

## SAINT GEORGE - PATRON SAINT OF ENGLAND



Nothing of St George's life or deeds can be confirmed and/or established, but tradition holds that he was a Roman soldier, tortured and decapitated under Diocletian's persecution of Christians in 303. He flourished in 3rd century—died, we are given to believe in Lydda, Palestine [now Lod, Israel].

His Feast Day is April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Best described as an early Christian martyr who during the Middle Ages became an ideal of martial valour and selflessness.

He is the Patron Saint of England & Georgia and is also venerated as one of the 14 Auxiliary Saints (Holy Helpers).

His remains were taken to Lydda (now Lod, Israel), the homeland of his mother, and were later transferred to the church that was built in his name there. Various relics reportedly are housed in both Western and Eastern churches worldwide.

St. George's Chapel at Windsor Castle for example, is said to have once held two fingers, part of the heart, and part of the skull of the saint.

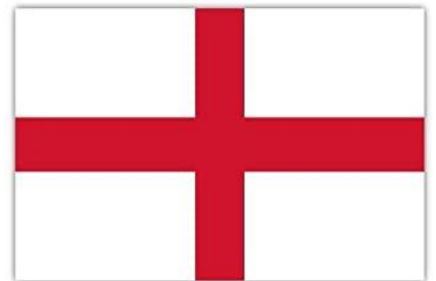
Jacob de Voragine's *Legenda aurea* (1265-66) repeats the story of his rescuing a Libyan king's daughter from a Dragon and then slaying the monster in return for a promise by the king's subjects to be baptised.

George's slaying of the dragon may be a Christian version of the Legend of Perseus who was said to have rescued Andromeda from a sea monster near Lydda.

It is a theme much represented in art, with St George frequently being depicted as a youth wearing knight's armour with a scarlet cross.

St George was known in England by at least the 8th century.

Returning Crusaders likely popularized his cult (he was said to have been seen helping the Franks at the Battle of Antioch in 1098), but he was probably not recognised as England's patron saint until after King Edward 111, (who reigned 1327-77), made him the patron of the newly founded Most Noble Order of The Garter.



He was also adopted as protector of several other medieval powers, including Portugal, Genoa, & Venice. With the passing of the chivalry age and finally the Protestant Reformation, the cult of St. George dwindled. His feast is now given a lesser status in the calendar of the Church of England, It was a Holy Day of Obligation for English Roman Catholics until the late 18th century,. It is now an optional memorial for local observance.

Shared by M. Jackson