

“TRULY THIS WAS THE SON OF GOD”

Saint Mark’s account of Christ’s Crucifixion introduces us to the saint we examine today. **MARTYR LONGINUS**. Longinus was **NOT** a follower of Jesus. On the contrary, he was the Roman centurion assigned to keep order at the cruel execution of our Lord.

Undoubtedly, Longinus had been given similar assignments before. But this particular task would change his life forever. It is recorded in Mark’s Gospel that this soldier was so moved by the final moments of Christ’s life that he uttered the phrase that will keep his memory alive throughout eternity: **“Truly this was the Son of God”**

The tradition of our Church is that Longinus immediately followed the Apostles, renouncing the Emperor and all that Rome stood for. He remained in the city of Jerusalem, where he was able to win many converts to Christianity. It was powerful testimony indeed for others to hear how a pagan servant of Caesar had come to accept and believe in the one true God at the cross.

It did not take long for Pontitus Pilate to learn of the “treason” of Longinus. Trained assassins were sent out with orders to bring the head of the former centurion back to the governor! Longinus did not even attempt to flee from his pursuers, for he knew if they failed to carry out their mission, their lives would be taken. So it came to pass that this brave warrior of Christ gave his life for his new-found Master in 36 A.D.

When the head of Longinus was brought back to Pilate, he ordered it to be discarded with the trash as one last act of humiliation. This relic was recovered by the Christian community and given proper burial. Many miraculous healings have been experienced by those who prayed at his tomb.