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Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705) Lutheran pastor

In 1705 Philipp Jakob Spener, a Lutheran preacher and an advocate of pietism in Germany, died in Berlin.
A native of the region of Colmar in northern Alsace, Spener was encouraged by his parents to become a pastor. He supplemented the education he had received at home - inspired, as was often the case in the German Lutheranism of the time, by the works of Johann Arndt - with a solid theological formation acquired at the University of Strasburg, where he studied the writings of Luther.
In 1664 he married Susanna Erhardt, with whom he would eventually have eleven children. He went on to acquire a doctoral degree, but preaching always remained more important to him than an academic career.
Convinced that the Lutheran Church was in urgent need of reform, Spener promoted the formation of small prayer communities and wrote the Pia Desideria, which came to be considered a sort of manifesto of German pietism.
In his writings, an insistence on the need for a more intense life of prayer and communion is balanced by a very practical approach. This made Spener and his followers witnesses who exerted a profound influence on the daily lives of German Christians.
Spener became known throughout Germany and was appointed head preacher at the court of the duke of Saxony. Later, he was named provost of the Nikolaikirche of Berlin and member of the concistory of the Lutheran Church. He received approval from many, but never spared anyone - not even the duke of Saxony and his other patrons - frank and sometimes severe criticism based on the Gospel and on the primacy faith should hold in the lives of those who call themselves Christians.

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

WESTERN CATHOLICS:
Agatha (d. 251), virgin and martyr

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (27 tubah/terr):
Phoebammon (3rd-4th cent.), martyr (Coptic Orthodox Church)
Ascension of Enoch, prophet (Ethiopian Church)

LUTHERANS:
Philipp Jakob Spener, theologian in France and Berlin

MARONITES:
Agatha, martyr

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:
Agatha of Catania, martyr
Synaxis of all saints of Kostroma (Russian Church)
Anatolij of Odessa (d. 1938), bishop and martyr (Ukranian Church)

OLD CATHOLICS:
Agatha, virgin and martyr