

ALBAN

THE LESSON: A LEGACY OF FAITH

*Jesus said, "In the world you will have tribulation.
But take heart; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)*

It was the year 304 – or thereabouts. The Roman empire still stretched from modern day Iraq, throughout northern Africa, and up to the southern tips of Britain and Russia. But now the emperor was Diocletian, and he had just embarked on a campaign to wipe Christianity from the empire. A severe persecution took place during the next eight years. Church buildings were destroyed, scriptures burned, and clergy arrested.

It's worth noting that though Diocletian caused great hardship and death to Christians, he failed utterly to stop the expansion of the faith. In fact, it was not many years after Diocletian's reign that another emperor (Constantine) would actually convert to the faith.

*Jesus said, "Whoever would save his life will lose it,
but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."
(Matthew 16:25)*

During the terrible time of the Diocletian persecution, Alban was a Roman soldier stationed in what is now Hertfordshire, England. Though not a Christian himself, he took in a Christian priest to hide him from his pursuers. In the days that followed, Alban came to faith in Christ and was baptized by his new houseguest.

Then one day, word got out that the wanted man was concealed in Alban's house, and the soldiers came for the priest. Alban put on the priest's clothes and pretended to be the man they were looking for so that the priest could escape. It didn't take long for the authorities to figure out that Alban, too, had become a believer.

*"Take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand
in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm."
(Ephesians 6:13)*

The account of Alban's martyrdom, found in the writings of Bede, says this:

"St. Alban... was not at all daunted by the prince's threats, but putting on the armour of spiritual warfare, publicly declared... 'If you desire to hear the truth of my religion, be it known to you, that I am now a Christian... and I worship ever and adore the true and living God, who created all things.'"

When they realized that neither argument nor abuse would cause Alban to deny his Lord, he was condemned and executed by beheading.

*"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord of hosts."
(Zechariah 4:6)*

Alban's influence did not stop at his death. Tradition tells us that the crowds who came to see the cruel spectacle of his execution became witnesses to miraculous evidence that this man was a saint, so that even one of his executioners was converted. In due course, the very town where Alban was put to death came so to revere him that its name was changed from Verulamium to St. Albans. No one could have predicted such a legacy for a Roman soldier. But we know that God is able to do far more through us than we could possibly accomplish by our own efforts. Today, there are many churches, hospitals and schools throughout the world named for St. Alban.

(SOURCE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: THE VENERABLE BEDE, "THE ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY OF THE ENGLISH PEOPLE", TRANS. A.M. SELLAR | DAVID FARMER, "OXFORD DICTIONARY OF SAINTS" | JUSTO GONZÁLEZ, "THE STORY OF CHRISTIANITY, VOLUME 1" | GERARD SAMPSON, "LAYMAN'S BOOK OF SAINTS".)

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AT-HOME CHALLENGE

Each morning and evening, follow your own rule of prayer.

(IF YOU DON'T HAVE ONE, TRY SAYING THE MORNING AND EVENING PRAYERS FROM THE "FORMS OF PRAYER TO BE USED IN FAMILIES", WHICH BEGINS ON PAGE 728 OF THE BCP. IF YOU DON'T HAVE A COPY, YOU CAN LOOK IT UP HERE: [HTTP://PRAYERBOOK.CA/RESOURCES/BCPONLINE/FAMILY-PRAYER.](http://prayerbook.ca/resources/bcponline/family-prayer))

Review today's lesson. Choose a line of scripture or a phrase from the story of Alban that you find edifying, inspiring or instructive:

Throughout this week, spend some time prayerfully reflecting on the phrase you've chosen. Close your time of reflection with a prayer of gratitude for the witness of Alban.

- AND/OR -

Take some time to pray through the following collect.

Almighty God, by whose grace and power thy Martyr Alban was enabled to witness to the truth and to be faithful unto death: Grant that we, who now remember him before thee, may likewise so bear witness unto thee in this world, that we may receive with him the crown of glory that fadeth not away; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who with thee and the Holy Spirit liveth and reigneth, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

(SUPPLEMENTARY COLLECT OF A MARTYR, P. 310)