



Saint of the day for July 20th
Saint Apollinaris
(d. c. 79)

Image: Statue of Saint Apollinaris in
Santa Maria del Suffragio, Ravenna |
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Saint Apollinaris' Story

According to tradition, Saint Peter sent Apollinaris to Ravenna, Italy, as its first bishop. His preaching of the Good News was so successful that the pagans there beat him and drove him from the city. He returned, however, and was exiled a second time. After preaching in the area surrounding Ravenna, he entered the city again. After being cruelly tortured, he was put on a ship heading to Greece. Pagans there caused him to be expelled to Italy, where he went to Ravenna for a fourth time. He died from wounds received during a savage beating at Classis, a suburb of Ravenna. A beautiful basilica honoring him was built there in the sixth century.

Reflection

Following Jesus involves risks—sometimes the supreme risk of life itself. Martyrs are people who would rather accept the risk of death than deny the cornerstone of their whole life: faith in Jesus Christ. Everyone will die eventually—the persecutors and those persecuted. The question is what kind of a conscience people will bring before the Lord for judgment. Remembering the witness of past and present martyrs can help us make the often small sacrifices that following Jesus today may require.