

Lives of Saints

St Paul Miki and companions

d. 1597

Feastday: 6th February



“The only reason for my being killed is that I have taught the doctrine of Christ. I certainly did teach the doctrine of Christ. I thank God it is for this reason I die.”

St Paul Miki

I was born in Tounucumada, Japan, in 1562. My father was a Japanese military leader. When I was eighteen years old, I joined the Jesuits and became known for my eloquent preaching.

In 1596, the Emperor started to imprison and kill anybody who followed Jesus, and I was arrested along with other Japanese Catholics. Among us there were priests, brothers and laymen, Franciscans, Jesuits and members of the Secular Franciscan Order; there were catechists, doctors, simple artisans and servants, old men and innocent children. What we had in common was our faith and love for Jesus and his Church.

I was very brave and wanted to help the other people that were arrested with me, knowing that they might be afraid. I was crucified on February 5 1597, along with twenty-five others. While I was on the cross I preached to the others about Jesus' love for them. The executions took place in Nagasaki.

Among the Japanese who suffered the same fate as I, there were: Francis, a carpenter who was arrested while watching the executions and then crucified; Gabriel, the nineteen year old son of the Franciscan's porter; Leo Kinuya, a twenty-eight year old carpenter from Miyako; Diego Kisai (or Kizayemon), temporal coadjutor of the Jesuits; Joachim Sakakibara, cook for the Franciscans at Osaka; Peter Sukejiro, sent by a Jesuit priest to help the prisoners, who was then arrested and Cosmas Takeya from Owari, who had preached in Osaka.

We were all canonized as the Martyrs of Japan in 1862.

S. D. C.
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