August 17

Johann Gerhard (1582-1637) witness

In 1637 Johann Gerhard, a Lutheran theologian, died in Jena, Germany.
Born in 1583 in the German town of Quedlinburg, Gerhard felt the desire for an intense inner life from his childhood. In the spirit of Luther, he always remained attached to a theology that was more experiential than speculative. Weakened by chronic poor health, he became fascinated by the spiritual trends of his era and began to write about prayer and meditation, publishing his first works at the age of twenty-two.
After completing his theological studies in academies where scholastic theology had offered the predominant research methods, Gerhard wrote his Loci Theologici, an admirable "summa" of Lutheran orthodoxy, which was published in Jena in 1621. Under the influence of Johann Arndt, he went on to explore patristic and medieval spirituality. Rediscovering the Church fathers, Gerhard unearthed the principle of spiritual exegesis of Scripture. He developed and defended a mysticism of union with Christ, which he presented as the ultimate meaning of justification by faith.
His work, marked by this meeting of faith's experiential, rational and contemplative dimensions, was read by many and has had a lasting influence on Lutheran theology.

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (11 misra/nahasse):
Moses (8th cent.), bishop of Awsim (Coptic Orthodox Church)

LUTHERANS:
Johann Gerhard, theologian at Jena

MARONITES:
Myron of Cyzicus (d. 250), martyr

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:
Myron of Cyzicus, hieromartyr