July 18

Paul Schneider (1897-1939) Lutheran pastor and martyr

In 1939 Paul Schneider, a pastor of the German Evangelical Church, died at the concentration camp of Buchenwald after fourteen months of torture and humiliation in solitary confinement.

Paul was born in Pferdsfeld, Germany in 1897. He studied theology at Giessen, Marburg and Tubingen, and then became a volunteer with workers in Germany's Ruhr region, accepting the most physically exhausting tasks. After this period of service, he became a pastor in Hochelheim.

Schneider married Margarete Dieterich and became the father of six children. When the Nazis' ascent to power forced him to choose between faithfulness to the Gospel and faithfulness to the regime, he had no doubts. As an active member of the Confessing Church, he preached the Gospel courageously, spoke out against the Arian Paragraph and Nazi racial laws, and was arrested more than once.

Aware of the destiny that awaited him, he accepted it freely, for love of Christ and the flock he had been given. At Buchenwald, where he was interned in 1937, his only concern was comforting those who were suffering with him. He announced the word of God at every possible moment, wanting nothing more than to bring life to those who were near death.

When word of Schneider's execution reached Dietrich Bonhoeffer in the United States, he overcame his hesitation and returned to Germany, and several years later he followed Schneider on the road to martyrdom.

THE CHURCHES REMEBER..

ANGLICANS:
Elizabeth Ferard (d. 1883), first deaconess of the Church of England, founder of the community of Saint Andrew

WESTERN CATHOLICS:
Marina of Orense, virgin and martyr (Spanish-Mozarabic calendar)

COPTS AND ETHIOPIANS (11 abib/hamle):
John and Simeon of Aexandria (4th cent.), martyrs (Coptic Church)

LUTHERANS:
Paul Schneider, witness to the point of bloodshed in Rhineland

MARONITES:
Emiliano di Durostoro (d. 363), martyr

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS AND GREEK CATHOLICS:
Emilian of Dorostolum, martyr
Founding of the relics of Serge of Radonez (1422)
Elisabeth and Barbara (d. 1918), nuns and neomartyrs (Russian Church)