

15. February 2026  
THE LIVE OF THE SAINTS  
“Saints Faustino and Jovita, martyrs”

Heb 10:32–38

*But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to abuse and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on the prisoners, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one. Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that you may do the will of God and receive what is promised. “For yet a little while, and the coming one shall come and shall not tarry; but my righteous one shall live by faith, and if he shrinks back, my soul has no pleasure in him.”*

This is one of the readings that the Church has chosen to commemorate the martyrs, magnanimous men and women who were willing to give their lives for the Lord. In many cases, before suffering martyrdom, they were subjected to terrible torture and persecution.

What enabled them to endure all this for the sake of Christ? Indeed, their most heroic deeds are recounted.

We can only understand this if we are aware that the spirit of fortitude, that wonderful gift of the Holy Spirit, was at work in the martyrs. All Christians have received it in holy baptism and must display it in their lives. Thanks to the spirit of fortitude, if we cooperate with it, our love for Him will grow in such a way that we will be willing to suffer for Him and to make every effort to fulfill His will.

We can also describe it in the following way: the love of God, poured into our hearts (cf. Rom 5:5), moves us to an ever more generous response, concentrating all our strength on loving and serving Him. This is manifested in a special way in martyrdom, for “*love is strong as death, (...). Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If a man offered for love all the wealth of his house, it would be utterly scorned*” (Song of Solomon 8:6–7).

It is, therefore, a love story between God and the martyrs. Their whole lives long for union with Him, and they are certain that what the Letter to the Hebrews affirms will come true in them: “*Yet a little while, and the coming one shall come and shall not tarry*”. Very soon they will be before the One who loved them and whom they loved more than their own lives. A better treasure awaits them, one that will last forever.

The wonderful words we hear today in the Letter to the Hebrews are very fitting for the two holy martyrs Faustino and Jovita. They were noble men from Brescia, in northern Italy, blood brothers, born around the year 100 to Christian parents in a pagan world. From a young age, they sought to evangelize their surroundings with fervor. They taught the faith to the ignorant, visited prisoners, and helped the poor. Bishop Apollonius called them to his private residence and ordained Faustino a priest and Jovita a deacon. This further increased their fervor, and many pagans were converted thanks to their witness. All this happened during the severe persecution of Christians under Emperor Hadrian.

The governor of Brescia arrested and chained them for their preaching. When the emperor visited the city, he was presented with the captive brothers, who professed their Christian faith before him with joy and fearlessness. The idolatrous statue of the sun god turned black, and when the emperor ordered it to be cleaned, it crumbled to dust.

The emperor then decided to kill the two brothers. They were taken to the arena to be devoured by lions and leopards. However, the Lord wanted to glorify Himself in the lives of these fervent witnesses through signs and miracles. Neither the lions nor the leopards harmed them; instead, according to the account, they lay down at their feet and licked their feet.

This miracle filled all those present with fear. Many people in the arena were converted. The emperor, for his part, left the city in a hurry but ordered the brothers to be thrown into the fire. Even the fire refused to burn them. The third attempt to take their lives also failed. According to legend, they were thrown into the sea, but the waves returned them to shore.

Unfortunately, neither the emperor nor many others drew the right conclusions from the miracles that occurred before their eyes and attributed them to witchcraft. These were such clear and eloquent signs that everyone could have converted to the

living God. However, as happens repeatedly in the Gospel and even in the present day, not everyone interprets the signs correctly. When hearts are hardened, even the greatest miracles, which God also performs to help unbelievers open themselves to faith, do not serve this purpose.

Finally, on February 15, 120, Faustino and Jovita were beheaded and came to the One whose faithful witnesses they had been throughout their lives.

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Meditation on the Gospel of the day: <https://en.elijamission.net/the-fullness-of-the-law/>