

Saint Charles Lwanga and Companions (Martyrs)

Wednesday 3 June



Saint Charles Lwanga and Companions

Saint Charles Lwanga (1860/1865-1886) along with twenty-two companions is considered to be a proto-martyr and is one of the first African martyrs. Saint Charles served the Ugandan king (kababka) as master of pages. This job mainly involved training young people for military service. He carried out this job during the reign of Mwanga who was anti-Christian. Saint Charles (who had recently converted to the Catholic faith) felt compelled to catechize the young pages in his charge in the ways of Christianity, which led to several baptisms. These baptisms sadly did not please king Mwanga and he asked Saint Charles and his companions to renounce the faith but they refused. They remained faithful to Christ. Saint Charles and his companions were arrested and sentenced to death.

What can we learn from Saint Charles Lwanga and his companions?

Saint Charles lived out his faith in Christ no matter where he was. He didn't let his work interfere with his faith, and he lived out his faith in practical ways. The same can be said for us.

When we live out our faith sincerely, joyfully and meaningfully with love, others may come to know Jesus. The Gospel today is of the Beatitudes which could be considered our roadmap for living as a Christian no matter what we are faced with, just like Saint Charles.

Choose one line from the Gospel reading and reflect on your own faith journey.

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The Collect

O God, who have made the blood of Martyrs the seed of Christians, mercifully grant that the field which is your Church, watered by the blood shed by Saints Charles Lwanga and his companions, may be fertile and always yield you an abundant harvest. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel Reading Matthew 5:1-12

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up the hill. There he sat down and was joined by his disciples. Then he began to speak. This is what he taught them:
'How happy are the poor in spirit; theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
Happy the gentle: they shall have the earth for their heritage.
Happy those who mourn: they shall be comforted.
Happy those who hunger and thirst for what is right: they shall be satisfied.
Happy the merciful: they shall have mercy shown them.
Happy the pure in heart: they shall see God.
Happy the peacemakers: they shall be called sons of God.
Happy those who are persecuted in the cause of right: theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
'Happy are you when people abuse you and persecute you and speak all kinds of calumny against you on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven: **this is how they persecuted the prophets before you.'**

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Antiphon Ps 115: 15

How precious in the eyes of the Lord is the death of his holy ones.

Hymn for the Memorial of Saint Charles Lwanga and Companions (Martyrs)

1. Saint Charles Lwanga and his friends
were faithful to God 'til the end,
proclaiming Christ as Lord and King,
which King Mwanga did offend.

2. They taught the youth about the Lord
and how to live life in His way;
baptizing them into Christ's fold
so they could serve him day by day.

3. May we proclaim that Christ is King
and tell the world about His Name;
then living witness shall we be
to Christ with pride and not with shame.

Text: Chris deSilva and Alessio Loiacono © May 2020 LM 88.88

Music links to the Scripture Readings

[Peace I Leave With You](#) - Barbara Bridge, Published by OCP- www.ocp.org

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