

June 2

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Martyrs of Lyon (2nd cent.)

Today the Roman Martyrology commemorates Potinus, Blandina and other martyrs of the city of Lyon. Their Passio is attributed to Ireneus, who succeeded Potinus as the city's bishop.

Many Christians became victims of persecution under the emperor Marcus Aurelius, and in the Gallic dioceses of Vienne and Lyon, torture was particularly severe. Authorities in these regions incited popular hatred against all Christians, from bishops to catechumens, using lynchings and other forms of violence in the hope of making them deny their faith.

Many Christians died of maltreatment in prison, in particular the elderly bishop Potinus of Lyon. But the first martyrs showed a degree of courage that defied the persecutors, producing an effect that was the contrary of what they had expected: even some Christians who had previously renounced their faith found the strength to confess publicly that they belonged to Christ.

Among Lyon's martyrs, Ireneus remembers the unusual courage of the young slave Blandina with particular affection. Eusebius later wrote that "even the gentiles confessed that never in their midst had a woman tolerated such numerous and harsh torments."

BIBLICAL READINGS

1 Thess 2:1-14; Lk 21:12-19

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

WESTERN CATHOLICS:

Marcellinus and Peter (d. ca. 305), martyrs (Roman and Ambrosian calendars)

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (25 basans/genbot):

Colluthus (3rd-4th cent.), martyrs (Coptic Church)

Takala Egzi'ena, monk (Ethiopian Church)

LUTHERANS:

Blandine, martyr at Lyon; *Friedrich Oberlin* (d. 1826), parish priest and benefactor in Alsace

MARONITES:

The 4 evangelists

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:

Nicephorus the Confessor

(d. 829), archbishop of Constantinople

Finding of the relics of Alexis (1431), metropolitan of Moscow (Russian Church)

Stephen of Piper (d. 1697; Serbian Church)

John the Young of Suceava (13th-14th cent.), martyr (Romanian Church)