Our Church’s namesake, St. Bartholomew the Apostle, has through the ages been one of Christianity’s favorite martyrs. There are Churches all over the world and other saints, for that matter, that have carry the name. Indeed, there are another five Saint Bartholomews on the books. The most recent is St. Bartholomew Chung Munho, a Korean martyr, canonized during the papacy of John Paul ll. There are ten or so Blessed Bartholomews of various nationalities. These are saints-in-waiting, if you will, who have reached the third of the four steps toward canonization. Although the Episcopal Church does not canonize saints we continue to venerate them in a manner similar to that of the Catholic and Othodox Church. We do commemorate special Saints days including that of St. Bartholomew on August 24 as noted in the Church Calendar’s “Days of Optional Observance” in the Book of Common Prayer.

#  Jesus is reported in St. John as referring to St. Bartholomew as “a man in whom there is no deception.” Other than that quote, he is mostly mentioned in the Bible in the lists of the apostles. There is, however, a rich tradition handed down by early Church historians concerning his work in preaching the message of Christ to lands as distant as Ethiopia, Armenia and India. Indeed, he is a patron saint of the Armenian Orthodox Church. Armenia being the first kingdom converted to Christianity after Jesus’ crucifixion. According to some sources, he converted the King of Armenia and his family after curing the King’s daughter of insanity. Pagan priests, however, conspired with the King’s brother to seize St. Bartholomew and had him crucified {upside down} and flayed {skinned alive}. Another source says he was beheaded, but it is the flaying that caught the imagination of the medieval church. As a result, in Church art, St. Bartholomew is customarily portrayed piously holding his own skin. Michaelangelo’s painting of the Last Judgement in the Sistine Chapel, one of the great masterpieces of the renaissance, has St. Bartolomew balefully looking up at Christ while holding his own skin draped over his left arm. (Interestingly, legend has that the face portrayed in the skin is that of the artist.)

# **Bartholomew the Apostle**

*Also known as*

Nathanael bar Tolomai

*Memorial*

[24 August](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/day0824.htm) (Roman); [11 June](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/day0611.htm) (Orthodox)

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*Name Meaning*

gift of God (Nathanael)

*Patronage*

[Armenia](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pst00037.htm); [bookbinders](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pst00079.htm); [butchers](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pst00100.htm); [cobblers](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pst00646.htm); [Forentine cheese merchants](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pst00293.htm); [Forentine salt merchants](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pst00294.htm); [Gambatesa, Italy](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pst01630.htm); [Gharghur, Malta](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pst02267.htm); [leather workers](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pst00425.htm); [nervous diseases](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pst00509.htm); [neurological diseases](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pst00509.htm); [plasterers](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pst00562.htm); [shoemakers](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pst00646.htm); [tanners](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pst00703.htm); [trappers](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pst01077.htm); [twitching](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pst00732.htm); [whiteners](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pst00908.htm)

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*Representation*

[tanner](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/pst00703.htm)`s knife; cross; elderly man holding a tanner`s knife and a human skin; skinless man holding his own skin

*Images*

[Gallery](http://www.catholic-forum.com/saints/stb11001.htm) of images of Saint Bartholomew

*Additional Information*

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New Catholic Dictionary

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