity and Perpetua helped each other through the terrible time in the arena. Both were killed by the sword.