

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 II. 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](#) (Roman); [11 June](#) (Orthodox)

Profile

One of the Twelve Apostles. Probably a close friend of Saint [Philip](#); his name is always mentioned in the Gospels in connection with him, and it was [Philip](#) brought Bartholomew to Jesus. May have written a gospel, now lost; it is mentioned in other writings of the time. May have [preached](#) in [Asia Minor](#), [Ethiopia](#), [India](#) and [Armenia](#); some one did, leaving early writings behind, and local tradition says it was him. [Martyr](#).

Died

[flayed alive](#) at Albanopolis, [Armenia](#); [relics](#) at Saint Bartholomew-on-the-Tiber Church, [Rome](#), and in the [cathedral](#) in [Canterbury](#), [England](#)

Name Meaning

gift of God (Nathanael)

Patronage

[Armenia](#); [bookbinders](#); [butchers](#); [cobblers](#); [Forentine cheese merchants](#); [Forentine salt merchants](#); [Gambatesa, Italy](#); [Gharghur, Malta](#); [leather workers](#); [nervous diseases](#); [neurological diseases](#); [plasterers](#); [shoemakers](#); [tanners](#); [trappers](#); [twitching](#); [whiteners](#)

Prayers

[Prayer to...](#) O Glorious Saint Bartholomew, Jesus called you a person without guile and you saw in this word a sign that he was the Son of God and King of Israel. Obtain for us the grace to be ever guileless and innocent as doves. At the same time, help us to have your gift of faith to see the Divine hand in the events of daily life. May we discern the signs of the times that lead to Jesus on earth and will eventually unite us to him forever in heaven. Amen.

Representation

[tanner](#)`s knife; cross; elderly man holding a tanner`s knife and a human skin; skinless man holding his own skin

Images

[Gallery](#) of images of Saint Bartholomew

Additional Information

[Ecole Glossary](#), by Karen Rae Keck

[Google Directory](#)

[Christian Biographies](#), by James Kiefer

[For All The Saints](#), by Katherine Rabenstein

[Catholic Encyclopedia](#), by John F Fenlon

Print References

Book of Saints, by the Monks of Ramsgate

[Martyrdom of Bartholomew](#)

[New Catholic Dictionary](#)

[Goffine`s Devout Instructions](#)

Saint Bartholomew

[Apostle](#), listed among the twelve [Apostles](#) (Matthew 10; Mark 3; Luke 6). Mention of him occurs infrequently in the Gospels, probably because Bartholomew was his patronymic rather than his proper name, and meant "son of Talmai or Tholmai"; some commentators identify him with Nathanael (John 1), although this theory is nowhere conclusively proved. Bartholomew was introduced to Christ by his friend, Saint Philip; his missionary labors brought him to India, Mesopotamia, Parthia, and Lycaonia. He is said to have [died](#) in Albanopolis, Armenia, but the stories of his death differ; according to one he was beheaded; others state that he was flayed alive and crucified. For this reason he is usually represented in [art](#) as flayed and holding his skin in his own hand. [Emblems](#): [knife](#), cross. [Feast](#), Roman Calendar, [24 August](#).

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