

LITURGICAL LIVING

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St. George

Countless stories are told about St. George, including the famous episode of the dragon and the girl saved by the saint. Here is one such story from *Stories of the Saints* by Carey Wallace.

“One day, a dragon decided to make his nest by the spring near the city of Silene. This was a terrible problem for the people of the city. They had to go to the spring every day to get water to drink, cook, and bathe. But the dragon’s breath was so foul that anyone who breathed it got sick. Not to mention the fact that the dragon roared burning flames at anyone who came near. But the people needed water to live. So they came up with a plan. Whenever they went to the spring, they’d bring a sheep out to the dragon. With a great roar of flames, the dragon would pounce on the sheep. And while the dragon was busy eating, the people would fill up all the buckets and barrels of water they could, then run back to the safety of the city.

This worked fine, until the city ran out of sheep. So they came up with another plan. Instead of giving the dragon sheep to eat, they’d give him children. Everyone in town had to draw lots. And whatever child was chosen was taken to the dragon. This went on until the lot fell to the king’s daughter. All of a sudden, the king wanted to change the plan. “Here, take all my money,” he said. “Just let me keep my daughter.” “You already took our children,” his people said. “And your money can’t bring them back. Give us your daughter, or we’ll burn your palace down.”

The king wept, but his people were dying from thirst, and he couldn’t think of any other way to save the city. So he dressed his daughter, the princess, in beautiful clothes, as if she were going off to be married. And he sent her out to meet the dragon alone, because everyone in the town was too afraid to go with her. But before the princess reached the spring, she met a soldier on the road. He saw right away that she had been crying. “Where are you going?” he asked her. “Go away,” the princess said. “Or you’ll die too.” “Tell me why you’re crying,” the soldier said. So the princess told him the whole story.

“Don’t worry,” the soldier told her. “I’m Georgem and I’ve served in the personal guard of the emperor Diocletian. In the name of Jesus, I will help you. “No one can help me now,” the princess told him. Just then the dragon appeared, snarling and gnashing his teeth. He had caught the scent of the nearby princess, and he was hungry.

George made the sign of the cross over himself. Then he struck the dragon a great blow. The dragon fell to the ground, wounded and whimpering. “Take your belt,” George told the princess. “And put it around the dragon’s neck,” When the princess did, the dragon followed the both meekly back to the town.

“We’re all going to die!” the people of Silene cried when they saw the dragon at the city gates. “Don’t doubt,” George said. “Believe in God. If you will all be baptized I will slay this dragon.” So everyone in the city was baptized that day. And before night fell, George chopped off the dragon’s head. The dragon was so big that it took four carts to carry its body out of the city. “How can I repay you?” the king asked George. “Here, take my treasure and gold.” But George refused, “Give that money to the poor,” he said, as he rode away.



Devotion to St George

St. George was born to a Christian family in Cappadocia around the year 280. After moving to Palestine, he joined the army of Diocletian. When the emperor issued the edict of persecution against Christians in 303, George gave all his belongings to the poor and, in front of Diocletian himself, tore the document apart and professed his faith in Christ. For this he suffered terrible torture and was eventually beheaded.

St George is considered the patron of knights, soldiers, equestrians, farmers scouts, England among others; he is also invoked against the plague and leprosy, and against venomous snakes. In the absence of certain information about his life, in 1969 the Church changed the liturgical feast of St George to an optional memorial on the universal calendar. However, this change did not affect devotion to the saint. The relics of the saint are found in different places of the world; in Rome the church of San Giorgio al Velabro has housed his skull from the time of Pope Zachariah.

As in the case of other saints wrapped in legend, the story of St George serves to remind the world of a fundamental idea, that good ultimately triumphs over evil. The fight against evil is a constant in human history. It is a battle cannot we cannot win on our own. Saint George was able to kill the dragon because God was acting in and through him. With Christ, evil will never have the last word.



What's the Deal with Martyrdom?

The word martyr means "witness." Traditionally, the Church uses that term to describe those who have given their lives as a consequence of the faith. The [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#) says that "martyrdom is the supreme witness given to the truth of the faith: it means bearing witness even unto death. The martyr bears witness to Christ who died and rose, to whom he is united by charity. He bears witness to the truth of the faith and of Christian doctrine. He endures death through an act of fortitude."

Here's an excerpt from an article on CNA.

"The faithful are called to follow the example of the martyrs in losing their lives for Christ, even if they do not suffer violence for their faith. "Both in the past and today, in many parts of the world there are martyrs, both men and women, who are imprisoned or killed for the sole reason of being Christian," he said, noting that there are more martyrs dying violent deaths in modern times than in the early centuries of the Church.

"But there is also the daily martyrdom, which does not result in death but is also a loss of life for Christ." This "daily martyrdom" consists of people "doing their duty with love, according to the logic of Jesus."

There are fathers and mothers who put their faith into practice concretely by devoting their lives to the good of their families each day. "There are many priests, monks, nuns who give generously with their service to the kingdom of God and the young people who give up their interests to devote their time to children, the disabled and the elderly," he stated.

Pope Francis entreated everyone, particularly young people, to "have the courage to go against the tide of current values that do not conform to the path of Jesus."



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SAINT GEORGE



AND THE DRAGON

