

Martyrdom
A Very Short Introduction

By Jolyon Mitchell

Questions for Thought and Discussion

- What is martyrdom?
- Who makes a martyr?
- How are martyrdoms created?
- Why are some deaths described as martyrdoms?
- What are the different kinds of martyrdom?
- How is martyrdom deconstructed and categorized?
- What are the differences and similarities between 'the noble death' and 'voluntary violent death' traditions?
- What are the roots of Jewish, Christian and Islamic understandings of martyrdom?
- What are the similarities and differences between Islamic and Christian understandings of martyrdom? How far do they matter?
- Why are some people drawn towards giving up their lives as martyrs?
- What place does religion play in creating and inciting martyrs?
- How are memories of martyrs and martyrdoms preserved?
- How are stories about martyrdom spread?
- How are stories about martyrdom adapted and translated?
- To what extent does martyrdom bring together devotion and violence?
- How is suffering represented and changed through martyrdom?
- How far is it possible to speak about 'good' and 'bad' martyrdoms?
- Why are memories about martyrdom so often contested?
- What makes a martyrdom political?
- Discuss the claim by Oscar Romero that: 'It is very easy to kill, especially when one has weapons, but how hard it is to let oneself be killed for love of the people.'

Other books by Jolyon Mitchell

Promoting Peace, Inciting Violence: The Role of Media and Religion (Routledge, 2012)
Media Violence and Christian Ethics (Cambridge University Press, 2007/2010)
Visually Speaking: Radio and Renaissance of Preaching (T&T Clark, 1999; WJKP, 2000)
Religion and the News (Ashgate, 2012) (Contributing co-editor, with Owen Gower)
The Religion, Media and Culture Reader (Routledge, 2011) (Contributing co-editor, with Gordon Lynch and Anna Strhan)
The Religion and Film Reader (Routledge, 2007) (Contributing co-editor, with S. Brent Plate)
Mediating Religion: Conversations in Media, Religion and Culture (T&T Clark, 2003) (Contributing co-editor, with Sophia Marriage)

Further reading

Daniel Boyarin *Dying for God: Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford University Press, 1999)
Elizabeth Castelli *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (Columbia University Press, 2004)
David Cook *Martyrdom in Islam* (Cambridge University Press, 2007)
Charles Kurzman *The Missing Martyrs: Why are there so few Muslim Terrorists?* (Oxford University Press, 2011)

Jan Willem Henten and Friedrich Avemarie (Eds.) *Martyrdom and Noble Death: Selected Texts from Graeco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian Antiquity* (Routledge, 2002)
Paul Middleton *Martyrdom: A Guide for the Perplexed* (T&T Clark: 2009)
Candida R. Moss *Ancient Christian Martyrdom - Diverse Practices, Theologies and Traditions* (Yale University Press, 2012)

A full list of titles can be found in the annotated bibliography on p.127 of *Martyrdom: A Very Short Introduction*