March 27

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Al-Hallaj (d. 922) righteous among the nations

At dawn on March 27, 922, the Sufi master Al-Hallaj was decapitated after an entire night spent in agony on a gallows in the form of a cross.
Born in the Persian village of Tur, al-Husain ibn Mansur al-Hallaj was educated from childhood in the Koranic and Sufi schools of his homeland.
A man with a forceful character, he decided to break off every tie with his past so that he could become the itinerant preacher of a Truth that, although he did not possess it, had begun to follow him like a torment. After several trips through the Middle East, Al-Hallaj settled in Baghdad and decided to undertake an inner pilgrimage into his own heart, God's true dwelling.
His loving identification with the Beloved, the goal of every Sufi, led him to formulate teachings that were considered extremely subversive, such as his famous affirmation, "I am the Truth." Far from proclaiming himself the incarnation of Allah, he simply wanted to remind listeners that only those who give all of the space in themselves to the Other can become capable of proclaiming the Oneness of the divine and God's unspeakable name.
But his invitation to inner pilgrimage was interpreted as a condemnation of pilgrimage to Mecca, one of the pillars of the Islamic religion, and Al-Hallaj was sentenced to death.
In his Passion, grippingly narrated by his disciples, Al-Hallaj was able to consummate his search for God by making total space in his life for the divine presence through the loving sacrifice of his own flesh. As several Christian masters of our own time have rightly noted, the remembrance of Al-Hallaj and his passion of love for the One is one of the strongest anti-idolatrous messages that the history of the world's religions has ever offered to humanity.

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (18 baramhat/maggabit):
Isidore of Pelusio (d. ca. 433), martyr (Coptic Church)

LUTHERANS:
Meister Eckhart (d. 1327), mystic in Strasbourg and Cologne

MARONITES:
Matrona of Thessaloniki (4th cent.), martyr

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:
Matrona of Thessaloniki, martyr