# April 24

**The thirteen Jewish martyrs of Troyes** (d. 1288)

In 1288, the Jewish residents of the French city of Troyes were accused of ritual homicide when a corpse was found in the house of Jewish nobleman Isaac Châtelain during Passover. The corpse had been left in Châtelain's house to make him appear guilty of a murder committed by others.
The Franciscan and Dominican friars who carried out the investigation accused the city's Jewish community, and a massacre appeared imminent. To save the entire community from catastrophe, thirteen Jews, most of whom were members of the Châtelain family, sacrificed themselves by confessing to a crime they had not committed. They were burned at the stake the same day.
Other Jewish communities had already been accused of committing ritual homicide in order to celebrate Passover with a human sacrificial offering. In 1171, this absurd and slanderous accusation had been made against the Jews of the city of Blois, who were all burned at the stake.

READING

*Into the square Rav Isaac Châtelain is led,*
*who left his home and earnings for God.*
*He who was rich in goods, a skilled author*
*of short and long commentaries on the Talmud, goes to meet his Lord.*

*Two brothers are burned, the older and the younger;*
*the youngest is terrified by the raging flames:*
*"Aaron, I'm on fire!" His older brother comforts him, saying,*
*"You are going to paradise, I assure you."*

Jewish lament in medieval French

---

**Armenian martyrs of the genocide**

(1915-1918)

During the night of April 23, 1915, mass arrests of Armenian politicians, church leaders, journalists, lawyers, and intellectuals took place in Constantinople, under the pretext that all of Turkey's Armenian residents were planning a revolt. These arrests marked the beginning of what would become history's second largest genocide in numerical terms, after the genocide of the Jews led by the Nazi regime.
Between 1915 and 1918, mass deportations and inhuman treatment resulted in the disappearance of 1,500,000 Armenians, who died on the road to exile or in the sands of Syria. Those who escaped death sought shelter in Middle Eastern refugee camps and on the far side of the first range of the Caucasus.
It is not easy to understand the intricate combination of faith, national identity, and political action in view of independence that resulted in the genocide of the Armenian people, but Armenians remember their brothers and sisters who died in the First World War as martyrs who were persecuted and despised because of their faith and their difference.
In any case, it is historically certain that very few Armenians denied the faith of their ancestors and converted to Islam in the hope of saving themselves from the Turks' destructive fury.

---

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

ANGLICANS:
*Mellitus* (d. 624), first bishop at London St Paul's cathedral, archbishop of Canterbury

ARMENIANS:
*Armenian martyrs (1915-1918)*

WESTERN CATHOLICS:
*Fedelis of Sigmaringen* (d. 1622), priest and martyr (Roman and Ambrosian calendars)
*Gregory* (4th cent.), bishop of Elvira
*George*, martyr (Spanish Mozarabic calendar)

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (16 barmudah/miyazya):
*Antipas* (1st cent.), bishop of Pergamum (Coptic Church)

LUTHERANS:
*Johann Walter* (d. 1570), director of the chapel choir in Saxony
*Toyohlko Kagawa* (d. 1960), witness to the faith in Japan

MARONITES:
*Saba the Stratilate* (4th cent.), martyr

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:
*Elisabeth the Thaumaturge* (6th-8th cent.), nun
*Joseph of Maramures the Confessor* (d. 1711), bishop
*Ilie Iorest* (d. 1678), bishop and confessor
*Pasicrates and Valentio of Dorostorum* (3rd cent.), martyrs (Romanian Church)
*Saba the Stratilate*, martyr (Melkite Church)

EAST SYRIAN ORTHODOX:
*George* (d. ca. 304), martyr