

Hymn Lyrics

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Chief of martyrs, he whose name

Chief of martyrs, he whose name
doth a mystic crown proclaim:
not of flowers that see decay,
weave we this his crown today.

Bright the stones, which wound him, gleam,
sprinkled with his life's red stream;
radiant o'er his faintly head,
stars could ne'er such luster shed.

Where his brow receives the blows,
flashing light divinely glows;
bursting forth, each holy ray
doth an angel-face betray.

Christ for him a victim bled;
he for Christ his blood first shed;
first confessor, whose last breath
flies to own him God in death.

First upon the path is he,
marked across the crimson sea!
Forth he leads the martyr-band;
lo! they follow close at hand.

Virgin-born, to thee we raise,
with the Father, endless praise;
God the Spirit we adore,
now, henceforth, for evermore!

Paris Breviary, 18th century; trans.