April 23

George of Lydda (d. ca. 304) martyr

On April 23, all Christian calendars commemorate George of Lydda, the most widely venerated Christian martyr.
He was probably born in Cappadocia and was the son of Gerontius, a pagan of Persian ancestry, and Polycronia, a Christian. After beginning a military career, George became a fervent disciple of Christ and abandoned the army, giving all of his possessions to the poor. The surviving accounts of his martyrdom are so thoroughly mixed with legend that it is virtually impossible to reconstruct what actually happened. Even the date of his death is uncertain, although we know he was buried in the Palestinian city of Lydda, where a basilica was built in his honor in 350.
George's Passio was translated into all of the languages of the Eastern and Western churches, and was often embellished in the process. It is a tale filled with miracles, some of which are truly extravagant. In one of the most famous episodes, which was immortalized by countless iconographical variations and narrated by Jacob of Varrazze in his Golden Legend, George kills a dragon that had been terrorizing the city of Silene in Libya.
This traditional episode made George a symbol of the struggle against the power of evil. He is the patron saint of England, and the number of churches dedicated to him worldwide is probably beyond estimation.

BIBLICAL READINGS
Ap 12:7-12; 2 Tim 2:3-13; Jn 15:18-21

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

ANGLICANS:
George, martyr, patron saint of England

WESTERN CATHOLICS:
George, martyr (Roman and Ambrosian calendars)
Adalbert (d. 997), bishop and martyr (Monastic calendar)

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (15 barmudah/miyazya):
Consacration of the church of St Agabus (Coptic Church)

LUTHERANS:
George, martyr in Dalmatia;
Adalbert of Prague, bishop and witness to the point of bloodshed in Prussia

MARONITES:
George, martyr

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:
George the Triumphant, megalomartyr
Martyrs of the monastery of Kvabtachevi (14th cent.; Georgian Church)

WEST SYRIAN ORTHODOX:
George, martyr

OLD CATHOLICS:
George, martyr