



**The Holy Hieromartyr Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna  
Whom the Holy Church Celebrates on February 23.**

This apostolic and Prophetic man, a model of faith and truth, was a disciple of John the Evangelist, successor of Bucolus (Feb. 6), and teacher of Irenaeus (Aug. 23). He was an old man and full of days when the fifth persecution was raised against the Christians under Marcus Aurelius. When his pursuers, sent by the ruler, found Polycarp, he commanded that they be given something to eat and drink, then asked them to give him an hour to pray; he stood and prayed, full of grace, for two hours, so that his captors repented that they had come against so venerable a man. He was brought by the Proconsul of Smyrna into the stadium and was commanded, "Swear by the fortune of Caesar; repent and say, Away with the atheists." By atheists, the Proconsul meant the Christians. But Polycarp, gazing at the heathen in the stadium, waved his hand towards them and said, "Away with the atheists." When the Proconsul urged him to blaspheme against Christ, he said: "I have been serving Christ for eighty-six years, and He has wronged me in nothing: how can I blaspheme my King who has saved me?" But the tyrant became engaged at these words and commanded that he be cast into the fire, and thus he gloriously expired about the year 163. As Eusebius says, "Polycarp everywhere taught what he had also learned from the Apostles, which also the Church has handed down; and this alone is true."

*Dismissal Hymn. Fourth Tone*

**A**S a sharer of the ways and a successor to the throne of the Apostles, O inspired of God, thou foundest discipline to be a means of ascent to divine vision. Wherefore, having rightly divided the word of truth, thou didst also contest for the Faith even unto blood, O Hieromartyr Polycarp. Intercede with Christ our God that our souls be saved.

*Kontakion. First Tone*  
*The soldiers standing guard*

**T**HROUGH Godly virtues, thou broughtest forth for the Lord God \* much spiritual fruit, O thou most blessed Hierarchy, \* and so didst prove worthy of God thy Lord, O wise Polycarp. \* Wherefore, on this day we who have all been enlightened \* through thy holy words extol thy praiseworthy mem'ry \* and glorify Christ the Lord.

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