

July 28

Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) witness

There are Christians who give witness to Christ with their lives, and others who do the same by leaving writings and teachings for posterity. Johann Sebastian Bach's witness, from the beginning to the end of his earthly parable, was his music.

Bach was born in Eisenach, Germany in 1685, the youngest child in a family of musicians. He lost his mother when he was nine years old, and his father one year later. Yet he had a peaceful life, focused on his family - he was the father of twenty children - and on his profession as organist. After secondary school he took a first position at Arnstadt, after which he moved on to the court of the duke of Weimar, and finally to the cathedral of Leipzig.

During his lifetime he was more highly esteemed as a performer than as a composer: his greatest religious works, such as the St. Matthew Passion, went almost unnoticed. Bach transposed all of his domestic affections and religious experiences into his music, allowing the beauty of daily life, which he always saw in the light of God's mysterious gaze, to emerge in extraordinarily moving ways.

Bach died in Leipzig on July 28, 1750. Little by little, his magnificent and original musical opus came to be seen for what it was: a stunning translation into music of the inner life Bach managed to cultivate in spite of his many commitments, which he never fled.

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

WESTERN CATHOLICS:

Nazarius and Celsus, martyrs (Ambrosian calendar)

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (21 abib/hamle):

Sosenius the Eunuch (5th cent.; Coptic Orthodox Church)

Basalota Mika'el (13th-14th cent.) and *La'eka Maryam* (16th cent.), monks (Ethiopian Church)

LUTHERANS:

Johann Sebastian Bach, Christian musician in Lipsia

MARONITES:

Sixth Ecumenical Council (680)

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:

Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon and Parmenas (1st cent.), apostles and deacons

Vladimir of Kiev (d. 1015), equal to the apostles (Russian Church)

EAST SYRIAN ORTHODOX:

Alphonsa of the Immaculate conception (d. 1946), religious (Malabar Church)