

# Today's Martyrs

*Resources for understanding current Christian witness and martyrdom*



## White Rose resistance milestones – 1941 through 1945

**This timeline contains not only the events of the arrest and execution of the Christian members of the anti-Nazi White Rose resistance movement, but also relevant entries of Bishop Clemens August Graf von Galen (who had inspired them with his anti-Nazi homilies) and Helmut James Graf von Moltke (the jurist responsible for sending the White Rose leaflets to London)**

**Sunday July 13, 1941**

### **Germany: Munster**

Bishop Clemens August Graf von Galen (aged 63, co-authored the 1937 encyclical *Mit Brennender Sorge*, which attacked the philosophical underpinnings of the Nazi regime; **UPDATE:** delivered a homily attacking the Gestapo for human and civil rights violations that denied justice and created a climate of fear in the country)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clemens\\_August\\_Graf\\_von\\_Galen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clemens_August_Graf_von_Galen)

**Sunday July 20, 1941**

### **Germany: Munster**

Bishop Clemens August Graf von Galen (aged 63, **UPDATE:** delivered a homily stating that written protests against the government's anti-Christian activities had failed, that clergy and religious were still being arrested and deported, and that the German people were being destroyed not by the Allies' war activities but rather by negative forces within the country)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clemens\\_August\\_Graf\\_von\\_Galen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clemens_August_Graf_von_Galen)

**Sunday August 3, 1941**

**Germany: Munster**

Bishop Clemens August Graf von Galen (aged 63, **UPDATE**: delivered a homily condemning the desecration of churches, the closing of convents and monasteries, and the euthanasia of the ill and infirm adding that the euthanasia campaign could be extended to returning war veterans)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clemens\\_August\\_Graf\\_von\\_Galen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clemens_August_Graf_von_Galen)

**October 1941, date unknown**

**Germany: Berlin**

Helmut James Graf von Moltke (aged 34, husband of Freya von Moltke, international jurist, wrote "Certainly more than a thousand people are murdered in this way every day, and another thousand German men are habituated to murder...What shall I say when I am asked: And what did you do during that time?...Since Saturday the Berlin Jews are being rounded up. Then they are sent off with what they can carry...How can anyone know these things and walk around free?")

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helmuth\\_James\\_Graf\\_von\\_Moltke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helmuth_James_Graf_von_Moltke)

**unknown date 1942**

**Germany: Berlin**

Helmut James Graf von Moltke (aged 34, husband of Freya von Moltke, international jurist, **UPDATE**: wrote "Today, not a numerous, but an active part of the German people are beginning to realize, not that they have been led astray, not that bad times await them, not that the war may end in defeat, but that what is happening is sin and that they are personally responsible for each terrible deed that has been committed - naturally, not in the earthly sense, but as Christians")

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helmuth\\_James\\_Graf\\_von\\_Moltke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helmuth_James_Graf_von_Moltke)

July 1942, date unknown

**Germany: Munich**

**The White Rose resistance group circulated four anti-Nazi leaflets in less than a month before the two leaders were recalled to army service in Russia, the third leaflet was the only written condemnation authored by Germans of the genocide of the Jews while it was underway, the fourth leaflet read “...Every word that comes from Hitler's mouth is a lie. When he says peace, he means war, and when he blasphemously uses the name of the Almighty, he means the power of evil, the fallen angel, Satan. His mouth is the foul-smelling maw of Hell, and his might is at bottom accursed. True, we must conduct a struggle against the National Socialist terrorist state with rational means; but whoever today still doubts the reality, the existence of demonic powers, has failed by a wide margin to understand the metaphysical background of this war. Behind the concrete, the visible events, behind all objective, logical considerations, we find the irrational element: The struggle against the demon, against the servants of the Antichrist. Everywhere and at all times demons have been lurking in the dark, waiting for the moment when man is weak; when of his own volition he leaves his place in the order of Creation as founded for him by God in freedom; when he yields to the force of evil, separates himself from the powers of a higher order; and after voluntarily taking the first step, he is driven on to the next and the next at a furiously accelerating rate. Everywhere and at all times of greatest trial men have appeared, prophets and saints who cherished their freedom, who preached the One God and who His help brought the people to a reversal of their downward course. Man is free, to be sure, but without the true God he is defenseless against the principle of evil...”**

Alexander Schmorell (aged 24, medical student)

Hans Scholl (aged 23, brother of Sophie Scholl, medical student)

<http://zulutango.com/whiterose/leaffoureng.html>

Thursday February 18, 1943

**Germany: Munich**

**White Rose resistance leaders arrested for distributing anti-Nazi literature**

Hans Scholl (aged 24, brother of Sophie Scholl, medical student)

Sophie Scholl (aged 21, sister of Hans Scholl, biology and philosophy student)

Willi Graf (aged 22, medical student)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans\\_Scholl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Scholl)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophie\\_Scholl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophie_Scholl)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willi\\_Graf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willi_Graf)

**Monday February 22, 1943**

**Germany: Stadelheim prison, Munich**

**UPDATE: White Rose resistance leaders convicted of treason, sentenced to death, executed**

Hans Scholl (aged 24, brother of Sophie Scholl, medical student, last words were shouted “Long live freedom!”, **guillotined**)

Sophie Scholl (aged 21, biology and philosophy student, sister of Hans Scholl, said at her trial “My brother and I wanted those leaflets to open people's eyes and to put an end to the terrible slaughter of other peoples and Jews even sooner than it will be ended by the Allies. Shall our nation be forever cast out by all mankind?...Your master race really wants peace. It wants human dignity to be respected again. It wants God, conscience and empathy”, in her last meeting with her mother was told “Remember Jesus” and replied firmly “Yes, but you too”, **guillotined**)

Christoph Hermann Probst (aged 24, medical student. husband of Herta Dohrn, father of Michael, Vincent and Katja, baptized and given Communion then said “Now my death will be easy and joyful”, said to Hans and Sophie Scholl “Well, in only a few minutes we shall be seeing each other again. In eternity”, **guillotined**)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans\\_Scholl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Scholl)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophie\\_Scholl](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sophie_Scholl)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christoph\\_Probst](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christoph_Probst)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic\\_resistance\\_to\\_Nazi\\_Germany#White\\_Rose](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catholic_resistance_to_Nazi_Germany#White_Rose)

**Saturday February 27, 1943**

**Germany: Munich**

Dr Kurt Huber (aged 49, husband of Clara, father of Brigit and Wolfie, professor of theodicy, White Rose resistance leader, arrested)

Clara Huber (wife of Dr Kurt Huber, mother of Brigit and Wolfie, arrested, later released)

Brigit Huber (aged 12, daughter of Kurt and Clara Huber, held at home by the Gestapo)

Wolfie Huber (son of Kurt and Clara Huber, held at home by the Gestapo)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurt\\_Huber](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kurt_Huber)

**Wednesday February 24, 1943**

**Germany: Munich**

Alexander Schmorell (aged 25, medical student, White Rose resistance leader, arrested after a failed attempt to flee to Switzerland)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander\\_Schmorell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Schmorell)

**Tuesday March 2, 1943**

**Germany: Munich**

Lieselotte 'Lilo' Ramdohr (aged 29, widow, White Rose resistance member, arrested, release for lack of evidence, arrest and execution ordered by Heinrich Himmler later in the month, escaped, went into hiding, married, survived the war)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lilo\\_Ramdohr](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lilo_Ramdohr)

**Monday March 15, 1943**

**Germany: Munich**

Traute Lafrenz (aged 23, White Rose resistance member, arrested)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traute\\_Lafrenz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traute_Lafrenz)

**Monday April 19, 1943**

**Germany: Munich**

Alexander Schmorell (aged 25, medical student, White Rose resistance leader, arrested on **February 24, 1943** after a failed attempt to flee to Switzerland; **UPDATE**: convicted of treason, sentenced to death)

Dr Kurt Huber (aged 49, husband of Clara, father of Brigit and Wolfie, professor of theodicy, White Rose resistance leader, arrested on **February 27, 1943**; **UPDATE**: convicted of treason, sentenced to death, had said to the court "My actions and aims will be justified by the inexorable course of history. On that I rely with rocklike confidence. I have acted as I had to act, prompted by a voice that came from within")

Traute Lafrenz (aged 23, White Rose resistance member, arrested on [March 15, 1943](#);  
**UPDATE:** sentenced to 1 year's imprisonment, re-arrested upon release, survived the war and turned to anthroposophy)

Willi Graf (aged 22, medical student, White Rose resistance leader, arrested on [February 18, 1943](#); **UPDATE:** convicted of treason, sentenced to death)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander\\_Schmorell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Schmorell)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traute\\_Lafrenz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Traute_Lafrenz)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willi\\_Graf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willi_Graf)

**Tuesday July 13, 1943**

### **Germany: Stadelheim prison, Munich**

Alexander Schmorell (aged 25, medical student, White Rose resistance leader, arrested [February 24, 1943](#), **UPDATE:** **guillotined**, wrote in his last letter to his father and stepmother "Now it shall be none other than this, and by the will of God, today I shall have my earthly life come to a close in order to go into another, which will never end and in which all of us will again meet. Let this future meeting be your comfort and your hope. Unfortunately, this blow will be harder for you than for me, because I go in the certainty, that in my deep conviction, I have served the truth. All of this leaves me with a calm conscience, despite how near the hour of death is. Think of the millions of young men who have lost their lives outside in the fields. Their lot is mine as well. Greet all my dear friends from my heart. Especially, though, Natascha, Erich, Nyanya, Aunt Toni, Maria, Alyonushka, and Andrei. In just a few hours I will be in a better life, by my mother, and I will not forget you; I will ask God to grant you solace and peace. And I will wait for you! One thing, above all, let me leave this on your hearts: Never forget God!!!")

Dr Kurt Huber (aged 49, husband of Clara, father of Brigit and Wolfie, professor of theodicy, White Rose resistance leader, arrested [February 24, 1943](#); convicted of treason on [April 19, 1943](#), sentenced to death, had said to the court "My actions and aims will be justified by the inexorable course of history. On that I rely with rocklike confidence. I have acted as I had to act, prompted by a voice that came from within"; **UPDATE:** **guillotined**)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander\\_Schmorell](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Schmorell)

**Friday October 8, 1943**

### **Germany: Munich**

Hans Conrad Leipelt (aged 22, fiancé of Marie-Luise Jahn, decorated war veteran, arrested for having collected money for Clara Huber, the widow of executed White Rose resistance leader Professor Kurt Huber)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans\\_Conrad\\_Leipelt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Conrad_Leipelt)  
<http://www.katjasdacha.com/whiterose/biographies/hcleipelt.html>

**Tuesday October 12, 1943**

**Germany: Stadelheim prison, Munich**

Willi Graf (aged 22, medical student, White Rose resistance leader, **UPDATE: guillotined**, wrote before his execution "Christianity is the tradition upon which we have built and carry on our spiritual and cultural life...Without religion a state can have no permanence. All order comes from God, equally for the family, the people, or the state" and "In every destiny, no matter how hard it may be, there lies a distinct meaning, even though it may not be disclosed to us in this world. The more difficult the time we pass through, the closer we come to God")

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willi\\_Graf](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Willi_Graf)

**Wednesday January 19, 1944**

**Germany: Berlin**

Helmut James Graf von Moltke (aged 36, husband of Freya von Moltke, international jurist, **UPDATE: arrested by the Gestapo for warning a friend he was about to be arrested**)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helmuth\\_James\\_Graf\\_von\\_Moltke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helmuth_James_Graf_von_Moltke)  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freya\\_von\\_Moltke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freya_von_Moltke)

**Thursday January 11, 1945**

**Germany: Berlin**

Helmut James Graf von Moltke (aged 37, husband of Freya von Moltke, international jurist, **UPDATE: sentenced to death for his discussions of postwar reconstruction with some of the plotters of Hitler's assassination, which he had opposed, later wrote to his wife that he had been tried "...not as a Protestant, not as a great landowner, not as an aristocrat, not as a Prussian, not as a German...but as a Christian and nothing else...But what the Third Reich is so terrified of...is ultimately the following: a private individual, your husband, of whom it is established that he discussed with 2 clergymen of both denominations [Protestant and Catholic]...questions of the practical, ethical demands of Christianity.**

Nothing else: for that alone we are condemned...I just wept a little, not because I was sad or melancholy...but because I am thankful and moved by this proof of God's presence")

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helmuth\\_James\\_Graf\\_von\\_Moltke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helmuth_James_Graf_von_Moltke)

[https://openlibrary.org/works/OL17318218W/Church\\_of\\_Spies](https://openlibrary.org/works/OL17318218W/Church_of_Spies)

**Thursday January 23, 1945**

**Germany: Plotzensee Prison, Berlin**

Helmut James Graf von Moltke (aged 37, husband of Freya von Moltke, international jurist,

**UPDATE: hanged)**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helmuth\\_James\\_Graf\\_von\\_Moltke](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helmuth_James_Graf_von_Moltke)

**Wednesday January 29, 1945**

**Germany: Munich**

Hans Conrad Leipelt (aged 23, fiancé of Marie-Luise Jahn, decorated war veteran, arrested on [October 8, 1943](#) for having collected money for Clara Huber [the widow of executed White Rose resistance leader Professor Kurt Huber]; **UPDATE: sentenced to death and guillotined)**

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans\\_Conrad\\_Leipelt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Conrad_Leipelt)

<http://www.katjasdacha.com/whiterose/biographies/hcleipelt.html>

**Today's Martyrs**

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