



Saint Christopher – a man who carries Christ

His name means ‘Bearer of Christ’ (Greek: Christophoros) and points to the central message of his life: whoever carries Christ also bears responsibility for other people.

The Life and Legend of Saint Christopher

There is very little reliable information about the historical life of Christopher. He is said to have lived in the 3rd century and to have died a martyr during the persecutions of Christians under Emperor Decius or Emperor Diocletian.

The best-known account of him is a legend from the Middle Ages:

Christopher is said to have been a very tall and strong man. He wanted to serve the most powerful ruler in the world. At first he served a king, but realised that the king was afraid of the devil.

So Christopher sought out the one who was stronger than the devil.

Eventually, he came to know Christ and realised: Christ is the true Lord over all powers.

A hermit explained to him that he could serve Christ by helping other people.

Christopher therefore stood by a dangerous river and carried travellers safely to the other bank on his strong shoulders.

One day, a small child asked him to carry him across the river.

As Christophorus carried the child, he grew heavier and heavier. He felt as though he were carrying the weight of the whole world on his shoulders.

The child revealed to him: **‘You have not only carried the whole world, but also the One who created the world.’** The child was Christ himself.

Saint Christopher the Martyr

According to legend, Saint Christopher openly professed his faith and was therefore persecuted and killed. He is regarded as a martyr because he remained true to his faith despite the danger.

Significance for us today

Saint Christopher reminds us that every person has a purpose: to support others and help them on their journey. No one has to face life's difficulties alone.

St Christopher can be a role model particularly for people in professions involving great responsibility – such as soldiers, emergency services personnel or managers. He shows that strength is not meant to dominate others, but to protect and support them.

His message is:

'Those who help others and take on responsibility carry Christ into the world.'

Feast Day

The feast day of Saint Christopher is 25 July. He is particularly venerated as the patron saint of travellers, motorists and pilots, and of all those who are on the move.