



## **St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna**

### **Biography:**

St. Polycarp was born in the first century and at the age of 20 he became a Christian. He was ordained a deacon by Pothinus, Bishop of Smyrna, and was later ordained a priest at a very young age.

The Bishop talked highly of him saying that he deserves to be his fellow in preaching. He became a disciple of St. John the Evangelist. He witnessed those who lived with our Lord Jesus Christ, listened to their preaching and realized that the true Christianity is that taken from the apostles and disciples who witnessed the Lord.

### **His martyrdom:**

When Emperor Marcus Aurelius began persecuting the Christians, they strongly pressured him saying, "Swear and we will set you free; curse Christ and we will spare your life." Polycarp replied, "I have served my Lord Christ for 86 years and He never harmed me so how can I blaspheme against my King Who saved me?"

The Governor said, "If you do not fear the wild beasts, I will make the fire consume you if you do not repent." St. Polycarp said, "You threatened me with fire that burns for a while, then burns out, for you do not know the everlasting fire of judgment and the eternal punishment that are awaiting the evil ones. Now why are you lingering? Do whatever you want."

Then, the pagans and Jews announced that he confessed he is Christian, and shouted, "This is the teacher of Asia, father of Christians, who ruined our Idols" They demanded that he would be put into fire. He was tied to a pillar and he raised his eyes to Heaven, prayed and asked the Lord to accept his soul as a martyr for the sake of His Great Name.

They lit a fire that surrounded his body, and then a nice smell as precious fragrant was smelt. At last, they pierced his body, from which a dove appeared, and blood poured out, putting out the fire.

He was martyred on 22<sup>th</sup> of February of the year 156 A.D.

### **Some of his teachings:**

From his letter to the church in Phlippie

- 1- Emphasizing the faith of incarnation and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2- Preaching about faith, hope and love.
- 3- Warning regarding the love of money.
- 4- Reminding wives of their duties, and reminding about the service to be offered to widows.
- 5- Asking the youth, and young adults to lead a pure life.
- 6- Asking the priests to be kind to everyone, leading those who are away from God.
- 7- Praying for kings and presidents.