

DOWNLOAD PDF FAITH UNLEASHED : HOW I SHARED MY FAITH WITH PAGANS, LIKE PERPETUA

Chapter 1 : Perpetua: Her Prison Became Her Palace - Church History For Kids

"Self-actualization (Psychology)--Religious aspects--Christianity"@en.. "Sex role--Religious aspects--Christianity"@en.. "Sex role--Religious aspects.

Norrie Hoyt Starhawk, Thank you for your poignant essay. It tells the truth about the direction in which intolerance and discrimination are flowing in America today. Hi, Starhawk, Thank you so much for your always informative and noninsulting posts. Sticking with the facts without calling names is the only way to go. Now if only everyone could be so civil! Brambleton As a Baptist, I have no idea what discrimination Wiccans may or may not endure. The only way for people to come to understand your beliefs is to talk to them about it – whether or not they ridicule you in the process. If you can get rid of the lions of Christianity? Jesus smoked dope in India, a trip he made for training purposed, the funding for which, I submit, was derived from the gold, frankincense is that how you spell that? Paganism might be freaky fun – but Jesus is the coolest and freakiest guy I have ever read about. I have written a poem. Starhawk describes, rather mildly, the actual and real discrimination and harassment that Pagans hear about and experience every day. What does a poem about smoking pot have to do with religious discrimination? Of course this goes to general aspersions on our character and ideas we might be criminals or do other nasty things certain others like to accuse us of, so even there – Starhawk Thank you, Terra Gazelle, for posting a much more detailed listing of incidents than I had time to put together! And thanks to all of you who have shared your personal experiences. Starhawk Starhawk Thank you, Terra Gazelle, for posting a much more detailed listing of incidents than I had time to put together! Starhawk Dreamweaver I just wanted to thank those such as Starhawk and Dana Eilers because the harassment is real, the discrimination is real. I used to live openly as a Pagan many years ago, but that has changed. I know there are other Pagans in our area, but my husband is afraid to socialize with them for the same reason. When will we have a truly open society? Dreamweaver I just wanted to thank those such as Starhawk and Dana Eilers because the harassment is real, the discrimination is real. There are plenty of good Christians out there, but too many are silent or turn away when this goes on in their communities. Or when the hatespeech that fuels it is broadcast. We all live with the nagging worry that some unhinged person is going to listen to one of those radio preachers calling for our deaths and act on it. Eilers, I have your book, it is very good, and very informative, and well appreciated. My hats off to you too! Every week there are more reports of people facing heavy discrimination – in court, from care workers and teachers, in schools and workplaces – because the public have no idea what practices and beliefs actually go into modern neo-paganism. Pagans hear Conservative Christians complain of discrimination and just have to laugh. Anyone saying that it would be better to come out about being a pagan in most parts of the US today clearly has no experience of actually being one. Education is key, but individuals still have everything to lose by going public if they live in the wrong State. My kids gave up trying to explain, and learned all about intolerance at a very young age. Just following their leaders. We called them sheeple. She was a witch, he was a follower of Thor. Both had been in the military, and during a posting to a base in Hawaii, their babysitter, a 16 year old Evangelical, discovered their ritual tools. She freaked, trashed the house, and called the MPs. Their three kids were taken away from them and given as foster children to Evangelical officers families. I urge as many Pagans as possible to consider that clause of the Bill of Rights as germane as the First. Because someday it might be YOUR kids they come for. Find some militant friends. And always have an escape route. Back three years ago I was by myself in my home watching tv and preparing for Samhain. I was expecting company from out of state to join me in celebrating. I heard a noise and looked up and there was a dark form who rushed me. I was beaten that night – he was in my house for hours and intermittently beat me and threaten to kill me. He accused me of some vile things – I was a Witch. Needless to say, I was afraid for my life. I will not go through it all, but just to say the Lady was with me. When the police arrived after I was able to get rid of the man it was someone I knew who had done yard work for us dawn was breaking – it took them three hours to get there and they

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never found him. Though we told them where he was at. That was three years agoâ€”last spring his sister and her husband came to my house to ask if I would drop charges on himâ€”he needed a new heart and with criminal charges he can not be put on the donor list. For a split second I thought that I was still alive and though he hurt me the pain is gone.. But then I thoughtâ€”yes the pain is gone, but the memories live on. And though I do my best to follow the Redeâ€”I hope he is dead. I lived for months with a gun in my hand when I went out side. I kept my home locked tight, I still do. He took away my safety in my own home. And why did he do that? I am a Witch. The first time was on campus. I had half an hour between classes, and decided to grab a quick sandwich and cup of coffee at the student union. At that point, I lost all interest in maintaining my cool, turned my body into his, pressed my knee into his groin, and told him that if he did not release my arm, I would relocate his gonads to his throat. I guess I was persecuting him. I politely declined their offer of a copy of The Watchtower, and started to close the door. One of them stuck his foot between the door and the sill. As far as I was concerned, once part of his body crossed my threshold uninvited, he had committed home invasion. I threw my entire weight against the door in a sincere attempt to break every bone in his foot. I guess I was perscuting him by not allowing him to barge into my home. But I really do believe that a thing like anger can put a hole in your soulâ€”so on that Samhain, I got rid of it. You know how the Christians will say Let Jesus??? I remembered I placed that is other hands.. And yes, he did not have a heart for meâ€”it all returns three fold. I had to trust in the universe to bring justice. I have never been hurt like that before just because of how I pray or how I see my Creator. What kind of people think that it is ok to hurt others, or to make someone feel less then? I used to have an online Magazine.. I was able to keep up with the civil rights of Pagans. I can say this.. Any way Pagan, I hate guns. Hate them, and I am partly angry with that man for making me turn to the thought of using one. As long as we stay in the shadows nothing will change, and might get worse. As long as there are those that think discriminating against us is fair gameâ€”they will do it. Like the man that came into my homeâ€”the police knew where he was.. And to be a bit Biotchyâ€”he was a good Christian. We live in dangerous times. Bobby Be Blessed All. Thank you very much Terra. I had not heard the story about Tempest, and it breaks my heart now to hear it. I have been a Pagan for 19 years, nad have been a teacher and leader from time to time. I have also had crosses burned on my front lawn. I just wish that people will just let people believe what they want and leave others in peace. That was the job of the County Prosecutor and Police. As far as that goes, as one of the officers used to say: Terra Thank-you for this article Starhawk, and thank-you Dana for that book. What he did to you was wrong, absolutely, but the way you related certain feelings almost made you sound like that which you faced that night. My roommate is from Korea but raised American and is a strong anti-racist activist and always talks about having to educate people about racism. Being crucified, fed to the lions, drawn and quarteredâ€” now THAT was persecution. You know, the stuff in the Constitution? Which, by the way, was written by Enlightenment deists, not Christians.

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Chapter 2 : Meditative Meanderings: Saints Perpetua and Felicity

Note: Citations are based on reference standards. However, formatting rules can vary widely between applications and fields of interest or study. The specific requirements or preferences of your reviewing publisher, classroom teacher, institution or organization should be applied.

Vibia Perpetua was a married noblewoman, said to have been 22 years old at the time of her death, and mother of an infant she was nursing. She was a young, well-educated, noblewoman and mother of an infant son living in the city of Carthage in North Africa. Her mother was a Christian and her father was a pagan. In terms of her faith, Perpetua followed the example of her mother. Despite the pleas of her father to deny her faith, Perpetua did the very opposite, and fearlessly proclaimed it. Felicity was a pregnant slave girl who was imprisoned with Perpetua. Little is known about the life of Felicity because, unlike Perpetua, she did not keep a diary of her life. The prison was so crowded with people that the heat was suffocating. Now she saw a vision that he was even more alone, in a dark place, hot and thirsty “not in the eternal joy she hoped for him. She began to pray for Dinocrates and though she was put in stocks every day, her thoughts were not on her own suffering but on her prayers to help her brother. Finally she had another vision in which she saw Dinocrates healed and clean, drinking from a golden bowl that never emptied. Meanwhile Felicity was also in torment. It was against the law for pregnant women to be executed. To kill a child in the womb was shedding innocent and sacred blood. Felicity was afraid that she would not give birth before the day set for their martyrdom and her companions would go on their journey without her. Two days before the execution, Felicity went into a painful labor. The officers of the prison began to recognize the power of the Christians and the strength and leadership of Perpetua. In some cases this helped the Christians: Despite threats of persecution and death, Perpetua, Felicity a slave woman and expectant mother and three companions, Revocatus, Secundulus and Saturninus, refused to renounce their Christian faith. They went to the arena the fifth, Secundulus, had died in prison with joy and calm. The men were attacked by bears, leopards, and wild boars. The women were stripped to face a rabid heifer. When the crowd, however, saw the two young women, one of whom had obviously just given birth, they were horrified and the women were removed and clothed again. Perpetua and Felicity were thrown back into the arena so roughly that they were bruised and hurt. Perpetua, though confused and distracted, still was thinking of others and went to help Felicity up. The two of them stood side by side as all five martyrs had their throats cut.

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Chapter 3 : Guest Blog: Derek Markie on Sharing Faith - FaithAction

Even if her pagan father pleaded to renounce her faith for the sake of her son, she did not listen. She even said that the pot lying in her prison cell cannot be called by any other name, just like her she can only be called a Christian.

Posted by Jim People have been living and dying for Christ for over years and history is full of wonderful examples of men and women who followed Christ faithfully. We can learn a lot from studying their lives. Yet, there is something truly compelling about those who suffer for Him and pay the ultimate price for their faith. When I read the historical record of what some of these ancient brothers and sisters went through, it challenges me deeply. I often wonder how I would respond in such situations. The one thing I can say with certainty is that these accounts inspire me to live for Christ. The record of the Passion of St. Felicitas, and their Companions is one of the great treasures of martyr literature, an authentic document preserved for us in the actual words of the martyrs and their friends. The following record of their martyrdom is lengthy, but it is well worth reading. It will inspire your own walk with the Christ and may even bring you to tears. May you and I so esteem Christ that we too truly live for Him! It was in the great African city of Carthage, in the year , during the persecutions ordered by the Emperor Severus, that five catechumens were arrested for their faith. The group consisted of a slave Revocatus, his fellow slave Felicitas, who was expecting the birth of a child, two free men, Saturninus and Secundulus, and a matron of twenty-two, Vivia Perpetua, wife of a man in good position and mother of a small infant. These five prisoners were soon joined by one Saturus, who seems to have been their instructor in the faith and who now chose to share their punishment. At first they were all kept under strong guard in a private house. Perpetua wrote a vivid account of what happened. Can it be called by any other name than what it is? Then I thanked God for the relief of being, for a few days, parted from my father. The Holy Spirit bade me after the holy rite to pray for nothing but bodily endurance. What a day of horror! Terrible heat, owing to the crowds! Rough treatment by the soldiers! To crown all I was tormented with anxiety for my baby. But Tertius and Pomponius, those blessed deacons who ministered to us, paid for us to be moved for a few hours to a better part of the prison and we obtained some relief. All went out of the prison and we were left to ourselves. My baby was brought and I nursed him, for already he was faint for want of food. I spoke anxiously to my mother on his behalf and encouraged my brother and commended my son to their care. For I was concerned when I saw their concern for me. For many days I suffered such anxieties, but I obtained leave for my child to remain in the prison with me, and when relieved of my trouble and distress for him, I quickly recovered my health. My prison suddenly became a palace to me and I would rather have been there than anywhere else. I saw a golden ladder of wonderful length reaching up to heaven, but so narrow that only one at a time could ascend; and to the sides of the ladder were fastened all kinds of iron weapons. There were swords, lances, hooks, daggers, so that if anyone climbed up carelessly or without looking upwards, he was mangled and his flesh caught on the weapons. And at the foot of the ladder was a huge dragon which lay in wait for those going up and sought to frighten them from the ascent. The first to go up was Saturus, who of his own accord had given himself up for our sakes, because our faith was of his building and he was not with us when we were arrested. He reached the top of the ladder and, turning, said to me: And I went up and saw a vast garden, and sitting in the midst a tall man with white hair in the dress of a shepherd, milking sheep; and round about were many thousands clad in white. He raised his head and looked at me and said: I at once told my brother and we understood that we must suffer, and henceforth began to have no hope in this world. My father arrived from the city, worn with anxiety, and came up the hill hoping still to weaken my resolution. Pity your father, if I deserve you should call me father, if I have brought you up to this your prime of life, if I have loved you more than your brothers! Make me not a reproach to mankind! Forget your pride; do not make us all wretched! None of us will ever speak freely again if calamity strikes you. The news of the trial spread fast and brought a huge crowd together in the forum. We were placed on a sort of platform before the judge, who was Hilarion, procurator of the province, since the proconsul had lately died. The others were questioned before

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me and confessed their faith. Spare the tender years of your child. Offer sacrifice for the prosperity of the emperors. I felt this as much as if I myself had been struck, so deeply did I grieve to see my father treated thus in his old age. The judge then passed sentence on us all and condemned us to the wild beasts, and in great joy we returned to our prison. Then, as my baby was accustomed to the breast, I sent Pomponius the deacon to ask him of my father, who, however, refused to send him. And God so ordered it that the child no longer needed to nurse, nor did my milk incommode me. Before pronouncing sentence, Hilarion had Saturus, Saturninus, and Revocatus scourged and Perpetua and Felicitas beaten on the face. They were then kept for the gladiatorial shows which were to be given for the soldiers on the festival of Geta, the young prince whom his father Severus had made Caesar four years previously. While in prison both Perpetua and Saturus had visions which they described in writing in great detail. The remainder of the story was added by another hand, apparently that of an eyewitness. Felicitas had feared that she might not be allowed to suffer with the rest because pregnant women were not sent into the arena. However, she gave birth in the prison to a daughter whom one of their fellow Christians at once adopted. Pudens, their jailer, was by this time a convert, and did all he could for them. Such calm courage and confidence astonished the pagans and brought about many conversions. On the day of their martyrdom they set forth from the prison. At the gates of the amphitheater the attendants tried to force the men to put on the robes of the priests of Saturn and the women the dress symbolic of the goddess Ceres, but they all resisted and the officer allowed them to enter the arena clad as they were. Perpetua was singing, while Revocatus, Saturninus, and Saturus were calling out warnings to the bystanders and even to Hilarion himself, as they walked beneath his balcony, of the coming vengeance of God. The mob cried out that they should be scourged for their boldness. Accordingly, as the martyrs passed in front of the venatores, or hunters, each received a lash. To each one God granted the form of martyrdom he desired. Saturus had hoped to be exposed to several sorts of beasts, that his sufferings might be intensified. He and Revocatus were first attacked half-heartedly by a leopard. Saturus was next exposed to a wild boar which turned on his keeper instead. He was then tied up on the bridge in front of a bear, but the animal refused to stir out of his den, and Saturus was reserved for one more encounter. The delay gave him an opportunity to turn and speak to the converted jailer Pudens: Not a beast has touched me! So believe steadfastly in Christ. And see now, I go forth yonder and with one bite from a leopard all will be over. Perpetua and Felicitas were exposed to a mad heifer. Perpetua was tossed first and fell on her back, but raised herself and gathered her torn tunic modestly about her; then, after fastening up her hair, lest she look as if she were in mourning, she rose and went to help Felicitas, who had been badly hurt by the animal. Side by side they stood, expecting another assault, but the sated audience cried out that it was enough. They were therefore led to the gate Sanevivaria, where victims who had not been killed in the arena were dispatched by gladiators. Here Perpetua seemed to arouse herself from an ecstasy and could not believe that she had already been exposed to a mad heifer until she saw the marks of her injuries. She then called out to her brother and to the catechumen: Do not let our sufferings be a stumbling block to you. This they did willingly, and after giving each other the kiss of peace, they were killed by the gladiators. Perpetua had to guide the sword of the nervous executioner to her throat. The story of these martyrs has been given in detail for it is typical of so many others. No saints were more universally honored in all the early Church calendars and martyrologies. In the fourth century their Acts were publicly read in the churches of Africa and were so highly esteemed that Augustine, bishop of Hippo, found it necessary to protest against their being placed on a level with the Scriptures. To read another inspiring life story from the early church, read our post: Inspiring Lives From Church History: James, the Great Martyr of Persia.

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Chapter 4 : Saints Perpetua and Felicity

Perpetua's father was a pagan, her mother and two brothers Christians, one of the brothers being a catechumen. instructor in the faith and who now.

Perpetua Parish located at D. Tuazon Avenue in Quezon City. A lot of people may not heard of these two great martyrs. They are the Patron of mothers, expectant mothers, ranchers and butchers. During the time that they were imprisoned Perpetua just gave birth to a son while Felicity was eight months pregnant and 2 months prior to their execution she has given birth to a baby girl who was adopted by a Christian woman in Carthage. Their feast day falls on 7th of March. Vibia Perpetua was a well-educated noblewoman who decided to follow the path of her mother to become a Christian. While Felicity is one of their slave. At the young age of 23 she was firm with her decision not to give up her Christian faith. Even if her pagan father pleaded to renounce her faith for the sake of her son, she did not listen. She even said that the pot lying in her prison cell cannot be called by any other name, just like her she can only be called a Christian. Before the execution, while praying, Perpetua dreamt of a ladder so high that it reaches the heaven. She saw that Saturus went up first and upon reaching the top he said to Perpetua that he will be waiting up there and reminded her to be careful not to be bitten by the dragon along the stairs. The men went first and were attacked by bears, leopards and wild boars. And when the women were stripped to face the heifer same like a cow the crowd cried that they had enough. So Perpetua and Felicity instead had to die in the hands of the gladiators. Before they were killed she told her fellow Christians to be steadfast with their faith, love one another and do not let the persecution stop them from becoming firm with their love of Christ. As Perpetua and Felicity stood side by side they were killed by a sword at Carthage in the Roman province of Africa. From the time I have heard of their martyrdom, I have admired their courage and they become my inspiration in times when I am questioned of my faith. When I am facing hardships in life, I would just remember how Saints Perpetua and Felicity were able to face their sufferings during the time they were imprisoned up to the moment they were persecuted. Though they are women who at their time were considered weak, they remained strong in faith and had bear the pains of their ordeals. For me their courage is a reminder that as long as we remain faithful in Christ, we will be able to endure all the sufferings that would come our way. Lawrence OP via Flickr We invite you to share your inspiring stories, life stories or reflections. Contact us at [wewrite2share gmail](mailto:wewrite2share@gmail.com).

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Chapter 5 : Two Kinds of Saints?

Despite threats of persecution and death, Perpetua, Felicity (a slave woman and expectant mother) and three companions, Revocatus, Secundulus and Saturninus, refused to renounce their Christian faith. For their unwillingness, all were sent to the public games in the amphitheater.

She trembled not from fear but from joy. Her name was Vibia Perpetua. She was just 22, a young mother singing hymns as the crowd jeered and a lion, leopard and wild cow encircled her. One of the beasts attacked, hurling her to the ground. She covered an exposed thigh with her bloody robe to preserve her modesty and groped in the dust for her hair pin so she could fix her disheveled hair. And when a Roman executioner approached Perpetua with a sword, her last words before collapsing were aimed at her Christian companions: According to a belief passed down through the centuries, the church grew because of Roman persecution. But that script is getting a rewrite. Unintended Consequences of Ancient Violence. More people read about martyrs than ever saw one. The debate over exactly how many Christians were persecuted and martyred may seem irrelevant centuries later. A scholarly consensus has indeed emerged that Roman persecution of Christians was sporadic, and that at least some Christian martyrdom stories are theological tall tales. Moss says ancient stories of church persecution have created a contemporary cult of bogus Christian martyrs. Other Christians invoke images of persecution when someone disagrees with them on controversial issues such as abortion or birth control, says Moss, whose "The Myth of Persecution" was recently released. People such as Perpetua did die because of their beliefs. The first Christians were tortured, reviled and held in contempt by Romans - and their example helped the church grow, they say. Jesus and most of his apostles were executed, he says. Some opposition to contemporary Christians is indeed evil, Morgan says. Christians are being killed today in places such as Nigeria and North Africa. They are the ones who have established orphanages, hospitals and charitable institutions. Jesus constantly warned his followers to expect persecution. The Apostle Paul wrote many of his epistles from jail. The Easter message itself is a story of martyrdom - Jesus, unjustly executed by the Romans. The idea that Christians are at war with demonic forces in the world is reflected throughout the New Testament, says Bryan Litfin, a theology professor at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago. They were the elite Christians who inspired and united others of their faith. There was a purpose behind spreading stories of persecution: Nothing brings a new group closer together than a common enemy, Moss says. The places where martyrs were born and died became early tourist stops. Towns competed with one another to draw rich pilgrims seeking martyr memorabilia, Moss says. Of course, the prices were completely jacked up. Christianity took roughly years to conquer Rome. The emperor Constantine converted to Christianity in and gave Christians religious freedom. For the first years of the church, Christians were often ridiculed and viewed with contempt. But Roman leaders spent about "less than 10 years" out of the first actually persecuting Christians, Moss says. There are only six reliable cases of Christian martyrdom before A. They say it was common knowledge in the academic world. Most Christians just got along with empire. The Emperor Nero covered fully conscious Christians with wax and used them as human torches. Other Christians were skinned alive and covered with salt, while others were slowly roasted above a pit until they died. She lived in Carthage in North Africa modern-day Tunisia and was arrested in March with four others as they prepared for baptism. The Roman Emperor Septimius Severus had decreed that any new conversion to Christianity would result in death. History remembers Perpetua because she kept a diary during her imprisonment. The emotion in the diary is almost unbearable. Perpetua describes the pain of leaving her infant son, who she was still nursing. She describes a prison visit from her weeping father, who kissed her hands while trying to get her to renounce her faith. A narrator picks up the story in the diary after Perpetua was sent to her death. While she was imprisoned, Perpetua says God gave her visions to reassure her. After one, she wrote: But I knew that mine was the victory. Persecution was central to the rise of the early church, he says. Instead, they say, Christians had a secret weapon. The martyrs may have gotten all the press, but it was

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ordinary Christians who got it done by the way they treated friends and strangers. Soap had not yet been invented, Stark says. They took in infant girls routinely left for dead by their parents. They risked their lives to tend the sick when plagues hit and others fled in terror. They gave positions of leadership to women when many women had no rights, and girls as young as 12 were often married off to middle-aged men, he says. Ordinary Romans might have thought Christians were odd but liked having them for neighbors, Stark says. A History of the World at the Time of Jesus. First-century Rome was undergoing globalization. The peace of Rome had made travel easier. People left homes and tribal ties for Rome. The empire was filled with rootless and excluded people: The Christian message offered guidelines for living in this strange new world, she says. Roman rulers eventually found reasons to support the church, she says. By that time the empire was rife with division, and Christians had become a major political bloc with members in the highest reaches of Roman society, says Stark, the sociologist. It was all part of a package. Today, churches have been named after Perpetua; films and graphic novels have been made about her life. She is considered a saint. Her words still inspire. People still read her diary. Perpetua stopped keeping her diary just before she was sent into the arena. No one knows for sure what she felt when she faced her moment of death, but she did write what she expected to see afterward. She wrote that God gave her a reassuring vision while in prison. In the vision, she saw a great bronze ladder ascending to heaven. At the foot of the ladder was a great serpent surrounded by swords and knives. Perpetua said she ignored the serpent and climbed the ladder. He was flanked by thousands of others Christians dressed in white.

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Chapter 6 : The Question of Martyrdom | The Outside View

As a young mother, I was especially taken by the story of Saints Perpetua and Felicity, mothers of infants who gave their children to family members and faced martyrdom in Carthage rather than renounce their Christian faith.

Not just with Catholic saints, but with the people of God who experienced persecution and even martyrdom. When the kids were school-age, one year I read aloud daily from a book called *Jesus Freaks*, a collection of stories of martyrdom compiled by Voice of the Martyrs and the Christian music group dc Talk. This anthology was filled with stories of those who suffered for Christ, many in the 20th century, and also those who were persecuted and martyred in the early centuries of the church. As a young mother, I was especially taken by the story of Saints Perpetua and Felicity, mothers of infants who gave their children to family members and faced martyrdom in Carthage rather than renounce their Christian faith. The friendship between these two women also struck me, as Perpetua was a young noblewoman, well-educated and well-off financially, while Felicity was a slave woman. But both went bravely to their deaths. We know so much about these women because Perpetua chronicled their days of imprisonment in writing, a work that has been passed down through the centuries and can be read here as a PDF: [Here is the Saint of the Day entry for today, courtesy of Franciscan Media](#): Can it be called by any other name than what it is? He continually pleaded with her to deny her faith. She refused and was imprisoned at In her diary, Perpetua describes her period of captivity: Terrible heat, owing to the crowds! Rough treatment by the soldiers! To crown all, I was tormented with anxiety for my babyâ€™. Such anxieties I suffered for many days, but I obtained leave for my baby to remain in the prison with me, and being relieved of my trouble and anxiety for him, I at once recovered my health, and my prison became a palace to me and I would rather have been there than anywhere else. For their unwillingness, all were sent to the public games in the amphitheater. There Perpetua and Felicity were beheaded, and the others killed by beasts. Felicity gave birth to a girl a few days before the games commenced. Reflection Persecution for religious beliefs is not confined to Christians in ancient times. Anne, like Perpetua and Felicity, endured hardship and suffering and finally death because she committed herself to God. Their stories put the troubles of my life into perspective. I know that I do!! Wishing you a blessed Lenten journey, Posted by.

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Chapter 7 : Saint of the Day for March 7 (d.) - IMS Dhyana bhavan

Perpetua did not come from a uniformly Christian family; her father was a pagan, as was one of her brothers. However, her mother and two brothers were Christians, and Perpetua herself was a catechumen, undergoing instruction in the Christian faith.

Just as from the heavens the rain and snow come down And do not return there till they have watered the earth, making it fertile and fruitful, Giving seed to the one who sows and bread to the one who eats, So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; It shall not return to me void, but shall do my will, achieving the end for which I sent it. The word of the Lord. Glorify the LORD with me, let us together extol his name. I sought the LORD, and he answered me and delivered me from all my fears. From all their distress God rescues the just. Look to him that you may be radiant with joy, and your faces may not blush with shame. When the poor one called out, the LORD heard, and from all his distress he saved him. The LORD has eyes for the just, and ears for their cry. The LORD confronts the evildoers, to destroy remembrance of them from the earth. When the just cry out, the LORD hears them, and from all their distress he rescues them. The LORD is close to the brokenhearted; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves. Do not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask him. Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. But if you do not forgive men, neither will your Father forgive your transgressions. Reflection 1 –” The Word of God Jesus speaks to us through the His Word which reaches into our innermost being and addresses our deepest needs. God through his Word comes into our lives and guides us based on His complete understanding of Who we are, what we need and what is right and acceptable. Anything we do that is beyond His Word is therefore not of our Lord. Even if we say we sought God in prayer, our imperfect beings and our sinful nature could influence us, such that what we have could be products of our own minds and flesh. In the same light, we need not worry amidst the concerns and trials that we face. All we have to do is focus on God and His Word. Listen and obey God as He speaks to us daily. It does not return there till they have watered the earth, making it fertile and fruitful, giving seed to the one who sows and bread to the one who eats. It will do the work that God sent it to do! Forgiveness liberates us and sets us free to enjoy the blessings that come with life. Forgiveness does not mean what the offender did was right. It simply means that we are willing to forgive and allow God to contend with those who contend with us. What God is asking from us is to forgive because He has forgiven us. He wants us to give Him the discretion of dealing with those who have offended us. God is the final judge of mankind and He will make sure justice is complete. God said in Isaiah To forgive and to love should be our decision at all times. Prayer Heavenly Father, I always pray that your Word and not my word be deeply imbedded in my heart. In Jesus, I pray. In Daniel 9, we read an example of how he prayed. Daniel had been reading in his scroll of Jeremiah that the captivity of his people was 67 years into exile. He was eager for it to end. Daniel decided to live righteously despite their lack of faith. He began to pray that God would not delay the end of the captivity. As he prayed, Daniel focused on worship and confession. His pattern of prayer gives us an insight into talking to God. In prayer, we praise and confess. Our prayer should first of all focus on God rather than on ourselves. We quietly trust that God will be there for us and give us what we need. We commit ourselves to living a godly life of forgiveness and holiness. May, our Lent be a time of discovering more of the essence of God and responding to those wonders with quiet trust and devoted service. Let us begin the day with God, Our Father. Kneel down to Him in prayer. Lift up your heart to His abode. And seek His love to share. Give me today the grace and strength to embrace your holy will and fill my heart with your love that all my intentions and actions may be pleasing to you. Give me the grace to be charitable in thought, kind in deed, and loving in speech towards all. Ambrose AD , an early church father and bishop of Milan, wrote that the reason we should devote time for reading Scripture is to hear Christ speak to

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us. Why do you not talk with him? By reading the Scriptures, we listen to Christ. That is why Jesus gave his disciples the perfect prayer that dares to call God, Our Father. This prayer teaches us how to ask God for the things we really need, the things that matter not only for the present but for eternity as well. We can approach God our Father with confidence and boldness because the Lord Jesus has opened the way to heaven for us through his death and resurrection. When we ask God for help, he fortunately does not give us what we deserve. Instead, God responds with grace, mercy, and loving-kindness. He is good and forgiving towards us, and he expects us to treat our neighbor the same. God has poured his love into our hearts through the gift of the Holy Spirit who has been given to us Romans 5: While he is offering us a model prayer he is teaching us a way of life whereby we can be pleasing in his sight. But that is not all. In this same prayer he gives us an easy method for attracting an indulgent and merciful judgment on our lives. He gives us the possibility of ourselves mitigating the sentence hanging over us and of compelling him to pardon us. What else could he do in the face of our generosity when we ask him to forgive us as we have forgiven our neighbor? If we are faithful in this prayer, each of us will ask forgiveness for our own failings after we have forgiven the sins of those who have sinned against us, not only those who have sinned against our Master. There is, in fact, in some of us a very bad habit. We treat our sins against God, however appalling, with gentle indulgence “but when by contrast it is a matter of sins against us ourselves, albeit very tiny ones, we exact reparation with ruthless severity. Anyone who has not forgiven from the bottom of the heart the brother or sister who has done him wrong will only obtain from this prayer his own condemnation, rather than any mercy. Help me to be kind and forgiving towards my neighbor as you have been towards me. Note the following similarities: I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth. Father, glorify your name. I manifested your name to men; keep in your name those whom you gave me. The Kingdom of God does not come in a way that dazzles the eyes. My kingdom is not of this world. The Kingdom of God is close at hand. Let not my will but thine be done. This is why I come, Father: Do not be concerned about what you will eat” Luke Ask which one of you will give a stone to his son if he asks for a loaf of bread. Up to seventy-seven Mark Father, forgive them” Temptation: Simon, Simon, I prayed for you so that your faith would not fail. Watch and pray in order not to enter into temptation” John This kind of demon can be driven out by no other means but prayer. I do not pray that you take them from the world, but that you preserve them from evil. Two elderly church members had a conflict, and the people had divided their loyalties between them, which made any kind of progress impossible. A new pastor came to the church and spent several weeks teaching about forgiveness and trust. For a while, the people stuck to their divided loyalties and continued to slog along in their stagnant pool of distrust. After much prayer, the pastor felt directed by the Lord to take action. So during a morning service, he called on the two men to stand and then asked them to forgive each other. He knew that if the church were ever to have peace again, a storm of confrontation had to occur. The men faced off, paused, and then embraced. Tears ran down their faces as each begged the other for forgiveness. Forty-five minutes later, the crying and hugging and forgiving throughout the congregation finally stopped.

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Chapter 8 : Saints of the Day - Sts. Perpetua and Felicity | GON Forum

Perpetua was a convert to Christianity who was born to a noble pagan family. She was martyred along with her maid and friend, Felicity, in Carthage in A.D. The two women were arrested and imprisoned, along with three other Christians.

In public life, he has had leading roles in local churches and voluntary organisations, and represented faith, public, and commercial groups to government at every level. Derek is a FaithAction partner across the Midlands and can be contacted at fte-em emcf. More of his work can be found at <http://> Like many who will be reading this, my faith is the most important thing in my life and the prime motivator for my efforts to serve others and our society. I suspect I am not the only one who has faced these questions, but I suspect, like many, I have let myself off with answers that are just window dressing, rather than a deeper resolution required if this sector is to flourish. So let me attempt some answers and invite comment from others in the belief that we should agree the situation with one another. To fail to do so risks us proceeding blissfully blinkered, until a fundamental problem emerges and wrecks our endeavours. I believe the answer is important, too, for our various co-religionists who currently treat all joint or inter-faith working with suspicion and are not motivated to co-operate across faiths. I believe it is important also to declare once and for all to those who would wish it to be so: I do not believe we are taking the first tentative steps on a set of convergent paths “but we are learning better how to live together. Perhaps it is best if I declare my position: I am a Christian from a broadly evangelical tradition and have progressed slowly to the point of view I now hold. But whilst I would continue to set boundaries for co-operation, I would totally endorse the idea of maximising it. The degree will vary. The closer the relationship of faith traditions, the less will be the limitations. I will be able to do more with fellow Baptists, and other Christians, than a wider group of mono-theists, and again more with them than with pan-theists, pagans or those holding atheistic belief sets. But I can do more with any of these than I can with those who are driven only by hedonism or purely economic determinism. Our various faiths set a priority on created order, shared environment, common humanity, and, apart from, perhaps, the most puritanical or fundamentalist extents of each of our faiths, the socially or culturally discerned limits of selfish expression that is public law and morality. Even those basics give us a lingua franca for working together for a common good, and raising concerns in an eternal context. For others outside of faith, many will claim to agree and travel with us, others will recognise a pragmatic value in our efforts and support us, but only those of faith or declared equivalent beliefs as prime motor will sustain equivalent effort, ethic and altruistic commitment. The limits to co-operation will inevitably occur in two areas “celebration and canvassing. I can celebrate with others in the Olympics or with my neighbours at a street party, but for me the most meaningful celebration is when I can praise my God for what is happening, and to do that with others, we need to share a closer understanding of God. I can say to someone, as a direct sequitur to this article, that I believe living by a faith opens up a fuller life. But I would be a liar if I suggested any faith would do, or that all faiths are equally valid, when I actually believe some to be blind alleys. I would be loathe even to suggest any faith is better than none, because I fear that some false lines would reduce the likelihood of someone finding what I believe to be the truth. More widely, I find it hard to argue even this case without drawing on the unique insights of my own faith. So much for a basis for co-operation; but what happens when our faith ambitions collide? It is common to hear the argument, often referencing the turmoil of the Middle-East or Ulster, that religion is the problem. I have to say that it has never been my experience and I would argue that unconstrained human passion is the problem, whether inspired by religion, romance, ambition or whatever. It is passion for what we desire or believe in which maximises our motivation and, if unleashed, can also blind us to the very things our actions then place at risk. Religious wars have been some of the most cruel; crimes of passion have even been partially condoned in some judiciaries on the basis that to do otherwise would be to limit a life-force. Our own society is facing massive moral turmoil as we at last promote individual rights above long-tolerated norms and social hierarchies in regard to sexual exploitation. Meanwhile, at the rational and ethical end of justice, I

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suspect for each of us there is another line that could be crossed. There is a point where our faith would demand the breaking of law, and we would assert the law of God as we see it, knowing full well that we must then accept the judicial consequences. So, what is the basis for our co-operation across faiths? Surely, it is the shared view that we add a dimension to society, motivation, meaning, artâ€¦ indeed to life, the universe, and everythingâ€¦ that very few would ultimately argue should be excluded. We raise both the ethical and relational qualities of debate and the humanity of practice. But we must beware. As soon as we begin to limit our own freedom to express the truths that motivate us individually, we risk a compromise too far that would make hypocrites of us all. To suppress those of others risks denying our common humanity. We may not agree what the truth isâ€¦ but we probably agree that it is the truth that makes us free.

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Chapter 9 : Ghostbusters Sermon 4 - All Saints - Romans

If we don't share faith, how can we work together to bring faith's contribution? Like many who will be reading this, my faith is the most important thing in my life and the prime motivator for my efforts to serve others and our society.

I hope your weekend went well, fair reader. What I want to talk about today is martyrdom. I have no intention of going into all of the detailed grit of what it means to be a martyr and what it means to carry your cross daily. I would like to say that I would confess without hesitation, but then comes the big difficulty: As a husband, I am duty-bound to protect my wife, and as a father, I will be duty-bound to protect my children. I confess Christ Following my confession, I am to be executed. As a Christian dying for my faith, I am showing the utmost trust in God and fully expressing my devotion to my faith. So ultimately, even if my children survive my own martyrdom, their souls may be lost. I deny Christ Following my denial of the Christian faith, I am released back to my family. We continue to live on in an anti-Christian environment. I can protect my wife and children, but I have shown them cowardice, demonstrating to them that when times are tough, I will buckle and reject the very faith which I still secretly profess. When the time comes and I stand before the throne, what will God say to me? Will Christ intervene for one who claimed to reject him, even if it was only momentary? So which option is the correct one? Perpetua continually refuses and is eventually killed, leaving her child to be raised by her father. Being raised by pagans, did he ever find Christ? If not, would he have found Christ if his mother had raised him? I believe my core question is this: I pray that if the time comes, I will hear God telling me what to do, but personally, I pray that I never have to face such a daunting question. Until next time, friendsâ€¦