

of keeping Easter, for the Asiatic churches kept it on the fourteenth day of the vernal equinoctial moon, as the Jews did (Jewish Passover), on whatever day of the week it fell; whereas Rome, Egypt, and all the West observed it on the Sunday following. It was agreed that both might follow their custom without breaking the bands of charity. We find no further particulars concerning Polycarp recorded before the acts of his martyrdom.

Polycarp occupies an important place in the history of the early Christian Church. He is among the earliest Christians whose writings survive. He was an elder of an important congregation which was a large contributor to the founding of the Christian Church. He is from an era whose orthodoxy is widely accepted by Orthodox, Oriental, Seventh Day, Protestants and Catholic Churches alike. He also may have been the one who compiled, edited and published the New Testament. All of this makes his writings of great interest.

\*(excerpted from: [www.catholic.org](http://www.catholic.org); [www.cin.org](http://www.cin.org))

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## ***Saint Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna***

**Feast Day: January 26**



**The martyrdom of St. Polycarp**

## ***Saint Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna***

\*Saint Polycarp was one of the most illustrious of the apostolic fathers, who, being the immediate disciples of the apostles, received instruction from their mouths, and inherited of them the spirit of Christ in a degree so much the more eminent as they lived nearer the fountain head. He embraced Christianity very young, about the year 80, was a disciple of the apostles, in particular of Saint John the Evangelist, and was constituted by him Bishop of Smyrna, probably before his banishment to Patmos in 96, so that he governed that important see seventy years.

He seems to have been the angel or bishop of Smyrna who was commended above all the bishops of Asia by Christ himself in the Apocalypse, and the only one without a reproach. Our Savior encouraged him under his poverty, tribulation and persecutions, especially the calumnies of the Jews, called him rich in grace, and promised him the crown of life by martyrdom.

This saint was respected by the faithful to a degree of veneration. He formed many holy disciples, among whom

were Saints Irenaeus and Papias. When Florinus, who had often visited Saint Polycarp, had broached certain heresies, Saint Irenaeus wrote to him as follows: "These things were not taught you by the bishops who preceded us. I could tell you the place where the blessed Polycarp sat to preach the word of God. It is yet present to my mind with what gravity he everywhere came in and went out; what was the sanctity of his deportment, the majesty of his countenance and of his whole exterior, and what were his holy exhortations to the people..."

Saint Jerome mentions that Saint Polycarp met at Rome the heretic Marcion in the streets, who resenting that the holy bishop did not take notice of him which he expected, said to him, "Do you not know me, Polycarp?" "Yes," answered the saint, "I know you to be the firstborn of Satan."...

About the year 158 he undertook a journey of charity to Rome, to confer with Pope Anicetus about certain points of discipline, especially about the time