Saint of the Day for June 1ˢᵗ
Saint Justin Martyr
(c. 100 – 165)

Saint Justin Martyr's Story

Justin never ended his quest for religious truth even when he converted to Christianity after years of studying various pagan philosophies.

As a young man, he was principally attracted to the school of Plato. However, he found that the Christian religion answered the great questions about life and existence better than the philosophers.

Upon his conversion he continued to wear the philosopher's mantle, and became the first Christian philosopher. He combined the Christian religion with the best elements in Greek philosophy. In his view, philosophy was a pedagogue of Christ, an educator that was to lead one to Christ.

Justin is known as an apologist, one who defends in writing the Christian religion against the attacks and misunderstandings of the pagans. Two of his so-called apologies have come down to us; they are addressed to the Roman emperor and to the Senate.

For his staunch adherence to the Christian religion, Justin was beheaded in Rome in 165.

Reflection

As patron of philosophers, Justin may inspire us to use our natural powers—especially our power to know and understand—in the service of Christ, and to build up the Christian life within us. Since we are prone to error, especially in reference to the deep questions concerning life and existence, we should also be willing to correct and check our natural thinking in light of religious truth. Thus we will be able to say with the learned saints of the Church: I believe in order to understand, and I understand in order to believe.