



# St. Polycarp of Smyrna




# Introduction

- State of the Early Church
  - Roman Empire
  - Gnosticism movement
  - Widespread persecution
- Smyrna - a city in what is now Turkey
  - *"Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to Pergamum, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Philadelphia, and to Laodicea." Revelation 1:11*
  - Admired for its tribulation and poverty; forecast to suffer **persecution** (Rev. 2:10)








*“Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves. But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues. You will be brought before governors and kings for My sake, as a testimony to them and to the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.”*

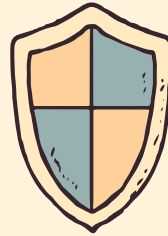
*Matthew 10:16-20*



# Today we will learn how St. Polycarp demonstrated...



**Power of Fasting &  
Prayer**



**Courage**



**Standing up for Faith**



# About the Saint

Born to a Christian family  
who learned directly from  
the Apostles

**70 AD**



Became the Bishop of  
Smyrna

**Age 40**



**Early-mid life**

Chosen by the bishop as his  
personal secretary



**Age 86**

Martyred



# Prayers Answered

- Drought throughout Smyrna
- The Bishop and a priest named Pangratios called for 3 days of prayer and fasting by all Christians
- On the third day, the clouds appeared and it rained and refreshed the land
- Everyone rejoiced because God answered the prayers of Pangratios and the faithful Christians
- Pangratios' name was then changed to Polycarp - which means "many fruits"



# Polycarp becomes a bishop

- At the age of 40, Polycarp was appointed as bishop of Smyrna
- As bishop, he fought against heresies and helped many convert to Christianity
- He wrote a letter to the Philippians
- He met with other bishops to discuss disputes about the date of Easter





# Uproar against Christians

- During a civil holiday in Smyrna, games were being held at the local amphitheater
- A Christian boy named Germanicus chose to fight the beasts during the games rather than to follow pagan practices
- Christians were accused of having brainwashed the boy
- The crowd wanted Polycarp to be brought. He was not afraid but his followers begged him to withdraw to a farm nearby with a few friends.
- He prayed night and day, for all men and for the churches throughout the world.
- One night while he was praying, Polycarp had a vision, seeing his pillow blazing with flames. He said to his friends,"I will be burned alive."

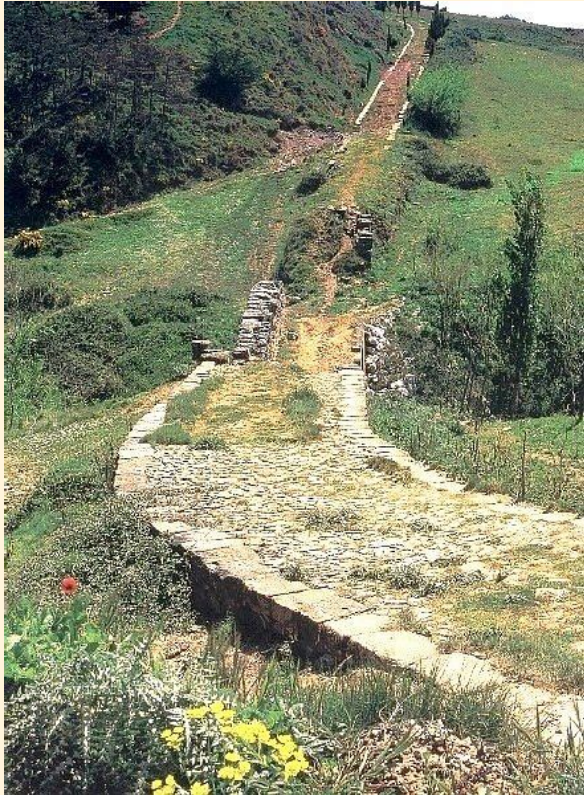


# Searching for the Bishop

- Soldiers came to look for Polycarp at his house. When they couldn't find him, they arrested two young servant boys
- They only found two young servant boys, one of which betrayed Polycarp and told them where he was
- The soldiers went to the farm where Polycarp had retreated, and took the servant boy with them
- When they arrived, Polycarp knew why they had come and came to greet and talk with them.
- He ordered a meal to be made for them and asked them to give him an hour or so to pray
- The soldiers were astonished to see the bishop pray intently for two hours
- When he had finished praying, he was taken back to the city, where he was to appear before the officials.



# Trying to convince Polycarp



- While they were heading down the road, a carriage came to meet them and escort them the rest of the way.
- While he was in the carriage, the captain of the police and his father who rode with him asked, to blaspheme saying Caesar is lord of the world and sprinkle incense
- At first Polycarp didn't answer. Later, he finally replied, *"I will not do what you advise, for to do so would be to deny the true Lord of all."*
- They began to insult him and threaten him, and eventually shoved him out of the carriage
- As he fell, Polycarp's leg was bruised, but he continued to walk as if he had not been hurt



# Polycarp meets the proconsul

- When Polycarp arrived to the stadium, there was a mob shouting very loudly, but he heard a voice from heaven saying, "Be strong, Polycarp, for I am with you."
- He was brought before the proconsul, Statius Quadratus, who tried to convince him to blaspheme and said "*Change your mind and say, 'Away with the godless!'*" Referring to the Christians
- Polycarp responded by turning to the pagan mob and saying "*Away with the Godless!*"
- The proconsul continued to try to persuade Polycarp "Swear and curse Christ, and I will release you."
- Polycarp replied: "*For eighty-six years I have served Jesus Christ, and he has never done me wrong. How can you expect me to betray and blaspheme my King who has saved me?*"



# Polycarp is Martyred

- First, Polycarp was threatened with wild beasts, then by fire
- Polycarp responded: *"Then bring on that fire, which only burns for a short time and then goes out," replied the bishop "Apparently," he continued, "You are ignorant of the everlasting fire of judgment and punishment which awaits the wicked. Why do you delay? I am ready to die for Jesus Christ."*
- He was thrown into a fire and prayed saying
  - *"I bless You, because You have seen fit to allow me this hour to share with the martyrs in the cup of Christ, to rise to eternal life, both in soul and in body, in the immortality of the Holy Spirit. May I be accepted among them in your sight today, as a pleasing sacrifice. For this, I praise You, I bless You, and I glorify You ... "*



# The Story of St. Polycarp shows us

**01** The power of fasting and prayer

**02** Defending the faith against heresies

**03** Courage in the face of torture and threats

**04** Showing kindness to those who persecute you



# Discussion



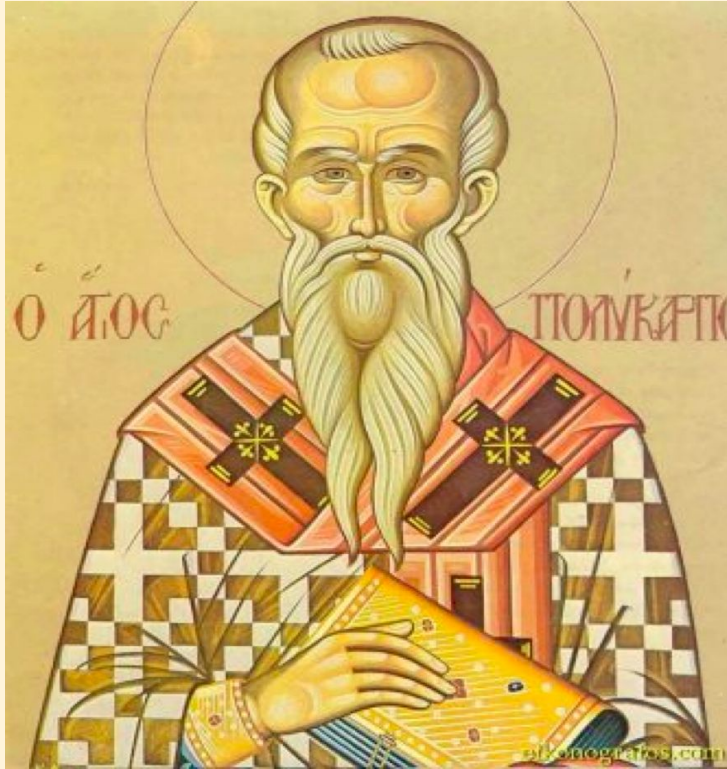
## Question 1

How can we stand up for our faith in a society that does not share our values and faith?



## Question 2

How can we love our enemies, like how St. Polycarp made food for his enemies?



# Icon of St. Polycarp

What features do you notice?







# THANK YOU

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