

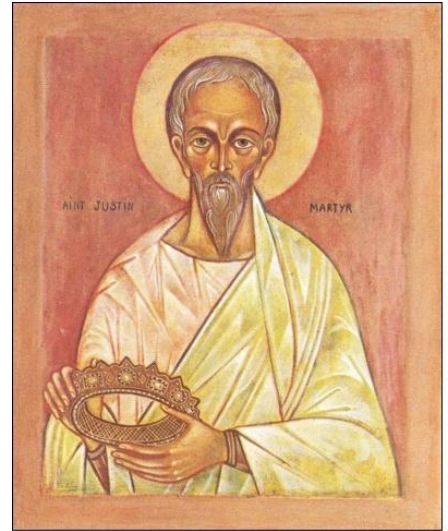
Justin Martyr – First Apology

The following text is an extract from the writing of Justin Martyr (c AD 100 – 165). The document is known as his First Apology, which was written to the Emperor Antonius Pius around AD 150-155.

Various English translations were used in the rendering of this extract.

Chapter 65: Baptism & Eucharist

After we have washed someone who has been convinced and has accepted our teaching, we bring him to the place where those who are called “brethren” are assembled. Together, then, we offer hearty prayers: for ourselves, for the illuminated person, and for all others in every place. We pray that we may be counted worthy, now that we have learned the truth, by our works be found good citizens and keepers of the commandments, so that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation.



Having ended the prayers, we greet one another with a kiss. Then bread and a cup of wine mixed with water are brought to the president of the brethren. Taking them, he gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and he offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things.

And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying “Amen”, the Hebrew for “so be it”. And when the president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called “deacons” give to each person present a portion of the bread and the wine mixed with water, over which the thanksgiving was pronounced. To those who are absent, they carry away a portion.

Chapter 66: The Eucharist

This food we call Eukaristia [the Eucharist], and no one is allowed to partake but he who believes that our doctrines are true, who has been washed with the washing for the remission of sins and rebirth, and who is living as Christ has enjoined.

We do not receive these as common bread and drink. For Jesus Christ our Saviour, made flesh by the Word of God, had both flesh and blood for our salvation. Likewise, we have been taught that the food blessed by the prayer of his word...is the flesh and blood of Jesus who was made flesh.

The apostles, in the memoirs they composed called “Gospels”, have passed on to us what was enjoined upon them; that Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, said, “Do this in memory of Me. This is My body”. In the same way, after taking the cup and giving thanks, He said “This is My blood” and He gave it to them alone.

(This the wicked devils have imitated, commanding the same thing to be done in the mysteries of Mithras. There, in the mystic rites of initiation, bread and a cup of water are placed amid certain incantations. This you already know or can discover)

Chapter 67: Sunday Liturgy in Rome

And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things with which we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Spirit.

And on the day called “*Sunday*”, all who live in cities or in the countryside gather together in one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits. Then, when the reader has finished, the president instructs and exhorts them to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we said before, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine with water are brought forth, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability. The people assent, saying “*Amen*”; and there is a distribution to each of the eucharistic elements. The deacons carry a portion to those who are absent.

Those who are able, give willingly whatever sum they think appropriate. The money collected is deposited with the president. He gives it, then, to comfort orphans, widows, and those who are wanting, through sickness or any other cause, and those who are imprisoned, and strangers travelling among us. In a word, he takes care of all who are in need.

We hold our assembly on Sunday because it is the first day, on which God brought forth the world from darkness and matter. On the same day, Jesus Christ our Saviour rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before Saturn’s day (Saturday); and on the day of the Sun he appeared to His apostles and disciples and taught them these things, which we have submitted to you for your consideration.