March 12

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Symeon the New Theologian (ca. 949-1022) monk

On March 12, 1022 Symeon the New Theologian, one of the best loved monks and spiritual masters in the Christian East, died in the monastery of St. Marina on the Asian bank of the Bosphorus.
Before him, only John the Evangelist and Gregory of Nazianzus had been nicknamed "theologians." In the Byzantine tradition this title indicates a person who has received the knowledge of God through personal experience, and who has been capable of communicating this knowledge to the church.
Symeon was born around the year 949 in Asia Minor, and was sent to Constantinople as a young man to complete his studies.
The prospect of a career at the Byzantine court did not appeal to him strongly, and for a certain period of time he entertained doubts and queries about his future. This changed when he met the monk Symeon of Studion, a renowned monastery of Constantinople. Guided by the elderly Studite, Symeon learned the art of praying without distractions. His intense experience of prayer gave him the certainty that God's love is poured into believers' hearts through the gift of the Spirit.
He became a monk, and later igumen, of the monastery of St. Mama. There he communicated to others the simple certainty he had gained from his very personal experience of God.
In many environments of the capital Symeon was not understood, and was eventually forced into exile on the Asian bank of the Bosphorus. Here he gathered together old and new disciples in the new monastery of St. Marina, where he guided them until his death, composing spiritual and liturgical writings of great value.

Maximilian of Teveste (d. 295) martyr

On March 12, 295 the young Maximilian of Teveste, the first Christian conscientious objector to military service, was executed in Numidia.
When Maximilian reached the age at which Roman law required all citizens to enlist in the army, he refused to do so. He was arrested and tried in the Forum. When the proconsul asked him to state his objections to military service, Maximilian answered simply and firmly that in conscience he did not consider the Gospel compatible with the practice of any form of violence.
By this time there were many Christians in the empire, and the Roman court, fearing that Maximilian's attitude might become widespread, condemned him to capital punishment. The sentence was carried out immediately. Maximilian's presence in the Roman Martyrology is a perennial warning to all those who think that the radical demands of the Gospel can be easily reconciled with the legislation imposed by human societies.

A READING

The proconsul Dio said, "What is your name?" Maxmilian answered, "Why do you want to know my name? I cannot serve in the army because I am a Christian." The proconsul said, "Prepare him." As they were preparing him, Maximilian replied, "I cannot serve in the army, I cannot do wrong: I am a Christian." Dio said, "Serve in the army, if you do not want to die." Maximilian answered, "I will not serve, even if you cut off my head. I do not fight in the army of this world, but in the army of my God." The proconsul said, "Who induced you to do this?" He replied, "My conscience, and the One who called me."

from the *Acta Maximiliani*

THE CHURCHES REMEBER...

WESTERN CATHOLICS:
Gregory the Great (d. 604), pope (Spanish-Mozarabic calendar)

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (3 baramhat/maggabit):
Cosmas III (d. 933), 58th patriarch of Alexandria (Coptic Orthodox Church)
Euphrasia (4th cent.), martyr (Coptic Catholic Church)

LUTHERANS:
Gregory the Great, bishop in Rome

MARONITES:
Gregory the Great, pope and confessor

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:
Theophanes of Sigriano (d. 817), igumen

EAST SYRIAN ORTHODOX:
Gregory the Great, pope (Malabar Church)

OLD CATHOLICS:
Gregory the Great, bishop and doctor of the church