

Reflection Tuesday Week 9 St Justin, Martyr - 2021

Saint Justin, Martyr (- 165) was born at the beginning of the 2nd century in Nablus, Samaria, of a pagan Greek family. An earnest seeker after truth, he studied many systems of philosophy before being led, through Platonism, to Christianity. As a layman, he began spreading the truth, travelling from place to place proclaiming the gospel. In 151 he came to Rome and opened a school of philosophy and wrote defences and expositions of Christianity, which have survived to this day; the earliest known writings of their kind. In the persecution of 165, the reign of Marcus Aurelius, he was denounced as a Christian, arrested and beheaded. The transcript of his trial by the prefect of Rome, Rusticus, has survived and is in today's Office of Readings.

Although Paul saw the cross as a symbol of our salvation, he also saw the wisdom of it in that it makes everyone stop and think. This one symbol can provoke very different response. I leave it to you to reflect on your response! In Central and South America, the crosses of Jesus are more gruesome than ours and clearly show the brutality of Jesus' death, reflecting the cruelty they face in their lives. In the western world the crosses are cosmetic. Jesus is cleaned up and often the wrong colour. Some see in the cross the arms of Jesus stretched out embracing us with love or recognise Jesus accepting his death for us so we can share in his victory over sin a death - to some a stumbling block to others freedom, to some failure to others victory. The cross cannot be ignored.

Our Founder, Emmanuel d'Alzon, writes:

Make the crucifix your friend, your confidant. Our Lord will love you, instruct you, and strengthen you through his image, and, with this constant companion, with this silent but blessed intermediary..... you will experience a transformation of your whole being.

I backed a horse last week at ten to one. It came in at quarter past four.

'A jump-lead walks into a bar. The barman says "I'll serve you, but don't start anything" '