June 28

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Irenaeus of Lyon (d. 202) pastor and martyr

Irenaeus, a Church father and bishop of Lyon, died in his city around the year 202. He may have been martyred during the persecution of Settimius Severus.

A native of Asia Minor, Irenaeus came from a pagan family. He was a disciple of Polycarp of Smyrna, who taught Irenaeus what he himself had learned from the apostles.

By the year 177, Irenaeus was a priest in the newly founded churches of Lyon and Vienne, which were already being persecuted. He was called to succeed the bishop Potinus, who had been martyred that year.

During his episcopal ministry, Irenaeus worked as a missionary among the native peoples of Gaul, corrected their deviations from the faith of the apostles, and made peace among the churches, which were already marred by divisions and controversies.

Using the language of the Bible, which he read as a unified whole and interpreted in the light of the canon of truth represented by the apostles' preaching, Irenaeus described passionately the Church's experience of faith. In his own words, Church tradition actually becomes younger as it is passed from generation to generation. For Irenaeus, Christian faith is faith in a good Father who has not abandoned the men and women he created, but who continues to speak to them and prepare them for the salvation that the Son's Incarnation has brought the world.

In his writings, which are the first examples of Christian theology, Irenaeus proclaimed the goodness of creation and human beings, who are made in God's image and likeness and are called to become God's glory on earth.

Before his death, he gave a further sign of his total commitment to reconciliation by attempting to make peace between the Eastern and Western churches, which were divided over the date on which Easter should be celebrated. For Irenaeus, the reconciliation of all creatures and the drawing together of all things in Christ was the heart of the joyful Christian message.

BIBLICAL READINGS
Wis 7:7-10.15-16; 2 Pet 1:16-21; Lk 11:33-36 or Jn 17:20-26

Paul Giustiniani (1476-1528) monk

Paul Giustiniani, a monk and the founder of the Camaldolese hermits of Monte Corona, died on June 28, 1528 on Mt. Soratte.

Born in 1476 into the wealthy Venetian Giustiniani family, he was baptized Thomas and educated by the greatest Italian humanists of the day. On the island of Murano, where he had settled in order to pursue his philosophical research in a peaceful atmosphere, he met the monks of Camaldoli, and his life took a sudden and radical turn. In 1510, he and two Venetian friends entered the hermitage of Camaldoli, and Thomas changed his name to Paul. With one of the two friends, Peter Quirini, he began to call for a serious reform of the church, and the two wrote a detailed Libello on the subject, which they sent to Pope Leo X.

Giustiniani's discontent was not limited to the overall situation of the church, however. For his entire life he remained convinced that the eremitical life could be a silent and mysterious reminder of God's love for humanity, a "wordless sermon." His desire to devote himself totally to intimacy with God led him to abandon the Camaldolese community of Murano, and in 1520 he founded the Company of Hermits of St. Romuald near Ancona, Italy. They are known today as the Camaldolese Hermits of Mt. Corona.

Giustiniani's education and culture made it possible for him to combine an extremely austere way of life with remarkable spiritual refinement. His teachings on the spiritual life have reached us in a precious series of works that, despite their evident eremitical slant, are capable of speaking to all Christians who wish to conform their lives more closely to the Gospel.

A READING

As a ship sailing through the sea leaves no trace behind it, so our soul, led by the Spirit of God through the vast sea and abyss of divine contemplation, should, with a backward glance, find no trace of the road by which we came, nor how we reached that point.
If you had already considered all of this, my dear brother in Christ, you probably would not have asked me or anyone else to advise you how to pray. Instead, you would have abandoned yourself completely to the divine Spirit, without asking to know the way, nor how the Spirit guides you.
Keep in mind, then, that in your orations, that is, when you are in prayer, the best method is not to have a method, and the best formula is not to have a formula. This is because prayer flows from the Spirit, who is generous, abundant and varied in his gifts, and as a result, the ways and kinds of prayer are so diverse and varied as to be almost infinite.

(Paul Giustiniani, from his *Treaty on Prayer*).

THE CHURCHES REMEMBER...

ANGLICANS:
Irenaeus, bishop of Lyon, teacher of the faith

WESTERN CATHOLICS:
Irenaeus, bishop and martyr (Roman and Ambrosian calendars)
Juliana, virgin and martyr (Spanish-Mozarabic calendar)

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (21 ba'unah/sane):
Building of the first church dedicated to the Virgin et Philippi (Coptic Church)

LUTHERANS:
Irenaeus, doctor of the church in Lyon

MARONITES:
Irenaeus, bishop and confessor

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:
Relocation of the relics of Cyrus and John of Alexandria (412), thaumaturges and anargyres
Jonah the Thaumaturge (d. 1461), metropolitan of Moscow (Russian Church)
Ephrem (14th cent.), patriarch of the Serbs
Lazarus Hrebeljanovic (d. 1389), martyr (Serbian Church)
Sergius and Germanus of Valaam (14th-15th cent.), monks (Orthodox Church of Finland)

EAST SYRIAN ORTHODOX:
Irenaeus, bishop and martyr (Malabar Church)

OLD CATHOLICS:
Irenaeus of Lyon, bishop