

Bernard Mizeki 18 June

Catechist in Zimbabwe, Martyr, 1896 — Memorial

Bernard Mi-ze'-ki is the Anglican Protomartyr of Southern Africa. He began work as a catechist among the Mashona people of Zimbabwe in 1891. Five years later, when the Mashonas rose up against the British, Bernard had ample opportunity to escape. Instead, he chose to remain with his congregation.

On the night of June 17, 1896, he was assaulted and mortally wounded by warriors from the village where he had his mission. He managed to crawl to a nearby hillside. Early the next morning, as Bernard's wife and another woman approached his hiding place, they were frightened by an unearthly sound, "like many wings of great birds," and by a dazzling light which moved toward the spot where Bernard lay. When the two women finally had the courage to go to him, Bernard's body was gone without a trace.

From that day to this, Anglicans from all over southern Africa have made pilgrimages to the site of his martyrdom, in order to offer their prayers and petitions in the house of so great a witness for Christ.

See Readings, page 584.

Sentence

Your neighbours will see your salvation by God, which will come to you with great glory and with the splendour of the Everlasting. *Baruch 4:24*

Collect

Almighty God,
your servant Bernard Mizeki
gladly brought the word of salvation
to a people that did not know him
and in obedience to Christ surrendered his life
for the sake of those committed to his care.
Grant that, after his blessed example,
your Church may ever seek to impart
that power of love and forgiveness,
once for all made perfect
in the passion of your Son Jesus Christ;
who is alive and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,
one God, now and for ever.

Readings

Baruch 4.21-24 Psalm 116.1-8

Refrain I will walk in the presence of the Lord.

Luke 12.4-12

Prayer over the Gifts

God of faithfulness, grant that in our offering this day
we may have the fellowship of your holy martyr Bernard,
and give us such joy and simplicity of faith
that your love may always master
our fear of human judgements.
We ask this for the sake of Jesus Christ the Lord.

Preface of a Martyr

Prayer after Communion

O God our Saviour,
who received your beloved servant Bernard
into the habitations of light and glory,
grant that our lives may ever be linked
with those who suffer reproach or death
for their witness to your justice and mercy.
This we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ the Lord.