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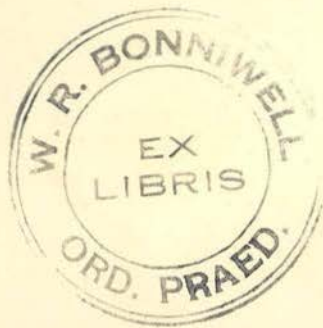
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THE SAINTS OF THE MASS





1/-

THE SAINTS OF THE MASS

COMPILED BY
MOTHER PHILIPPA
OF ST MARY'S CONVENT, YORK



LONDON
CATHOLIC TRUTH SOCIETY
69 SOUTHWARK BRIDGE ROAD, S.E.
1911

“ Read the lives of the saints, and you will find that you are gradually creating a society about you to which in some measure you will be forced to raise the standard of your daily life.”

Rev. H. S. BOWDEN.

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THE SAINTS OF THE MASS

INTRODUCTION

THE title of this book and the use of the Missal may naturally suggest the question: Why have these particular Saints obtained such honourable notice in the Church's Liturgy?

It is obvious that the Mother of God, Queen and Mother of all the children of the Church, should have a place with the twelve Apostles, and St. Paul, whose name is always coupled with St. Peter's. But what principle of selection has opened the door to those that follow—St. Peter's three immediate successors, and a few of the martyr-host out of the great multitude which no man can number?

The answer is that, in the earliest age of the Church, martyrs alone among her saints received public veneration. Mass was celebrated on their tombs in the catacombs, and their names,

The Saints of the Mass

especially on the anniversary of their martyrdom, came to receive honourable mention in the Mass. But among the martyrs themselves a few only could be thus remembered, and so we find mention only of the more noticeable among the multitudes who shed their blood for Christ.

The whole portion of the Mass called the Canon is thirteen or fourteen hundred years old, and Pope Vigilius, before the time of St. Gregory the Great, testified that it had been received from Apostolic tradition. No additions have been made to it since St. Gregory's time; to him we are indebted for the mention of the Saints Agatha, Lucy, Agnes, Cecilia, and Anastasia.

It is hardly necessary to say that the matter of this little book does not pretend to be critical; it embodies with ascertained facts the more noteworthy of the legends associated with the Holy Ones of whom it treats.

July, 1911.

I THE SAINTS BEFORE THE ELEVATION

Saints Peter and Paul.

JUNE 29 and 30.

ST. BERNARD, in one of his sermons for this day, reminds us that the "commemoration here made of the holy Apostles is not of their birth, as of St. John Baptist's (June 24), or of any great event of their lives, as of St. Paul's Conversion (January 25), or of St. Peter's liberation from prison by an angel, but of their death, the thing we most dread, and their martyrdom.

"On this day St. Peter was crucified and St. Paul was beheaded. It is therefore a glorious day, consecrated by the heroic deaths of the two noble martyrs, the leaders of the martyr-band, the Princes of the Apostles, Peter and Paul, the two great luminaries whom God has placed as two eyes in the body of His Church. They have been made over to me," he says, "for my masters and mediators, to whom I may securely commit my cause, for they have made known to me the way of life. By their intercession I shall be able

to ascend to the great Mediator, who came to reconcile by His blood all that are in heaven and on earth.

“What could be sweeter than Peter’s way of calling sinners, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles and in his Epistles? Willingly, too, do I follow Paul, who, with exceeding gentleness and affection, weeps over those who have sinned and have not done penance, and who drew his wisdom and unction, not from the first or second, but from the third heaven.”

With their lives and glorious labours for the faith we are all familiar; let us then consider their deaths and the great devotion borne to them in the early Church.

The cruel emperor, Nero, enraged at the spread of Christianity through the Apostles’ preaching and miracles, ordered them to be seized and put into prison. Yet here, too, they made many converts—their keepers and others. God co-operated with them, for, when water was wanting for baptism, it is said that a fountain sprang up in their prison—the Mamertine—where it is to be seen at the present day.

Another legend tells how, when the term fixed for their imprisonment was near at hand, all the Christians, in distress at the thought of losing their dear shepherd and father, entreated St. Peter to make his escape and preserve his life for the sake of the infant Church. After long refusing,

he at length yielded through compassion for his children, though he vehemently longed to shed his blood for his beloved Master. On his way our blessed Lord appeared to him. The Apostle recognized his dear Master, and asked, “Where art Thou going, Lord?” “I am going to Rome,” was the answer, “to be crucified anew.” St. Peter understood the meaning of those words and returned to Rome and to prison that he might complete the likeness between Christ’s Vicar and Christ.

When the two Apostles were led out to execution, they embraced and kissed each other, after which they were separated and led to the destined sites—St. Peter to an elevated spot on the Vatican hill, St. Paul to the Ostian way. St. Peter in humility begged to have his cross reversed, for he judged it too great an honour to die in the same position as his Divine Master.

A portion of the body of each Apostle is preserved at St. Paul’s Church outside-the-walls, and the remainder at the Vatican Basilica, St. Peter’s.

The devotion of the faithful towards these Princes of the Church has been great in every age. Churches have been erected in their honour, where no expense has been spared, and where the noblest works of art and genius have been bestowed on their embellishment. The precious relics of these martyrs, the

memorials of their sufferings, have been carefully treasured. In the church of Santa Maria Transpontina are seen the pillars at which they were scourged before execution. St. Peter's chains hang in the Mamertine, and on the wall nearest the well may be seen, carefully shielded by a grating, the profile of the first Vicar of Christ. St. Paul's chains, too, are venerated in Rome, and a legend states that when the head was struck off it leapt three times, and three fountains sprang up to mark the spots.

The devotion of our forefathers in England to these Apostles is a matter of history, and is testified by the letters of English kings to the Popes, and theirs to the kings; by the writings also of the Cardinals Baronius and Bellarmine. They assert that St. Peter preached in England, and raised churches. Ailred, the Cistercian Abbot of Rievaulx, in Yorkshire, states that St. Peter consecrated a certain spot in the west of London, where he wished a monastery to be built.

St. Andrew the Apostle.

NOVEMBER 30.

St. Andrew is held by the early Fathers of the Church to have been our Lord's first disciple, the "First-called." He had long been watching for the coming of the Messiah, for he was a

fervent follower of St. John the Baptist and had learned from him to prepare himself for the "Desired of all Nations." When therefore he heard St. John exclaim, as Jesus passed by, "Behold the Lamb of God!" (St. John i. 36), he immediately understood of whom he spoke, and without delay hastened with another of St. John's disciples to follow Jesus.

We all know the Divine Master's gentle welcome, "What seek ye?" and His invitation to "come and see" where He dwelt. With St. Augustine we may lovingly imagine what happy hours those disciples spent in His company "the rest of that day" and the whole of the following night, listening to the sacred words which flowed from our Saviour's lips as He revealed to them His divine mission for the redemption of the world.

Already imbued with our Saviour's zeal for souls, Andrew could not rest till he had shared with his brother Simon the infinite treasure he had discovered, and had brought him also to Christ that he too might know and acknowledge Him. Our blessed Master graciously received Simon and gave him the new name of Cephas or Peter.

These first three disciples frequently attended on our Lord when their occupations permitted, until they received His more special call to leave their nets and all they possessed for His

love. From that time they were His constant companions. They were the witnesses of His first miracle at Cana in Galilee, and afterwards baptized in the Jordan by Christ's authority and in His name.

Wherever St. Andrew is mentioned in the Gospel we find him bringing others to our Lord, and this zeal has won for him from St. Bede the title of "Introducer to Christ." Our blessed Lord repaid his love by special familiarity, and associated him with Peter, James, and John when He performed some of His greatest miracles, and when He gave instructions that were not for all.

After Christ's ascension, St. Andrew preached the Gospel in Scythia or Northern Asia. More probably it was European Scythia, for the Muscovites, now Russians, gloried long in having received the faith from St. Andrew. Early writers tell us that he passed into Greece, and that at Argos "this divine fisherman put all the philosophers to silence" (St. Paulinus).

Lastly, he confirmed the faith he had preached by his death at Patræ in Achaia. The legends of his martyrdom tell us that he was crucified, and that, when he saw his cross at a distance, he saluted it with outstretched arms: "Hail, precious Cross! that hast been consecrated by the body of my Lord, and adorned with His limbs as with rich jewels. I come to thee

exulting and glad; receive me with joy into thy arms. O good Cross! that hast received beauty from our Saviour's limbs . . . take me from among men, and present me to my Master; that He who redeemed me on thee may receive me by thee." The body of St. Andrew was translated from Patræ to Constantinople in A.D. 357; and in A.D. 1210 his relics were brought to Amalfi in Italy, where they still remain. The Scotch honour him as patron of their country: relics of this saint were brought from Constantinople and deposited in a church in his honour where the city of St. Andrews now stands.

St. James the Great, Apostle.

JULY 25.

"And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea (for they were fishers). And He saith to them: 'Come ye after Me, and I will make you to be fishers of men.' And they immediately leaving their nets, followed Him. And going on from thence, He saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and He called them. And they forthwith

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left their nets and father, and followed Him" (St. Matt. iv. 18-23).

There is not much mention of St. James in the Gospels. The above text shows that he was the brother of St. John the Evangelist and that the two brothers were called together to the Apostleship, and that both answered Christ's call with instant obedience. At His word they hesitated not to leave their father and their means of subsistence to follow Him in His poverty and in the labours of the apostolic life. Their father Zebedee seems to have approved of their resolution, while their mother Salome devoted herself to our Lord's service and followed Him to Calvary. At first, perhaps, her ambition for her sons was somewhat worldly, but she was not then well instructed in the heavenly character of the kingdom our Saviour meant to establish.

St. James must have profited much in our Lord's school, for he was early admitted with his brother and St. Peter into Christ's intimacy, to receive His more secret instructions and witness His most signal miracles.

After our Lord's death St. James preached for a short time in Judea, and is generally believed to have afterwards passed to Spain, where he has always been greatly venerated. On his return to Jerusalem he was apprehended by Herod Agrippa, Governor or King of Judea

St. James the Great

and Jerusalem. To please the Jews, this Governor ordered St. James to be beheaded about the time of the Passover, our Easter, in the year A.D. 43.

St. Clement of Alexandria relates that his accuser, seeing the constancy and courage with which the Apostle endured his trial, openly declared himself a Christian and was condemned to be beheaded with St. James. As they were both on the way to execution, the convert knelt to beg the saint's pardon. St. James, after a short pause, embraced and kissed him, saying, "Peace be to you." They were beheaded together.

St. James's body was interred at Jerusalem, and later carried to Spain and deposited at a place now called—from him—Compostella, a corruption of Jacomo 'Postolo.

There are authentic histories of miracles wrought by his intercession and of his appearing to protect the armies of the Christians in Spain against the Moors. The military order of St. James was instituted by Ferdinand II. in 1175.

A church in Rome is called St. James of the Spaniards.

St. John, Apostle and Evangelist.

DECEMBER 27.

"The beloved disciple," "the disciple whom Jesus loved." These are the titles in which St. John gloried and which he so frequently repeats in his Gospel. They speak more loudly than words, and remind us of the purity and innocence which so greatly endeared him to our Saviour.

Beautiful, but too lengthy for insertion here, is his history in the Gospels, from his first following the Divine Master, the "Lamb of God," on the banks of the Jordan, to his devoted standing by the Cross on Calvary, where he received the last token of his dying Master's love—the tenderest and most touching of all—the charge of the blessed Virgin-Mother, "Behold thy Mother." From the Resurrection, too, till the Ascension, we find him again in frequent attendance on his beloved Master.

After the dispersion of the Apostles, St. John seems to have remained some time at Jerusalem, where St. James the Less was bishop; yet he preached occasionally in other parts of the country. It was probably only after the death of the Blessed Virgin that St. John visited Asia Minor and settled at Ephesus, the capital of that part of the country. St. Timothy was the bishop

of Ephesus, but, as Apostle, St. John exercised authority and jurisdiction over all the other bishops. Indeed, Tertullian says that he established sees and appointed bishops in all the Churches of Asia. Ephesus, therefore, was his headquarters. All the Apostles had this power to found new sees under the guidance of the Holy Ghost and in virtue of their commission from Jesus Christ to plant His Church. It was a power to destroy as well as to build up; therefore St. John deposed priests who taught what was not correct, or whose lives were not worthy of their high calling.

Even in his extreme old age—he lived to 92—he continued to visit the Churches of Asia, and Eusebius says that he would undertake long journeys to raise a single person to the priesthood when marked out to him by the Holy Ghost. How touching, too, the story of his following the young man whom he had left in charge of a bishop, but who had fallen away deplorably and even become a highway robber; and of his winning him back to God and the Church by his tender entreaties and Christlike charity.

His apostolic zeal was roused to the utmost against the heretics Ebion and Cerinthus, who denied the Divinity of Jesus Christ and even His existence before His human birth. So great was St. John's horror of heresy that he would

not enter a building where he knew Cerinthus was. St. Polycarp, his disciple, related the occurrence to St. Irenæus, and the Saint's words on the occasion: "Let us, my brethren, hasten away, lest the bath wherein is Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, should fall upon us."

It was chiefly to confute the blasphemies of these heretics that St. John wrote his Gospel. When he was urged by the clergy and people to undertake it, he promised to comply with their request if a common fast were ordered with united prayer to God for the work. These devotions ended, he received from heaven clearest light and fullest revelation, and broke forth into the magnificent and divine exordium: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." It is said that he wrote this Gospel at Ephesus after his return from Patmos, in the year 98, at the age of ninety-two.

Three years previously, in 95, St. John had been apprehended by the Proconsul of Asia and sent to Rome during the second general persecution under Domitian. He was cast into a cauldron of boiling oil, but was miraculously preserved from death. When Domitian heard of this preservation he banished St. John to the island of Patmos. In this retirement the saint was favoured with those heavenly visions which he has recorded in the book of Revelations, or

the Apocalypse. They were manifested to him on a Sunday in the year 96. The death of Domitian left him free to return to Ephesus in 97, where he found that St. Timothy had been crowned with martyrdom. St. John yielded to the entreaties of the faithful and assumed the government of that see. In imitation of the Jewish high-priest, he wore the *lamina*, or plate of gold, on his forehead as a symbol of his Christian priesthood. The same practice is related of St. James the Less and of St. Mark.

Throughout his life St. John's characteristic virtue was universal meekness and charity, as his Gospel and his three Epistles testify. He had drawn this spirit of love from the very heart of Jesus Christ, both during His life and ministry and when reposing on the bosom of His Divine Master at the Last Supper. Extreme old age could not cool his sacred ardour, for, when too feeble any longer to hold long discourses, he would be carried to the Christian assemblies and there always repeated the same words: "Little children, love one another." When his hearers, wearied with the constant repetition, asked his reason for it, he replied: "Because it is the precept of the Lord, and if you comply with it you do enough"—"an answer," says St. Jerome, "which should be engraved in letters of gold, or rather on the heart of every Christian."

St. John died peacefully at Ephesus in the

year of our Lord 100, being ninety-four years old. He was buried on a mountain outside the town. The dust of his tomb was carried away out of devotion and was famed for miracles, as St. Augustine, St. Ephrem, and St. Gregory of Tours mention.

The Church of St. John, at the Latin Gate in Rome, is built on the spot where he was thrown into the boiling oil. This torment merited for him the title of martyr.

St. Thomas, Apostle.

DECEMBER 21.

St. Thomas was a poor fisherman of Galilee, a man apparently of dull mind, but of simple faith and willing heart. For these good qualities doubtless our Lord made choice of him for one of His twelve Apostles. It is remarked by one of his biographers that he seems to have been one of the chief Apostles, since the Church, in the Canon of the Mass and in the Litanies, places him immediately after St. John, in the fifth place.

To St. Thomas we are indebted for some of the most beautiful passages of the Gospels, which have called forth the eloquence of the Church's greatest Fathers and Doctors; of St. Cyril, St. Leo, St. Augustine, and others. They show

forth his readiness to follow his beloved Master even to death, and his perfect reparation for a momentary wavering of faith by his glorious confession of our Lord's divinity—"My Lord and my God."

That he had imbibed our Lord's instructions to all who preach the Gospel is evidenced by his zealous labours in many parts of the world after the Ascension. Ethiopia, Northern Asia, and India seem to have been the scenes of his labours. Traces of his preaching are said to have been found in the Arctic countries and also in Brazil by the Jesuit missionaries.

A pious legend relates that when the Apostle went into the East he found the three Wise Men who were miraculously guided to Bethlehem by a star. These he baptized and made his companions in his preaching and labours. Eusebius tells us that he sent Thaddeus, one of the seventy-two disciples, to King Abgarus of Edessa, to preach the Gospel to him and his people as Christ during His life had promised him by letter.

India was the country chiefly favoured and enlightened by his zeal and by the example of his exceedingly poor, humble, and mortified life. He wrought many miracles and converted numbers to the true faith. The idolaters were incensed against him, and put him to death with their lances.

His martyrdom took place at Calamina, now Meliapore, on December 21, A.D. 75. It is affirmed by many and undoubted testimonies, says Ribadaneira. In 1523, under the reign of John III. of Portugal, when digging within a certain chapel, they found the body of St. Thomas, and near it the lance with which he was martyred and his walking staff. The Viceroy commanded a church to be built there and the body to be placed in a silver chest. This drew many devout persons to settle in the town, which was eventually called St. Thomas's.

Very many wonderful facts concerning him might yet be related. It is said that in the city of Calamina, or Meliapore, St. Thomas built a church and placed in it a stone cross with this inscription: "When the sea shall come to this stone, by the divine ordination shall come white men from very remote countries to preach the doctrine I have now taught and to renew the memory of it." And they say that, when the Portuguese conquered that country, the sea did come up to that stone,—the prophecy thus being verified to the great admiration and comfort of the Christians.

St. Francis Xavier was most devout to this Apostle, and spent days and nights at his tomb, begging help and prayers for the success of his labours.

St. James the Less, Apostle.

MAY 1.

St. James is called the Less to distinguish him from the brother of St. John, the son of Zebedee. The epithet less is also supposed to have been given him because of his youth, or of his later call to the apostleship. In dignity and apostolic powers he was equal to his namesake and to the other Apostles. We are told that he was very generally called James the Just, and at his martyrdom this title was alluded to by his murderers, as we shall see.

He was the son of Alpheus, or Cleophas, the cousin of the blessed Virgin; therefore he was cousin to our blessed Lord, and so nearly resembled Him that, according to Ribadaneira, it was said that many persons, after the Ascension, went to Jerusalem to see St. James, that they might be reminded of the beloved features of our Saviour, if they had known Him, or might behold in St. James a living picture of the Divine Master.

St. Ignatius the Martyr, writing to St. John, says he intends going to Jerusalem to see James, that by seeing him he may seem to see Jesus Christ our Lord. We can more easily understand this expression when we learn that, like our Lord, St. James was a Nazarite—one con-

secrated to God—and that consequently he wore his hair long, as Christ did.

St. John Chrysostom says that St. Peter, by the advice of the other Apostles, ordained St. James Bishop of Jerusalem; for, although Christ our Lord had before ordained him with the rest of the Apostles, He had not appointed him to any particular church and city wherein to exercise the power given him. This St. Peter, as head of the Church, now did. St. Anacletus, Pope, adds that St. Peter, St. James the Great, and St. John together ordained him, in order to leave a form for their successors, and so establish a law that no bishop should be consecrated without the presence of three bishops at the consecration. Like St. John and St. Mark, St. James wore the lamina, or plate of gold, on his forehead.

He was much addicted to prayer, and lived an exceedingly mortified and abstemious life. He never ate meat unless of precept, as the Paschal Lamb before our Lord's death; wore only a single linen garment, and walked without sandals.

His Epistle, one of those called Catholic or addressed to all Christians, is a portion of the inspired writings of the New Testament. One of the three Oriental Liturgies of the Mass bears his name, and is said to be of great antiquity.

The Jews, disappointed of their expected

opportunity of exercising their malice against St. Paul by his appeal to Cæsar, proceeded to avenge themselves on St. James. Ananus, son of the wretched Annas mentioned in the Passion, summoned St. James before him in the Sanhedrim. Josephus says that St. James was accused of violating the laws, and was delivered to the people to be stoned to death. They first led him to the battlements of the Temple that he might publicly renounce his faith in Christ, and, as they termed it, undeceive those who had embraced Christianity.

It was the time of the Passover which brought a great multitude to Jerusalem. St. James made it the occasion for a more glorious confession of our blessed Saviour. He raised his voice and proclaimed from the high spot to all the assembled crowd that Jesus Christ, the Son of Man, was seated on the right hand of the Sovereign Majesty and would come in the clouds of heaven to judge the world. The Scribes and Pharisees, infuriated at this testimony in favour of Jesus Christ, cried out: "The Just Man also hath erred!" Then they rushed up to the battlements and threw him headlong to the ground, saying, "He must be stoned!"

St. James, though much bruised by the fall, was able to rise to his knees and, lifting his eyes to heaven, beg God to pardon his murderers,

St. Cyprian, Bishop.

SEPTEMBER 16.

St. Cyprian was one of the most wonderful triumphs of divine grace that we read of in the Church's history. Until almost "old age," as he himself writes, he was given up not merely to a worldly life, but likewise to the indulgence of every passion.

Thascius Cyprian was a native of Carthage, where his father was one of the principal senators. He made great advances in the teaching of philosophy and of all the liberal arts, and his success in oratory and eloquence won him the post of public professor of rhetoric. This employment was then one of great distinction, and Cyprian, in accordance with it and with his rank, lived in great pomp and plenty. He never went abroad but richly attired and with a pompous retinue of clients and followers. He was advanced in life when God in His infinite mercy brought him out of the darkness of paganism and the slavery of passion and vice, to the light and freedom of the Gospel truth.

There resided at Carthage an old priest named Cecilius. Cyprian became acquainted with him, and gradually relished his discourses on the divine truths and the beauty and sanctity of the

Christian religion. A long and terrible struggle with himself was the consequence. He tells us in his writings that he could not understand how baptism conferred a new life and changed the neophyte into a new person, still retaining his outward nature. He believed it impossible to alter his inclinations and inveterate habits, to lay aside his past enjoyments and ambition, his sumptuous fare and splendid apparel, his eagerness to amuse and to please, and lead a life of humility and sobriety. "But" he says, "as soon as the waters of baptism had washed away the stains of my soul, I received the light of truth; the Spirit of God descended upon me and I became a new creature. My difficulties vanished. What I had abhorred seemed easy and desirable, my views and intentions were hence directed to God."

Cyprian ever after revered the holy priest Cecilius as his spiritual father and benefactor, the instrument under God of his marvellous conversion. To mark this he assumed the priest's name with his own, Thascius Cecilius Cyprian.

Cyprian's subsequent life was entirely changed. He devoted himself to prayer and the study of the sacred Scriptures, and to the fervent practice of all Christian virtues. He sold his vast estate and made over the greater part of the money to the poor. He then led a retired and penitential

for "they knew not what they were doing." A shower of stones were cast upon him, and finally a fuller gave him a blow on the head with his club, which put an end to his sufferings. This was on the 10th of April, A.D. 62. He was buried near the Temple where he was martyred, and a pillar was erected over the spot.

So great was the reputation of the sanctity of St. James that the destruction of Jerusalem under Titus was looked upon as the punishment for his death.

St. Philip, Apostle.

MAY I.

St. Philip was a native of Bethsaida, a town of Galilee, and was called by our blessed Lord to follow Him, the day after St. Peter, St. Andrew, and "that other disciple" as St. John so often styles himself. St. Clement of Alexandria relates, as a thing well known, that St. Philip was the person who, when called by our Lord, begged leave to go home first and bury his father; and how he received for reply: "Let the dead bury their dead; but go thou and preach the Kingdom of God." Our Lord here wished to teach him that after being called to the apostleship he ought not to allow the claims of flesh and blood to interfere with its exalted

duties. If the surmise is correct, may it not have been at his second and more special call to the apostleship, rather than at his first meeting with our Lord, when he heard the loving invitation "Follow Me"? On that occasion St. Philip showed great readiness, and immediately sought for and brought to Jesus Nathanael, after conquering his friend's doubts with those winning words: "Come and see."

As one of our Lord's disciples he would be present at the marriage at Cana of Galilee, and would therefore be a witness of His first public miracle. Again, at the multiplication of the loaves, we meet St. Philip and find our Lord putting his faith to the test. Later on, he joins St. Andrew in bringing certain Gentiles to our Saviour. After our Lord's Ascension, what numbers was he to bring to the faith!

At the dispersion of the Apostles he set forth to Scythia, then to Phrygia, the northern part of Asia Minor. Here, in the city of Hierapolis, he learnt that in a pagan temple an enormous serpent was being worshipped as a god. St. Philip, full of holy indignation, prostrated himself in humble and earnest prayer to God that He would destroy the serpent by which the devil was holding captive the minds of the pagans and hindering them from receiving the light of the Christian truth. His prayers were heard. When he entered the temple the serpent fell

dead, and the devil that had dwelt in it was banished. Seeing the wonder, the people soon after accepted the light of the Gospel, and great numbers received baptism. The pagan priests were enraged, and, laying hands on St. Philip, cast him into prison. After cruelly scourging him, they crucified him and even stoned him while hanging on the cross. The saint rejoiced to share thus in the sufferings of his dear Divine Master.

The people, more merciful, were anxious to take him down that he might die less painfully. Philip, however, desired only to die on the cross, and so prayed God to take his soul. Ribadaneira goes on to say that, while the executioners and wicked ministers were scoffing at the Apostle, God sent a fearful earthquake which threw down many beautiful buildings, destroyed houses, and crushed their inhabitants. This catastrophe frightened the pagans but comforted the faithful, who praised our Lord for thus justifying and honouring His faithful Apostle.

The people were about to take him down from the cross, but his prayer for himself was heard. Before they loosed him he breathed forth his blessed soul on the cross.

The Christians took his body and buried it with great reverence. It was later translated to Rome, where it is still kept in the Church of the Twelve Apostles.

St. Bartholomew, Apostle.

AUGUST 24.

“Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no guile” (St. John i. 47). Here is the panegyric of the Apostle from the lips of truth itself. It was spoken at the moment of his conversion and of his vocation to the apostleship. Of such stones as this did Jesus Christ build His Church. He chose the lowly ones, those unknown to the great of the earth, the single-minded, who seek God alone. St. John’s narrative of the occasion tells us all this: “Whence knowest thou me?” He is surprised at being recognized and known in so special a way; yet his simple and well-prepared soul easily received the light of the brighter truth put before him. At once he acknowledged and adored, in Christ, the long-desired Messiah. “Rabbi, Thou art the Son of God, Thou art the King of Israel.”

In relating this event, St. John calls him Nathanael, but it is believed that Bartholomew and Nathanael are identical.

The field of St. Bartholomew’s apostolate was India. Alban Butler tells us that in the third century some of the Brahmins, who still retained the knowledge of Christ, possessed a copy of St. Matthew’s Gospel in Hebrew, which they declared had been brought into those parts by

St. Bartholomew when he preached the faith there. Later, he travelled to the west of Asia, and was preaching in Armenia when he was crowned with martyrdom. Some say he was flayed alive, others that he was crucified; possibly he suffered the double punishment, as it was in use among the neighbouring Persians.

His relics were frequently removed, but came at last, in A.D. 983, to Rome, where they still repose in a beautiful monument under the high altar in the church of St. Bartholomew, in the island of the Tiber. An arm of this saint was given to St. Edward the Confessor, and by him bestowed on the Cathedral of Canterbury.

St. Matthew, Apostle and Evangelist.

SEPTEMBER 21.

St. Matthew's prompt and joyful acceptance of our Lord's invitation "Follow Me," and his generous, open-hearted hospitality in thanksgiving for the grace of divine vocation, at once endear him to us and stamp him as our model in following the inspirations and calls of God to a better course of life.

His occupation, or profession, was collecting the taxes to be paid to the Roman governor. This was a business detested by the Jews and

looked upon as scandalous, because much cheating and extortion were practised in its exercise. In calling to the apostleship "Matthew the Publican," as the Apostle loves humbly to style himself, our Lord teaches us that He makes no such invidious distinctions as the Jews, but bestows His graces wherever He sees hearts prepared. "He came not to call the just, but sinners to penance."

After our Lord's Ascension St. Matthew remained some years in Judea, and there, at the entreaty of the Christians, wrote his Gospel in Syro-Chaldaic, the language of the people and the one our blessed Saviour spoke. This Gospel was translated into Greek in the time of the Apostles, and the translation was approved by them. They thus taught us how careful they were to guard the true faith and preserve correct versions of the sacred writings. At the dispersion of the Apostles St. Matthew was appointed to preach in Ethiopia. He there converted the king, his wife, and his family by raising his son to life; his daughter was moved by the saint's inspired words to consecrate her virginity to God. St. Matthew gave her the sacred veil, and has been considered the institutor of religious life, because many of the companions of the princess followed her example.

St. Matthew himself lived a very austere and abstemious life. He never ate meat, but only

herbs, roots, and similar food. He instituted the use of Holy Water, and his prayer in blessing it is set down by St. Clement, Pope. He also ordained that offerings should be made to God of first fruits and tithes for the support of those in the service of the Altar and for the poor, as St. Clement also relates.

St. Simon, Apostle.

OCTOBER 28.

St. Simon is sometimes surnamed the Canaanite, sometimes Zelotes, the Zealot; but critics agree that the two names have the same meaning, the first in Hebrew, the second in Greek. He is called Simon Zelotes to distinguish him from Simon Peter, also from Simeon, the brother of James the Less and his successor as Bishop of Jerusalem.

We find no mention of St. Simon in the Gospels except in the list of the Apostles given by St. Luke (St. Luke vi. 15), and as one of the Eleven in the "upper room" in Jerusalem awaiting the coming of the Holy Ghost, and consequently taking part in the choice of Matthias to fill the place of the traitor (Acts i. 13). Even the countries evangelized by him are disputed. Some say he preached in Mauritania and eventually in the East and Persia, or Sar-

matia, which belonged to Persia. Here was the probable site of his martyrdom, for, in the accounts of St. Andrew, there is a passage relating that near the Bosphorus a tomb had been found in a grotto with an inscription that Simon the Zealot was interred there. The martyrologies say that his death was procured by the idolatrous priests, and that he was crucified. St. Peter's Church on the Vatican and the Cathedral of Toulouse possess the chief portions of the relics of Saints Simon and Jude.

St. Jude, or Thaddeus, Apostle.

OCTOBER 28.

St. Jude, or Thaddeus—both names mean "praise," or "the brave"—was the brother of St. James the Less, and of Simeon and Joseph, "brothers"—that is, cousins—of our Lord. This relationship, however, would not so much commend him to our Saviour as his virtue and zeal for the true faith. The only special mention of him in the Gospel is at the Last Supper. When our Lord promised to manifest Himself to every one who should love Him, Jude asked: "Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself to us and not to the world?" The answer of Jesus shows that the manifestation of which He spoke was

one purely spiritual, and consisted in His abiding in the soul that loves Him.

According to several historians and martyrologies, St. Jude preached in Judea, Samaria, and Mesopotamia, and finally joined Simon in Persia, or Persian territories, where he was martyred with him. St. Jude wrote an Epistle called Catholic, because addressed not to any special portion of the Church, but to all the Churches of the East. In it he inveighs with burning eloquence against the heretics then attempting to corrupt the true faith. He calls them "raging waves of the sea . . . wandering stars to whom the storm of darkness is reserved for ever" (St. Jude i. 13).

He was a married man before he was called to the apostleship, and two of his grandsons boldly confessed the faith before Domitian. But the Emperor, charmed with their simplicity and noticing that they were men of low condition, accustomed to labour and therefore not likely to endanger the State, allowed them their liberty. They were promoted to the priesthood and governed considerable churches.

St. Linus, Pope.

SEPTEMBER 23.

St. Linus was an Italian, born at Volterra, in Tuscany. His father was of high birth and held in great consideration.

When St. Peter began to preach in Rome, Linus, who was then living in the city, heard and followed him, and is reckoned as one of his first disciples. The holy Apostle saw in Linus one highly fitted for the apostolate by his virtues, learning, and prudence. He ordained him priest and afterwards bishop, making him his coadjutor in preaching and administering the sacraments, when himself unable to suffice otherwise for all the labours of his supreme government. St. Linus was coadjutor *within* the city, St. Cletus *without*. St. Linus was therefore the natural successor of St. Peter, and filled the Pontifical Chair eleven years. During his pontificate he gave Holy Orders twice, and ordained fifteen bishops and eighteen priests. He commanded that women should not enter into the church with their heads uncovered. St. Peter had ordered the same and St. Paul left it in writing.

He wrought many miracles on the sick and possessed, and raised the dead to life. After delivering the daughter of Saturninus, the

The Saints of the Mass

consul, from the devil, he received for his reward from the wretched, ungrateful father the crown of martyrdom. His body was interred on the Vatican Hill, by the side of his blessed predecessor, St. Peter.

The Church keeps his feast on 23rd September, the day of his martyrdom, A.D. 80.

St. Cletus, Pope.

APRIL 26.

St. Cletus was the son of Emilianus, of a noble and ancient Roman family. St. Peter converted him to the faith, and seeing that he became a spiritual man, prudent and zealous, he ordained him bishop to assist in preaching and instructing the people. He also employed him in many matters of business connected with the general government of the Church. After St. Peter and St. Linus, St. Cletus governed the entire Church with saintly ability for twelve years, during the reigns of Vespasian and his son Titus. He was crowned with martyrdom under Domitian, brother of Titus, on 26th April, A.D. 93, and was buried by the Christians near the body of St. Peter.

St. Cletus, in accordance with St. Peter's orders, divided the city of Rome into twenty-five parishes and placed in each of them a priest

St. Cletus

to have charge of it and administer the sacraments. He was the first Pope who added to his apostolic letters the words: "Health and Apostolic Benediction," which have been used by all other Popes in imitation of him.

St. Clement, Pope.

NOVEMBER 23.

St. Clement was a Roman of noble birth but of Jewish extraction; greater glory, however, than Roman nobility, was his being converted to Christ by St. Peter and ranked by St. Paul among those whose names are written in the Book of Life. These two Apostles admitted him to share their apostolic labours; and so earnest and constant was his attendance on them that he has been styled by the early Fathers almost an Apostle. St. Paul speaks of him in his Epistle to the Philippians as his fellow-labourer; and as such he accompanied St. Paul to Rome. There he again met St. Peter, no longer at Antioch, and fully imbibed the Apostle's spirit through his preaching and instructions. Tertullian tells us that St. Clement was consecrated by St. Peter himself. Others also affirm that he acted as St. Peter's Vicar at Rome and governed there during the saint's frequent absence on missionary work.

After the martyrdom of Saints Peter and Paul, St. Linus and Cletus were successively bishops of Rome. St. Clement followed them on the Chair of Peter. On entering upon his high office, his zeal was called forth by a sad schism and rebellion in the Church of Corinth. A party had opposed and defied the priests, and had even presumed to depose them. Fortunatus, an old man and a disciple in the time of St. Paul, went to Rome bearing a message from the clergy of Corinth, in which they begged St. Clement's interference in this disastrous disturbance. The saint undertook the cause with the plenitude of his apostolic authority. He wrote his famous Epistle to the Corinthians, urging charity among themselves and submission to the clergy; and, with true apostolic spirit, tenderly reminded them at the same time of the peace they had enjoyed and the edification they had given when they lived in humble subjection to those who governed them.

St. Clement dispatched four messengers to Corinth with Fortunatus, and added in his letter: "Send them back to us again with all speed in peace and joy, that they may the sooner acquaint us with your peace and concord, so much prayed for and desired by us."

This Epistle is so manifestly inspired by God that it has been ranked next to the sacred Scriptures; and it is believed to have been

read with them in the churches, for copies of it have been found in ancient manuscripts of the Bible, especially the Alexandrian.

St. Clement, by patience and prudence, avoided apprehension during Domitian's persecution. In Trajan's the tempest raged anew in the year A.D. 100. No accounts of St. Clement's martyrdom have been preserved; but Pope Zosimus expressly styles him a martyr, and his name is inscribed in the ancient Canon of the Mass, which only admitted martyrs.

St. Sixtus II., Pope.

AUGUST 6.

St. Sixtus was a Grecian by birth, and deacon of the Roman Church under St. Stephen, Pope, whom he succeeded in the Chair of Peter, being the twenty-fifth from that Apostle.

After about three-and-a-half years of comparative tranquillity for the Church, Valerian raised a new persecution, A.D. 257. St. Stephen, Pope, was an early victim. In the following year the persecution became more fierce, and the emperor sent a rescript to the Senate of Rome, of which St. Cyprian writes:—

"Valerian has sent an order to the Senate importing that all bishops, priests, and deacons should forthwith suffer, even though they should

be willing to conform ; but that senators, persons of quality, and Roman knights should forfeit their honours, should have their estates confiscated, and if they still refused to sacrifice, should lose their lives ; that matrons should have their goods seized and be banished ; that any of Cæsar's officers or domestics who had already confessed the Christian faith, or should now confess it, should forfeit their estates to the exchequer and should be sent in chains to work in Cæsar's farms." And further on : "Pray notify these particulars to my colleagues, that so our brethren may everywhere be prepared for their conflict ; that we may all . . . be crowned."

"On August 6, 258, Pope St. Sixtus II. celebrated the Divine Mysteries in this crypt chapel (Catacomb of Prætextatus), surrounded by his deacons, in presence of a considerable number of the faithful. After the Holy Sacrifice he was addressing an exhortation to the assembled Christians, when suddenly the pagan persecutors, led there probably by some traitor or apostate, burst into the compartment, arrested the Pope with his six deacons, and, according to St. Cyprian, a priest named Quartus, and dispersed the assembly. The prisoners were dragged before the City Prefect and at once condemned, then led back to the catacombs to be there executed" (*Pilgrim-Walks in Rome*, p. 240).

On the Appian Way stands the Church of San Sisto. According to an ancient tradition, supported by the title of the church, it was at this point that St. Laurence, the young archdeacon and martyr, overtook the Pope, St. Sixtus II., and the four deacons, Saints Januarius, Magnus, Vincentius, and Stephanus, as they were being dragged to martyrdom. The affecting scene is described by St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Maximus, and others. St. Laurence, shedding tears of grief at not being allowed to share in their martyrdom, fell at the Pope's feet, exclaiming : "Father, where are you going without your son? Whither are you going, O holy priest, without your deacon? You were never wont to offer sacrifice without me, your minister. Wherein have I displeased you? Have you found me wanting in my duty? Try me now, and see whether you have made choice of an unfit minister for dispensing the Blood of the Lord." The holy Pontiff replied : "I do not leave you, my son, but a greater trial and a more glorious victory are reserved for you, who are in the full vigour of youth. We are spared on account of our weakness and old age. You will follow me in three days' time."

Embracing him tenderly, the Pope bade him distribute the treasures of the Church among the poor, lest they should fall into the hands of the persecutors.

The holy Pope was beheaded in the very crypt where he had offered the Holy Sacrifice, and the four deacons mentioned above suffered with him. Two others, Saints Felicissimus and Agapitus, won their crown on the same day in another place. The priest Quartus probably met his death along with the Pope. The bodies of St. Sixtus and the four deacons were afterwards buried by the Christians in the Catacombs of St. Callixtus; those of the other two deacons were laid in the Catacomb of Prætextatus, where an inscription with their names was found by De Rossi.

St. Cornelius, Pope.

SEPTEMBER 16.

The holy Pope Fabian was crowned with martyrdom on January 20, A.D. 250, but the violence of the persecution prevented the clergy and people assembling for the election of a successor. This they did not succeed in doing until, after sixteen months, Valens was called off to his wars with the Goths, and Cornelius was chosen to fill the Apostolic See. Though he had held the chief direction of affairs during the vacancy, compulsion was needed to induce him to accept the dignity. The concurrent suffrages of sixteen bishops confirmed the election. St.

Cyprian and the other bishops not present hastened to dispatch to him, according to the custom, their letters of communion and congratulation.

The peace of the Church was soon disturbed by Novatian, a schismatic and heretic, whom St. Cyprian calls "a deserter of the Church, an enemy of all tenderness, a very murderer of penance, a teacher of pride, a corrupter of truth, and a destroyer of charity."

St. Cornelius assembled at Rome a synod of sixty bishops, where Novatian was condemned and, as he obstinately refused to submit, was excommunicated. Those who had been seduced by Novatian were upon their repentance and submission, to the great joy of the people, received back by Cornelius to communion with the Church.

St. Cornelius was the first person apprehended by the new emperor, Gallus, in 251. Having made a glorious confession of his faith, he was sent into banishment to a place now called Cività Vecchia. His death took place on September 14, A.D. 252. He is ranked among the martyrs.

St. Cyprian, Bishop.

SEPTEMBER 16.

St. Cyprian was one of the most wonderful triumphs of divine grace that we read of in the Church's history. Until almost "old age," as he himself writes, he was given up not merely to a worldly life, but likewise to the indulgence of every passion.

Thascius Cyprian was a native of Carthage, where his father was one of the principal senators. He made great advances in the teaching of philosophy and of all the liberal arts, and his success in oratory and eloquence won him the post of public professor of rhetoric. This employment was then one of great distinction, and Cyprian, in accordance with it and with his rank, lived in great pomp and plenty. He never went abroad but richly attired and with a pompous retinue of clients and followers. He was advanced in life when God in His infinite mercy brought him out of the darkness of paganism and the slavery of passion and vice, to the light and freedom of the Gospel truth.

There resided at Carthage an old priest named Cecilius. Cyprian became acquainted with him, and gradually relished his discourses on the divine truths and the beauty and sanctity of the

Christian religion. A long and terrible struggle with himself was the consequence. He tells us in his writings that he could not understand how baptism conferred a new life and changed the neophyte into a new person, still retaining his outward nature. He believed it impossible to alter his inclinations and inveterate habits, to lay aside his past enjoyments and ambition, his sumptuous fare and splendid apparel, his eagerness to amuse and to please, and lead a life of humility and sobriety. "But" he says, "as soon as the waters of baptism had washed away the stains of my soul, I received the light of truth; the Spirit of God descended upon me and I became a new creature. My difficulties vanished. What I had abhorred seemed easy and desirable, my views and intentions were hence directed to God."

Cyprian ever after revered the holy priest Cecilius as his spiritual father and benefactor, the instrument under God of his marvellous conversion. To mark this he assumed the priest's name with his own, Thascius Cecilius Cyprian.

Cyprian's subsequent life was entirely changed. He devoted himself to prayer and the study of the sacred Scriptures, and to the fervent practice of all Christian virtues. He sold his vast estate and made over the greater part of the money to the poor. He then led a retired and penitential

life, in which he made such rapid progress in virtue as to justify his being raised to the priesthood, at the request of the people, though he was as yet among the catechumens. In less than a year after this he became Bishop of Carthage, at the death of Donatus, though he made great efforts to avoid the dignity, of which he felt himself quite unworthy.

We are told that his appearance was wonderfully reverent and gracious, his countenance at once cheerful and grave, and that his whole bearing won for him both respect and love.

The Emperor Decius began his reign by a bloody persecution against the Church. His cruel edict reached Carthage in the year A.D. 250. The idolaters immediately ran to the market-place crying, "Cyprian to the lions; Cyprian to the wild beasts!"

Though he knew it was the part of a hireling to desert his flock in the hour of danger, Cyprian thought that, as there were many weak ones among them, he ought to follow our Lord's advice of flying from one city to another. He consulted God in prayer, and our Lord appeared to him bidding him to seek safety in flight. During his retirement he continued to govern his Church through frequent letters of advice and earnest admonition, and by appointing certain vicars, some bishops, others priests to attend to the needs of the faithful.

After nearly two years he was able to return to Carthage, where he employed himself with his usual zeal in settling the disturbances caused by the heretics and by those among the clergy who took severe views concerning the "lapsed."

The persecutions continued with varying intensity. In 257, the fourth year of Valerian's reign, St. Cyprian was arrested and banished to a town fifty miles from Carthage. Here God comforted him with a vision foretelling his martyrdom. He prepared himself for it by compunction and penance, and by ardent desires of the happy moment when he was to shed his blood for Christ. A new proconsul recalled Cyprian, but only in order to find him more easily when he should receive the edicts of the new governor of Africa, Galerius Maximus.

Upon the publication of these edicts Cyprian was seized and brought before the proconsul, who, after a long examination, read the sentence: "I will that Thascius Cyprian be beheaded!" to which the saint answered, "Blessed be God for it!" The Christians there present in great numbers called out: "Let us be beheaded with him!" and they made a great disturbance.

The holy bishop was led out of court, and, attended by a large number of soldiers, was taken to a spacious plain in the country. Here

his head was struck off on the 14th September A.D. 258. The faithful interred his body reverently in an adjoining field. Two churches were afterwards erected to his memory, the one on the place of his burial, the other on the spot where he had suffered. His festival was at first fixed for the 14th September, but since the fifth century it has been joined to that of St. Cornelius on the 16th September.

The writings of this saint are amongst the Church's greatest treasures.

St. Laurence, Martyr.

AUGUST 10.

"There are few martyrs in the Church," says Alban Butler, "whose names are so famous as that of the glorious St. Laurence." His praises have ever resounded throughout the Church, and the most illustrious Fathers have exerted their eloquence in relating his noble triumph. The city of Rome is rich in memories of him.

We know little of his early life, but the Spaniards claim him as their countryman. It is probable he went to Rome for education, for he was young when St. Sixtus II., then Archdeacon of Rome, took him under his protection, and guided him in the study of the Scriptures, and in the practice of Christian perfection. When

St. Sixtus was raised to the Chair of St. Peter in 257, he ordained Laurence deacon, and gave him the first place among the seven deacons who served in the Roman Church. This choice constituted him archdeacon, and gave him charge of the Church's treasury and the distribution of its riches among the poor. That so important and difficult an appointment should be given to one still young speaks highly in his favour, and shows in what esteem St. Sixtus held him. St. Laurence soon gave proof that his trust was not misplaced.

In the following year, 258, St. Sixtus was apprehended: for the touching account of his meeting his archdeacon on the way to martyrdom, see p. 41. On the same occasion St. Laurence was summoned before the Prefect of Rome, whose cupidity had been aroused by hearing of the concealed treasures in possession of the Church. The prefect feigned kindness, and promised the favour of Cæsar if Laurence would deliver them up to support the emperor's wars and soldiers. Laurence owned that the Church was indeed rich beyond all the possessions of the emperor, and promised to show him a valuable portion of them if he would allow him time to set all in order. The prefect granted Laurence three days' respite. During this time he sought out all the poor, the sick, the widows, and orphans on his list to the number of fifteen

hundred. He appointed a meeting for the third day, before the ancient Court-house, somewhere near the Colosseum. Here he spoke to the prefect. "Behold the Church's treasures; she has no other riches but these." The prefect was transported with anger and ordered Laurence to be severely scourged, then, all bleeding, to be laid on a gridiron, with a slow fire beneath, that his tortures might be more lasting. God supported the young heroic martyr, for he mocked at the tyrant, and, with a smiling countenance, bade him: "Turn my body; this side is done enough." The Christians were conscious of a most heavenly perfume exhaled from his body. Many senators were converted by the sight of his courage, as well as by his beautiful prayer for the speedy triumph of the Church. To this prayer is attributed Constantine's conversion and victory over idolatry, which occurred shortly afterwards.

His precious remains were borne by the newly-converted noblemen to the field Verano and honourably buried. In the reign of Constantine the Great a church was built over his tomb, on the road to Tivoli, called St. Laurence without-the-walls.

St. Chrysogonus, Martyr.

NOVEMBER 24.

St. Chrysogonus was one of the many holy martyrs who died for Christ by the command of Diocletian. He was a Roman of good birth and great ability. For two years he was kept in prison in Rome for the faith, and would have probably died there of want had he not been provided with all necessary support by a holy woman named Anastasia. The charity of this lady became known to her husband, Publius, a wicked and cruel man in high position and a great enemy of the Christians. To hinder her from continuing her work of mercy to Chrysogonus, and to avenge himself for her determination to remain a virgin, he shut her up in a room of his own house and set guards to prevent her from exercising her religion or sending meat and other necessaries to Chrysogonus. He moreover ordered that her own food should be gradually lessened so that she might die of hunger.

Finding herself thus imprisoned, Anastasia contrived to send the following letter to Chrysogonus:—

"Although my father was a pagan, my mother Fausta was a Christian and a very virtuous woman. She brought me up as a Christian, and

after her death I was married to a cruel and sacrilegious man, whose company I have shunned by the mercy of God. I have employed myself day and night in praying to Jesus Christ and following His holy footsteps. This most cruel man is wasting my patrimony with wicked and shameful people, and keeps me as a sorceress in so hard a prison that I think I shall end my life in it; for nothing seems wanting but to breathe my last. And although it be sweet and savoury to me to lose my life for Christ, yet I cannot but much resent that my goods, all of which I had offered to God, should be spent in evil practices and in the service of false gods. Wherefore, I entreat thee, O servant of God, that thou wouldst beseech our Lord that either He would give true life to this man, that he may acknowledge God and be converted, or else that He would take him away if he is to persevere in his obduracy. For it would be better to lose his life than to deny the Son of God and torment those that confess Him. I call to witness and promise the omnipotent God that if He please to give me my liberty, I will employ myself wholly in His service as I was wont to do in relieving and providing for the necessities of the holy confessors. God be with thee, man of God, and be mindful of me."

Chrysogonus received this letter in prison. Many other holy confessors were there with

him, and all united in praying to our Lord for Anastasia, as she desired. He answered her as follows:—

"Amidst the storms and tempests of this world's sea in which you are floating, hold for certain, madam, that Jesus Christ will favour you and with one word will sink to the bottom the devil who torments you and makes war against you. Have patience amidst your sufferings and make account that you are in the middle of the sea, combated by a furious tempest, and have confidence that Jesus Christ will come upon those waves and deliver you out of them. Cry out with the prophet, saying: 'Why art thou sad, O my soul, and why art thou troubled?' Hope in God, Who, how much soever He tries and exercises you, does not for this cease to be your salvation. Think, lady, that God will give you the goods of heaven, seeing that He takes from you those of earth. And if it seem to you that He tarries long, know that He does it that you may more esteem His gifts. Be not troubled nor afflicted because that, living well, evils and afflictions do befall you. God proves, but does not deceive. Man is deceitful, and he who confides and puts his hope in him is cursed; and he who puts his hope in God is blessed. Fly all sins with great care and diligence, and desire to be comforted by God alone, whose commandments you do

which are the habitations of devils." This answer enraged Diocletian, who ordered him to be beheaded and his body thrown into the sea.

After the execution, a holy old man named Zoilus succeeded in finding the body and had it respectfully buried. Some time later, by divine revelation, he discovered the head, which was as fresh as if just severed from the body. He placed it reverently with the other remains. For this charitable act St. Chrysogonus rewarded him by appearing to him thirty days after his martyrdom and calling him to heaven. Zoilus died calmly, and followed the holy martyr to rejoice with him for ever with God.

St. Chrysogonus has a church built in his honour, mentioned by Pope Symmachus in the sixth century and by St. Gregory the Great. It was rebuilt by Gregory III. in 740, and again restored by Cardinal Scipio Borghese in 1623. It gives title to a cardinal.

Saints John and Paul, Martyrs.

JUNE 26.

These saints were officers in the service of Constantine the Great, and were also in the household of his daughter Constantia as her steward and her secretary.

During Constantine's reign they were sent with the General, Germanicus, into the eastern provinces of the Roman empire, where the barbarians were giving trouble. When defeat after defeat had attended the Roman arms, and Germanicus was depressed that his sacrifices to his god Mars had brought no victory, Saints John and Paul showed him the folly of praying to such a god and promised that, if he would believe in Jesus Christ and pray to Him, he should conquer. He consented, and vowed to embrace the Christian faith if he gained the victory. He immediately experienced the divine assistance, and marched with so much courage against the enemy that he gained a bloodless victory over the panic-stricken Scythians.

So complete was the conversion wrought by these saints that, on returning to Rome, Germanicus refused the consulate and the marriage with Constantia which he had made the two conditions of his undertaking the war. He moreover gave the rest of his life to devotion and the service of the poor. He was beheaded for his faith by Julian the Apostate. His feast is kept on June 25.

On coming to the throne Julian laid hands on the possessions of the Christians, but most of all did he covet the riches left by Constantia to Saints John and Paul. Julian first employed flattery, and sent them word that if they would

come to Court they should enjoy high positions and become his favourites. They answered that they would never set foot in the palace nor look in the face of one who had renounced Jesus Christ and denied the faith of his baptism. The messenger, Terentianus, gave them ten days in which to consider. They replied that he might look upon the days as already past, for they would never change their mind or alter their resolution. The ten days were spent by them in praising and thanking God for the grace of martyrdom offered to them, and in distributing all their goods to the poor.

On the eleventh day Terentianus returned with several soldiers. He offered the Saints a little statue of Jupiter, promising them life and honours if they would sacrifice to it; if not, he had orders to kill them privately on the spot. The Emperor, they said, had in this regard to their rank; in truth, he dreaded a rising of the people. On the refusal of the Saints, the officers beheaded them and buried them there in their own house, giving out that the Emperor had banished them.

In the time of St. Jerome a church was built over the house, which had been filled in with earth. Excavations made in 1887 brought to light the house of the two saints in good preservation. Their bodies are under the high altar in the church above the house, and a railing

in the nave marks off the spot in the house beneath, where they suffered death in the year 362.

Saints Cosmas and Damian, Martyrs.

SEPTEMBER 27.

Cosmas and Damian were brothers and natives of Arabia. They had Christian parents, but lost their father at an early age. Their mother Theodora, a faithful servant of God, brought them up in His fear and love. When of fitting age they devoted themselves to learning, and chiefly to the study of medicine, in which they were very successful. Many of the cures effected by them were so wonderful that they were attributed rather to the Divine Power than to the skill of the physicians. God thus blessed their fervent prayers and disinterested charity. By this charity they were well known at Algea, in Cilicia, where they lived. In this town they exercised their profession without any view to temporal gain, and solely for the love of God, refusing all stipends for their good offices. These holy brothers also made their employment a means of extending the faith, and numerous conversions rewarded their zeal. Their fame spread through the city and neighbourhood. Lysius, the Proconsul of Cilicia, a

keep. For when you least think of it, He will be pleased to comfort you, and will send you, after the darkness of the night, the joyful light of day ; and after the troublesome frost and cold of winter, will come the delightful spring ; and after the tempest a clear and fair heaven, that you may be able to favour and do good to those that suffer persecutions for Christ, and that, relieving their temporal necessities, you may obtain of our Lord eternal reward. God be with you, and pray for me."

St. Anastasia was very much consoled by this letter, and so greatly encouraged that she endeavoured to make her patience equal to her past distress at her husband's cruelties. Her sufferings increased so much that she was allowed daily only the fourth part of an ordinary loaf of bread. Believing that her last hour was near, she wrote a second letter :—

"The end of my days is at hand. Pray to God to receive my soul when it shall go forth from my body, since it is for His love that I endure the torments which the old woman, the bearer of this letter, will relate."

The Saⁿt answered :—

"Darkness always goes before light, and after sickness comes health, and life is promised after death. All the prosperities and adversities of this life have their end, that neither the sad and afflicted should despair, nor the joyful and con-

tented forget to keep a guard over themselves. We all sail on the same sea, our bodies are the ships that cut the waves, and our souls the pilots that govern them. But some of these ships are so strong and well built that they break the waves and pass through without harm ; others so frail that at every turn they run hazard. Take comfort, servant of Christ ; for thy navigation, although it has been full of storms and tempests, will end prosperously and happily, and thou shalt arrive at the desired haven, enjoying Christ with the palm of martyrdom."

These letters are given by Nicephoras, Suidas, and Odo. A further account of Anastasia will be found in the narrative of her martyrdom, December 25 (p. 94).

When the two years of imprisonment were ended for Chrysogonus, Diocletian commanded him to be brought before him. The emperor then addressed the holy confessor with mild and flattering speeches ; offered to make him prefect and consul, dignities which were due to his exalted birth and noble race. The only condition was to lay aside Christian follies and adore the gods, the protectors of the empire. Chrysogonus boldly answered :

"I adore only one God with my soul, and reverence Him with my heart, and with exterior sign confess Him to be God, Who is Jesus Christ. I hate and curse these your idols

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man famous for his cruelty and hatred of the Christians, could not fail to hear of the zealous labours of Cosmas and Damian. He ordered them to be brought before him, and then questioned them on their names and country. In his examination he drew from them that they had three other brothers, also Christians, Anthymius, Leontius, and Euprepus. These were apprehended, and the proconsul endeavoured in vain to persuade all the brothers to sacrifice to his gods. He therefore ordered them to be bound hand and foot and to be cast into the sea ; but an angel loosened their bonds and set them on the shore. Lysius attributed their escape to magic and subjected them to fire ; but like the Hebrew children they remained unhurt, praising God amid the flames, which only attacked those who threw them in. Other tortures were applied with like result, till Lysius, infuriated at being thus balked, ordered them to be beheaded, September 27, A.D. 303. Their bodies were devoutly buried outside the city, and later translated to Cyrus in Syria.

When the Emperor Justinian came to the throne in 527, he found at Constantinople a church, built in their honour, in a ruinous condition. In thanksgiving for his recovery from a dangerous illness through their intercession, he raised a large and costly edifice in its place ; and further to satisfy his devotion to these

Saints Cosmas and Damian

martyrs, built a second church to their honour in this his imperial capital.

The relics of Saints Cosmas and Damian were brought to Rome, where Pope St. Felix built the church to receive them which may still be seen in the Forum.

II THE SAINTS AFTER THE ELEVATION

St. John Baptist.

JUNE 24 and AUGUST 29.

GOD never places anyone in an office or employment without at the same time furnishing him with the capabilities and helps that will enable him to discharge it in a competent manner. The sublime function of Forerunner of the Messiah, to which St. John was destined, demanded that unusual gifts and graces should be bestowed upon him. With these God lavishly invested the herald of His Son.

Miracle and mystery encompassed him from the earliest dawn of existence. The priest Zachary had long relinquished all hope of children. An angel now announced to him the approaching birth of a son, and that his name should be John. Cleansed before birth from original sin, John was also endowed with sanctifying grace, if not with the gift of reason, as some believe. For the unborn Forerunner recognized the unborn Messiah, at Mary's

St. John Baptist

meeting with Elizabeth; and he then gave token of his exultation. At his birth and circumcision wonders multiplied. His father, struck dumb by the Angel months ago, regained his speech, "and all that heard these things laid them up in their heart, saying, What an one, think ye, shall this child be? For the hand of the Lord was with him" (St. Luke i. 66). His father and mother were both filled with the Holy Ghost. His father prophesied and spoke (in the beautiful canticle *Benedictus*) of the great future of his little one. "Thou, child, shalt be called the Prophet of the Highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare His ways. To give knowledge of salvation to His people, unto remission of sins" (St. Luke i. 68-79).

John's life was in keeping with this beginning. In early childhood the Holy Ghost led him into the wilderness, where he "grew and was strengthened" till the time appointed for "his manifestation to Israel." The sacred pages speak of his severe life in the desert; of his austerity and mortification in food and in clothing. By these virtues, and by constant prayer and union with God, he prepared himself for his future mission. This he began by the direction of the Holy Ghost in his thirtieth year. Crowds flocked to listen to his powerful words. He proclaimed the immediate coming of the Messiah, the necessity of penance and compunction for the

remission of sin. He baptized on the banks of the Jordan, but his baptism was not a sacramental act; its value lay in preparing for that great Sacrament which our Lord afterwards instituted.

Though St. John preached against sin with the fiery eloquence of Elias, he was gentle and charitable to the sinner. Even the corrupt King Herod "heard him willingly" and respected his sanctity, though he was too weak to resist his passions and to turn a deaf ear to the wicked Herodias. This wretched woman demanded St. John's death in revenge for his fearless reproof of Herod; and it is said that, when the Baptist's head was brought to her in a dish, she pierced his blessed tongue with a bodkin.

St. John's disciples bore away his body from the prison and honourably interred it. Part of his head is preserved at Amiens and a part in St. Silvester's Church in Rome.

St. Stephen, Martyr.

DECEMBER 26.

St. Stephen is called the Proto-martyr, the first and, as it were, the Captain of Martyrs. He was one of the seven deacons chosen and ordained by the twelve Apostles for the distribution of the alms of the faithful. St. Stephen was

the chief amongst them, with the title of arch-deacon.

The account of his holiness, his virtues, his arraignment and death, is given so circumstantially in the Acts of the Apostles that nothing further need be added. His martyrdom took place on 26th December, in the same year in which our blessed Saviour was crucified.

His body was buried about twenty miles from Jerusalem by order of Gamaliel and at his expense. The tomb was gradually lost sight of till this same Gamaliel appeared in the fifth century to the priest Lucian, and pointed out to him the spot where St. Stephen's body reposed. He desired him to have it, and the bodies of those buried in the same tomb, removed to a becoming place. This was done in the reign of Honorius and Theodosius the Younger in 415. Pope Pelagius translated St. Stephen's body from Constantinople to Rome and placed it in the tomb of St. Laurence, where it is now venerated.

St. Matthias, Apostle.

FEBRUARY 24.

St. Clement of Alexandria assures us from tradition, says Rev. Alban Butler, that this Saint was one of the seventy-two disciples, and that

this tradition is confirmed by Eusebius and St. Jerome. The Acts of the Apostles tells us that he was a constant follower of our Lord from the time of His baptism by St. John to His ascension, and that this was his qualification for the apostleship.

During the ten days that the Apostles remained in Jerusalem awaiting the descent of the Holy Ghost, St. Peter called an assembly, or council of the faithful, and showed them from Scripture the obligation of choosing one of their number to fill the place of the traitor Judas. They unanimously singled out two—Joseph Barsabas the Just and Matthias, and prayed that God would make known which of these two He had chosen. "And they gave lots, and the lot fell upon Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven Apostles" (Acts i. 26), and with them he received the Holy Ghost.

With what deep humility and diffidence in himself must he have entered into that vacant bishopric! Only God's immediate choice and the appointment of Peter, the Vicar of Christ, could have encouraged him to undertake it. But with these unflinching supports he persevered in a life of personal mortification and zealous labour for souls.

We are told that St. Matthias planted the faith about Cappadocia and on the coasts of the Caspian Sea, and that he received the crown of

martyrdom in Colchis. The Latin Church keeps his feast on 24th February. Portions of his relics are shown in the Abbey Church at Triers, and at St. Mary Major in Rome.

St. Barnabas, Apostle.

JUNE 11.

St. Barnabas, though not one of the Twelve, has always, like St. Paul, received the title of Apostle on account of his having been so signally chosen by God for the apostolate. "Separate Me Saul and Barnabas for the work whereunto I have taken them," said the Holy Ghost to the "prophets and doctors" assembled at Antioch (Acts xiii. 2), amongst whom were the two thus selected.

St. Barnabas was of the tribe of Levi, but born in Cyprus, where his family was settled and had purchased an estate, as Levites might do when out of their own country. He was at first called Joseph or Joses. After the Ascension, the Apostles changed his name to Barnabas, "which is interpreted Son of Consolation." This, says St. Cyprian, was because of his special talent for consoling the afflicted.

It is said that he was one of the seventy-two disciples of our Lord, and had therefore received the doctrine of eternal life from the mouth of

Christ Himself. His history, before and after his calling to join St. Paul, may be gathered with interest from the Acts of the Apostles.

St. John Chrysostom and ancient writers describe St. Barnabas as a man of beautiful and venerable appearance and of a majestic presence, whereas St. Paul was of a low stature. St. Barnabas, by his graceful deference to St. Paul, gives us a striking example of humility, for he had been called to the faith much earlier, had been numbered among the doctors of the Church of Antioch and had himself introduced St. Paul to the Apostles; yet he always yielded the precedence to St. Paul. Even when a difference of opinion between them concerning Barnabas's cousin, John Mark, led to a separation in their work, no smallest breach of charity was the consequence. On John Mark it had the happy effect of rousing him to a more fervent and courageous service of God than hitherto, and this won him later the approval and recommendation from St. Paul which is mentioned in his Epistle to the Colossians (iv. 10).

Alexander, a monk of Cyprus, relates that after many torments he was stoned to death at Salamis, at the instigation of certain obdurate Jews of that city. His remains were found near Salamis; laid upon his breast was a Hebrew copy of the gospel of St. Matthew in St. Barnabas's own handwriting. He seems to

have attained a great age, for St. Chrysostom speaks of his being alive in A.D. 63.

St. Barnabas is thought to have preached at Milan, and is thence called its Apostle.

St. Ignatius, Martyr.

FEBRUARY 1.

St. Ignatius, surnamed Theophorus or God-bearer, was the fervent and intimate disciple of St. John the Evangelist and fellow-disciple of St. Polycarp. An Eastern tradition mentioned by Nicephoras says that he was the child that our Lord took into His blessed arms and placed in the midst of His disciples as their model in innocence and simplicity. This early consecration by our Saviour's own hands had its effects in the burning charity for God and his neighbour and the ardent desire for martyrdom which are such marked features in his life.

St. Chrysostom tells us that he was appointed to the See of Antioch by St. Peter after the death of Evodius, the second bishop of that see.

From Saints Peter and Paul, the joint planters of the faith in Antioch, as well as from St. John, he drew in the fulness of the spirit of our blessed Lord. This spirit breathes in all his writings, exhaling from them as a precious perfume with every stroke of his pen. Nothing

does he so ardently sigh for as to give his life for Jesus Christ. He even fears that he has not yet attained to the perfect love of God, since he has not been called to seal his faith with his blood. Like his holy father and master, St. John, he laboured most earnestly to establish in the faithful the true spirit of charity—"the commandment of the Lord."

During the short reign of Nerva, the Church enjoyed comparative peace; but under Trajan the persecution was renewed. This emperor did indeed order that the Christians should not be sought out, yet, on his expedition against the Parthians, when he made a pompous entry into Antioch, in order to indulge his preposterous superstition and worship of his gods, he resolved to compel the Christians either to sacrifice or to suffer death in case of refusal.

St. Ignatius willingly allowed himself to be led before Trajan, who addressed him thus:

"Who art thou, wicked demon, that thou darest to transgress my commands and persuade others to perish?"

The saint replied: "No one calls Theophorus a wicked demon."

"Who is Theophorus?" said Trajan.

And St. Ignatius answered: "He who carries Christ in his breast."

The examination continued in the same strain. Then Trajan dictated the sentence: "It is our

will that Ignatius, who says he carries the Crucified Man within himself, be bound and conducted to Rome to be devoured there by wild beasts, for the entertainment of the people."

The holy Martyr, hearing this sentence, cried out with joy: "I thank thee, O Lord, for vouchsafing to honour me with this token of perfect love for Thee, and to be bound with chains of iron, in imitation of thy Apostle Paul, for Thy sake." Having said this, and prayed for the Church and recommended it with tears to God, he joyfully put on the chains and was hurried away by a savage troop of soldiers to be conveyed to Rome.

On the journey Ignatius was guarded night and day by ten soldiers whom he called ten leopards, on account of their merciless treatment; for the kinder he was to them the more fierce and cruel were they to him. As the route chosen was very circuitous, he had the opportunity of confirming in the faith and in piety the Christians of several towns through which they passed. Deputations were sent from distant towns to salute him and ask his prayers and blessing. At Smyrna he had the joy of meeting and discoursing with St. Polycarp, his fellow-disciple under St. John.

During the long journey St. Ignatius wrote epistles to different churches, in all of which he recommends charity and entreats the Christians

to remember that they bear Christ in their breasts, and that as His temples they must adorn their souls with all virtues. He earnestly begs them to shun all heretics and all corruption of the faith, and with all humility desires them to pray for him, calling himself the last of the faithful. Throughout is to be seen his one longing desire to be in Rome and to meet the wild beasts that are, as he puts it, "to grind him, the wheat of God, in their teeth, that he may be found the pure bread of Christ."

These words he repeated on entering the amphitheatre. Two fierce lions were let out upon him. They quickly devoured him, and forthwith his glorious soul passed to the immediate presence of the Lord he so ardently loved, on December 20, A.D. 107 or 116. The lions left only the larger bones and a part of the skull. These relics, St. Chrysostom relates, were gathered up with pious care by the Christians present at the martyrdom, and borne in triumph through all the cities from Rome to Antioch. In 637, when Antioch fell into the hands of the infidel Saracens, these precious relics were brought back to Rome, and are now under the high altar of San Clemente. A part of the skull is at the Gesù, and a relic of the arm at Santa Maria del Popolo.

This glorious bishop and noble martyr of Jesus Christ wrote several Epistles, all of great

authority and highly valued and venerated by the great Fathers and Doctors of the Church. St. Polycarp carefully collected them. St. Denis the Areopagite, St. Ireneus, St. Athanasius, St. Jerome, and others mention them or quote them; St. Gregory observes that they usually end with the words—"Amen—Gratia."

Saints Bernard, Denis the Carthusian, and some modern authorities, including Peter Canisius, S.J., speak of a letter of his to our Lady and one of hers to him and hold them to be quite authentic. Two of his to St. John the Evangelist are also preserved.

St. Alexander, Pope.

MAY 3.

St. Alexander was born in Rome, and was son of a citizen in that city. At only thirty he succeeded to St. Peter's Chair, holiness and learning supplying the deficiency of years. By his preaching and conversation he won over many Roman nobles and senators to the Christian faith, especially Hermes, with all his family and many of his dependants, to the number, it is said, of twelve hundred and fifty.

This zeal caused him to be apprehended and cast into prison, where he received miraculous favours from God. Hermes, his convert, was

also in the same prison and greatly desired to see him. As in St. Peter's case, an angel loosened Alexander's chains and led him to Hermes. The two friends embraced with great joy and fervour, and animated each other to suffer courageously for Jesus Christ. When Quirinus the Tribune witnessed this scene, and moreover learnt that his daughter Balbina had been cured of the king's evil by St. Alexander only touching her with his chains, he became a Christian with Balbina, and with all the prisoners under his charge.

St. Alexander sent for St. Eventius and St. Theodulus, priests, to baptize the converts. Aurelianus, the governor of the city, was enraged when he heard of these events. He first tortured and put to death Quirinus; then beheaded Hermes, and ordered Balbina and all that had been baptized in prison to be cast into the sea.

Alexander and the two priests were next summoned to his presence. After some short parley wherein he gained nothing, he commanded Alexander to be stripped and laid on the rack, with the usual appliances to his sides of hooks and torches. The Saint remained silent and calm during the torture, to the amazement of the governor, who asked him why he did not complain and cry out. "When a Christian prays," answered the martyr, "he speaks to God."

The two priests were subjected to the same

torments, though Eventius was eighty-one and had been a priest from twenty years old. The martyrs seemed only to gain fresh strength by their suffering. They were therefore put into a fiercely heated oven. Alexander and Eventius were thrown in first, Theodulus was to stand at the mouth of the furnace, in hopes that he would yield and sacrifice. But, seeing his companions unhurt by the fire, at their invitation he leapt in and joined them. The flames at the same time burst from the furnace and consumed those who had thrown them in. The tyrant's hard heart remained unmoved by these wonders. Alexander and the two priests were beheaded after renewed outrages. This took place, according to Baronius, on May 3rd, A.D. 132.

Aurelianus rejoiced over their death as over a great victory. But his joy was short-lived. A voice from heaven was heard telling him that the gates of heaven had been opened to his victims, but that the gates of hell were open for him. He fell to the ground, and, biting his own tongue, he expired.

The bodies of St. Alexander and his companions were buried on the Numentan Road, seven miles from Rome, and afterwards translated to Santa Sabina, the church of the Dominican Friars.

St. Alexander was noted for his zeal for the divine service. He ordained that unleavened

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bread should be used at holy Mass, to signify the purity of the Blessed Sacrament and to imitate our blessed Saviour, who made use of it at the Last Supper. He also decreed that a little water should be mixed with the wine, to show the union of Christ with His Church and to represent the blood and water which issued from our Lord's side after His death. In so ordering, however, he was only making an obligation of what the Apostles had previously taught and practised.

Another of his ordinances was that, in blessing holy water, salt should be mixed with the water; and he recommended this blessed water to be kept in churches, houses, and rooms to ward off the temptations of the devils who are ever seeking to trouble us.

Saints Marcellinus and Peter, Martyrs.

JUNE 2.

These saints both belonged to the clergy of Rome, and were both eminent for their zeal and piety. Marcellinus was a priest and Peter an exorcist.

About the year 304, during the persecution of Diocletian, they were condemned to death for the faith. Pope Damasus has left us an interest-

Saints Marcellinus and Peter

ing account of their execution and burial, which he assures us he received when a boy from the lips of the executioner himself.

This executioner was secretly ordered by the judge to lead the two priests to a forest and there kill them privately, so that no Christians might know their burial-place. When he had led them into a thicket covered with briars and thorns, three miles from Rome, he made known to them his order. They, nothing daunted, very cheerfully set to work to clear the ground for their own grave. After they were beheaded, their bodies were hidden in the same spot. God, however, watched over these precious remains and defeated the judge's intentions by revealing some time afterwards, to a devout lady called Lucilla, the place where the bodies lay concealed. She, with another holy lady, Firmina, removed the bodies and interred them honourably near the tomb of St. Tiburtius on the Latician road. Constantine built a church there in their honour, and in it buried his mother, St. Helena.

The bodies of Saints Marcellinus and Peter were sent to Germany in 827 by Pope Gregory the Fourth, at the request of the secretary of Charlemagne, to enrich a monastery he had built and in which he intended to live. St. Gregory the Great preached his twenty homilies on the Gospels in the Church of Saints Marcellinus and Peter at Rome.

Saints Perpetua, Felicitas, and Companions, Martyrs.

MARCH 7.

The Emperor Severus set on foot a violent persecution in the year 202. In the following year it broke out in Africa, and five catechumens were seized for the faith at Carthage. These were Revocatus and Felicitas, Saturninus and Secundulus, and Perpetua.

Felicitas was the fellow-slave of Revocatus, and a young mother. Perpetua was of good family, and her husband a person of distinction in Carthage. Her father was advanced in years and a pagan; her mother and one of her brothers were Christians; the other brother, like Perpetua was a catechumen. A third brother died when about seven years old.

At their arrest the five martyrs were put under a strong guard in a private house, to await their committal. Here Perpetua's father came to try and shake her resolution by representing to her his age and his great affection for her—she was his favourite child. He reminded her, too, of her little infant boy, still in arms, who could not survive her. But, when he found her invincible, his tenderness changed to anger and reproach, though he left her in confusion at his own discomfiture. While in this house she and her

companions received baptism, and, like so many of the early Christians, immediately felt the effects of the presence of the Holy Ghost in their soul.

St. Perpetua was favoured in prison with several visions which greatly comforted and strengthened her and her companions, and of which she wrote an account. Saturus was favoured in like manner. This martyr had voluntarily joined their number, and is said to have been brother to Saturninus and the instructor of all, and as such was unwilling to leave them. He made up the number five, for Secundulus had died in prison.

When the day of their triumph arrived they were led out of the prison and conducted to the amphitheatre. The joy of all the blessed martyrs was depicted in their countenances and gestures. Perpetua walked with a firm step and a calm and collected demeanour; her eyes were cast down as became one belonging to Jesus Christ. Felicitas walked modestly and joyously by her side. On arriving at the amphitheatre they were offered the superstitious garments of the pagan rites; to the men those of the priests of Saturn, to the women those worn by the priestesses of Ceres. All indignantly refused them.

The brave answers of the prisoners at their trial enraged the people, who begged they might be scourged. This was granted, and the martyrs

rejoiced at being thus likened to our blessed Saviour. After this cruel punishment the men were exposed to the beasts, some of which refused to hurt them. Saturninus, after being spared by a bear, was quickly dispatched by a leopard and was the first to gain his crown, as Perpetua had foreseen in her vision. The two women were tossed by a wild cow, but not killed. When Perpetua recovered some consciousness after the fall, she was seen gathering together her torn and disordered garments—evidently more concerned about decency than about her sufferings. Then, seeing Felicitas much hurt, she helped her to rise, and the two stood together as if awaiting a fresh assault; but both the women and the surviving men were led from the arena to be reserved for the end of the shows. Some Christian friends were allowed to visit them in the place where they were confined. Rusticus, a catechumen, attended to Perpetua. She asked him when she was to be exposed to the wild cow, and could hardly believe his account of what had happened till she was shown her wounds and tattered garments. "Where was she," exclaims St. Augustine, "that she remained without feeling her wounds, or being conscious of the attack of the wild beast? What did she see that blinded her to what all the world saw? By what sweet potion of love was she so transported out of herself, and,

as it were, divinely inebriated that she seemed to be insensible to pain though still in a mortal body?"

Before leaving for the arena, Perpetua called for her brother and begged him and Rusticus to continue firm in the faith, to love one another and not to be scandalized at their sufferings. When the Martyrs arrived for the second time at the amphitheatre, the people, still thirsting for blood, cried out that they should be brought into the middle of the arena; whereupon some of them exchanged the kiss of peace and went forward of their own accord. The rest were dispatched without a word, where they were. Perpetua fell into the hands of a timid and unskilful gladiator, who caused her to linger a long time.

"Thus," says St. Augustine, "did two women, amidst fierce beasts and the swords of gladiators, vanquish the devil and all his fury." The day of their martyrdom was the 7th of March, A.D. 203, as marked in ancient martyrologies, and in the Roman calendar as early as the year 354.

Their bodies were in the great church of Carthage in the fifth century, as St. Victor assures us. St. Augustine says that more persons were drawn each year to their church there to honour their memory than had once been gathered in the amphitheatre through curiosity to witness their martyrdom.

St. Agatha, Virgin and Martyr.

FEBRUARY 5.

St. Agatha was a native of Sicily, and was born either at Palermo or Catania. She suffered at Catania during the persecution of Decius. Her trial and her martyrdom are almost the only facts of her life that have been preserved. She was of a rich and illustrious family, and had been consecrated to God from her tender years. Her riches excited the cupidity of Quintianus, a consul, who therefore determined to marry her. He hoped to compass his design by having Agatha apprehended and brought before him. Seeing herself in the hands of the persecutors, she made this beautiful prayer: "Jesus Christ, Lord of all things, Thou seest my heart, Thou knowest my desire. Do Thou alone possess all that I am; I am Thy sheep, make me worthy to overcome the devil." She wept and prayed for strength and courage all along the road to the tribunal.

When Quintianus beheld her before him he ordered her to be taken to a wretched woman who for a whole month tried every means to corrupt her and to force her to yield to Quintianus' desires. It was of no avail. Much rather would she have suffered the most painful tortures than endure this ordeal; but she put

her whole confidence in Jesus Christ, and He gave her the victory over their hellish attempts.

When she was again brought before Quintianus, this tyrant, infuriated at her constancy, ordered her to be stretched on the rack and iron hooks and torches to be applied. Seeing her still firm, he commanded her breasts to be cut off. "Cruel tyrant!" she exclaimed under the torture; "are you not ashamed to inflict such a punishment, after having sucked the breasts of a woman yourself?"

He remanded her to prison, and forbade both salves and food. But God Himself sent her help. St. Peter appeared to her, healed her wounds, and filled her dungeon with heavenly light. Four days later Quintianus sent for her. Obdurate still, and unmoved by her miraculous cure, he ordered her to be rolled on live coals and potsherd.

While the executioners were carrying out this barbarous sentence, the whole city of Catania was shaken by an earthquake in which two of the governor's friends were killed. The terrified inhabitants cried aloud that it was a scourge from God to avenge the cruel treatment of Agatha. They rushed to the governor's house and demanded Agatha's release. Quintianus, dreading a popular riot far more than the anger of God, remanded her to prison. But the blessed virgin and martyr felt that her combat

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was at an end, and begged her Divine Spouse to take her to Himself. "My eternal God, who out of Thy pure goodness hast armed me with Thy heavenly grace to fight against the tyrant for the exaltation of Thy faith, and hast made me—that am young, weak, and tender in this frail flesh—to overcome so many torments, soldiers, and armed men; open, O Lord, the arms of Thy mercy and receive my soul that thirsteth after Thee with an extreme desire and love."

With this prayer on her lips Agatha breathed forth her pure soul to God. Wonders are related to have occurred at her funeral. The people flocked in crowds to her tomb to venerate her holy remains. She has always been considered the patroness of Catania, and has very frequently preserved it from destruction during the eruptions of Mount Etna. On one occasion, a poor man saw his cottage and little property momentarily threatened by a stream of burning lava. He invoked St. Agatha, and, just as the stream reached his house, it divided and passed at either side, leaving his little possession uninjured.

St. Agatha's martyrdom took place A.D. 251. Her name is inserted in the Canon of the Mass, in the Calendar of Carthage as ancient as the year 530, and in all martyrologies of the Latins and Greeks. Pope Symmachus built a church

St. Agatha

in Rome under her name about the year 500. St. Gregory the Great enriched a church, which he had purged from the Arian impiety, with her relics, which it still possesses.

St. Lucy, Virgin and Martyr.

DECEMBER 13.

St. Lucy, a native of Syracuse, was one of the brightest ornaments of the Church of Sicily. Her parents were honourable and wealthy, and educated her from earliest infancy in the faith of Christ. Lucy lost her father when very young, but her mother Eutychia watched over her with jealous care and instilled into her mind sentiments of virtue and piety. Lucy corresponded faithfully with her mother's training, and early became a model of Christian perfection. When still a child she offered her virginity to God, but kept her vow, or rather, holy resolution, a secret from her mother. Eutychia, ignorant of her child's intention, pressed her to marry a young gentleman, who, though a pagan, seemed in other respects a suitable protector for her daughter. Lucy endeavoured quietly and firmly to postpone the marriage, and meantime prayed earnestly to God that He would hinder its taking place. This our Lord thought good to bring about in the following way. Eutychia

was visited with a serious illness which demanded Lucy's constant care. As no physicians were able to effect a cure, she consented, at Lucy's advice, to visit the tomb of St. Agatha, at Catania. "St. Agatha," said her child, "ever stands in the sight of Him for whom she died. Only touch her sepulchre and you will be cured."

They spent the night at the tomb in prayer, till, overcome by weariness, they fell asleep. St. Agatha appeared in vision to Lucy, and calling her "sister," foretold her mother's cure and her own martyrdom. The cure was instantaneous, and in her gratitude the mother allowed her daughter to distribute her wealth to the poor and consecrate her virginity to God.

The young man to whom Lucy had been betrothed, hearing of this sale and distribution and its reason, denounced her as a Christian. The governor ordered her to be taken to a house of ill-fame, but God rendered her immovable, so that the guards were powerless to carry her thither. He also enabled her to overcome fire and other torments. After a long and glorious combat, she died in prison of her wounds about the year 304, under the Emperor Diocletian.

Her name was ever honoured in Rome among the most illustrious virgin-martyrs. In

England, before the change of religion, her feast was celebrated as a holiday of second class, when no work was allowed except tillage and the like.

Her body remained in Syracuse for many years, but was at length translated to Italy, and thence to Metz. Some of her relics are preserved at Venice, where they are greatly venerated.

St. Agnes, Virgin and Martyr.

JANUARY 21.

Though St. Agnes comes before us only at the close of her short life, St. Jerome tells us that the tongues and pens of all nations are employed in her praises, who overcame both the cruelty of the tyrant and the tenderness of her age, and crowned the glory of chastity with that of martyrdom. "In a short space she fulfilled a long time" (Eccli. iv. 13).

Her name signifies chaste in Greek, and in Latin, lamb. She has always been ranked with the Immaculate Mother of God as one of the special patronesses of purity. When only thirteen, her great beauty and her riches excited the young noblemen of the first Roman families to desire her in marriage. To all alike she gave the one unvarying answer—that she was already

betrothed to a heavenly Spouse, whose beauty surpassed all human loveliness.

Finding her constancy invincible, they accused her to the governor as a Christian, never doubting that torments would subdue her though their blandishments had failed. The judge at first promised her whatever was most likely to attract one of her age and position, but to all his flattering assurances she replied that Jesus Christ should be her only spouse. He then employed threats, and displayed the most horrible instruments of torture. But the Lord in whom she trusted had endowed her with such masculine courage that she smiled at the sight and offered herself to endure their worst inflictions. When urged to burn incense to the idols, St. Ambrose says she could not be compelled to move her hand except to make the sign of the Cross. These threats were followed by the order for the most repulsive trial of all to her innocent soul. Here, too, she was triumphant, and her Divine Spouse preserved her pure and faithful to His love. The governor, enraged at seeing himself baffled by a child, ordered her to be beheaded. On hearing the sentence Agnes was transported with joy. She looked upon it as the summons to her heavenly bridal. Gladly she obeyed that summons and bent her head to the blow. The executioner struck it off with a trembling hand. Her parents, far from

mourning her loss, rejoiced in her triumph, and bore away her blessed body to bury it on their own property. She suffered on 21st January, A.D. 305.

With her was buried two days later her foster-sister, St. Emerentiana. A crowd of Christians having gathered around St. Agnes's tomb to venerate her precious remains, some pagans attacked them. Emerentiana, though still a catechumen, fearlessly reproached them for their cruelty and impiety in putting to death the worshippers of the One Almighty God. They turned upon her and stoned her, till she died praying at her sister's tomb, baptized in her own blood.

Every year on St. Agnes's feast, 21st January, High Mass is followed by an interesting ceremony, which attracts crowds of the faithful; this is the blessing of two little lambs, emblems of innocence and sacrifice, which are brought into the church tastefully decorated and laid upon the altar. The blessing is given by the Abbot of the Canons Regular of the Lateran. These blessed lambs are presented to the Pope, and from their fleece are woven the palliums worn by archbishops.

St. Cecily, Virgin and Martyr.

NOVEMBER 22.

St. Cecily or Cecilia was of patrician parents, and from infancy inherited from them the lofty aspirations and dispositions expected from those of noble birth. She was still more indebted to her mother for her education in the Christian faith. Her father is thought to have been a pagan, for he promised her in marriage at an early age to an excellent and happily disposed young patrician, also a pagan, named Valerian.

Both parents were unaware that Cecilia had already given herself to God, and by a special call and grace from Him had resolved to preserve her virginity for Jesus Christ, her Heavenly Spouse. When therefore she learnt their designs, she redoubled her prayers and practices of piety and mortification to obtain from her sweet spouse Jesus the grace of perpetual chastity. Valerian dearly loved and admired Cecilia, and longed for the day when she would be entirely his. As the appointed hour drew nigh she spent the three preceding days in prayer, fasting, and austerities, entreating God to allow her to live a single life with Valerian, and putting herself under the guardianship of the Blessed Virgin, Mother of God, and of the saints and martyrs.

On the wedding day, she was arrayed as became her own patrician rank and that of her husband, in cloth of gold and many rich jewels. All this grandeur in no way affected her, for, while all the guests were joyous, it was remarked that she alone looked sad and thoughtful.

In the evening when alone with Valerian she spoke to him thus: "My very dear spouse, I would gladly tell thee a secret if I could be sure thou wouldst not divulge it." He swore to her that he would never reveal it. "Thou must know, then, that I have an angel of my God who accompanies me and with great care and zeal guards my body. If thou attempt to love me with a worldly and carnal love, it may cost thee thy life, but if thou dost honour me with a pure and chaste affection, this angel will love thee and bestow many favours upon thee."

Valerian was troubled at these words, yet, filled with a new reverence for his holy and beautiful bride, he begged her to show him the angel, otherwise he would believe he had a rival in her affections and would kill both her and him. To this Cecilia replied that a resplendent light cannot be seen by blind eyes; that if he wished to see the angel he must believe in Jesus Christ, receive baptism, and so be cleansed from sin and stain. God blessed her words and moved Valerian's heart; he owned his willingness to believe and asked who was to instruct and

baptize him. She sent him with a message from herself to Pope Urban, who was hidden three miles from Rome, and gave him signs whereby to discover the hiding-place. The holy old Pope wept for joy at all Valerian told him, and while he was speaking, a venerable old man appeared bearing a book written in gold. Urban encouraged the affrighted Valerian and bade him read. The words in the book were: "There is only one true God, one true faith, one true baptism." Valerian declared his readiness to believe this. The angel, for such it was, then disappeared, and Urban instructed and baptized the neophyte, who returned in unspeakable joy and happiness to Cecilia.

On entering her chamber he found her absorbed in prayer, and now he beheld at her side, in radiant heavenly splendour, the angel of God of whom she had spoken. Valerian gazed in wonder, and saw that he held two garlands of roses and lilies, and that he was offering one to Cecilia and one to himself. "These flowers are gathered from the pleasant meadows of Paradise. Jesus Christ sends them to you, that you may henceforward love each other with a pure and chaste affection. Their beauty will not wither, nor their fragrance fade, but they will be perceptible to yourselves alone. As a proof of His love to you, Valerian, Jesus is ready to grant whatever you request."

The neophyte cast himself on the ground in humble joy and gratitude for God's goodness, and answered: "There is nothing I so much desire as to see my brother Tiburtius, whom I love as my own life, sharing my happiness and my faith in Jesus Christ." The angel replied that his petition was granted, and that both should soon be crowned with martyrdom. He vanished, leaving them thus comforted. Presently Tiburtius joined them, and, as he entered the room, was struck with amazement at the delicious and heavenly odour unlike anything on earth. They told him all that had happened. He believed, fell at Cecilia's feet, and offered to follow her advice. She sent him with Valerian to the Pope, by whom he also was baptized. The two brothers suffered martyrdom a few days before Cecilia. Their feast is kept on April 14, possibly the day their relics were translated with great solemnity in 1599.

St. Cecilia was apprehended by Almachius, Prefect of Rome. At her trial she spoke so efficaciously on the vanity of the world and the happiness of dying for Christ that a great number there present, 400, it is said, embraced the faith and asked for baptism; amongst them was a man of high authority named Gordian. Almachius was enraged at these conversions, and ordered Cecilia to be stifled in a hot-air bath in her own house. She was preserved there

unhurt for a day and a night. An executioner was then sent to behead her, but he did his work with so trembling a hand that after three strokes—all that the law allowed—she still lived. He was therefore obliged to leave her to die of her wounds.

The faithful came and collected her blood in linen cloths, and kept watch beside her. On the third day Pope Urban came to her. She told him she had prayed not to die till she had seen him, for she desired to give him this, her house, for a church. She begged him to distribute her riches amongst the poor. Urban accepted the bequest, and gave her his apostolic blessing. She then turned her face to the ground and breathed forth her pure soul to God.

That same evening her body was placed in a coffin of cypress wood, just in the attitude in which she had died, and Urban and his deacons bore it out of the city to the cemetery of St. Callixtus, and there buried it in a chamber near the crypt of the Popes.

St. Anastasia.

DECEMBER 25.

In the life of St. Chrysogonus (p. 51), St. Anastasia's charity to the martyrs and her own sufferings are related up to the point of her

impending death by starvation. At this very time the Emperor Diocletian sent Publius, her husband, as an ambassador to the King of Persia. When he departed from Rome he left Anastasia imprisoned in his house, with the intention, should she survive, of putting her to death on his return. But God was watching over His patient and suffering spouse. He willed that on the journey Publius should fall sick and die.

Anastasia was thus liberated. She regained possession of her property, which she continued, according to her solemn promise to God, to employ in the service and support of the poor and of the martyrs and confessors of Christ. With winning zeal and affection she visited them in prison, comforted and cheered them, dressed their wounds, and after their death saw to the interment of their precious remains, in all this making herself their servant and slave.

God our Lord, who had freed her from her husband's tyranny and given her once more the opportunity of serving His martyrs, would not, deprive her of the reward of martyrdom. She was apprehended by the Prefect of Apulia and cast into a frightful prison. Here St. Theodota, who had accomplished her martyrdom in that same place and was now reigning in heaven with our Lord, sustained her for two months with miraculous food. At the end of this time, Anastasia and two hundred men and seventy

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women, all Christians, were put into a ship and sent adrift to be drowned. But the ship, guided by God's providence, arrived at the island of Palmaria, where St. Anastasia was tied to stakes, and a fire kindled beneath her, and her body was burned. Her blessed soul, purified by this and so many other torments, went to its heavenly reward.

A Christian matron named Apollonia took Anastasia's half-burnt body and, after kissing it many times with great tenderness, she embalmed it with precious ointments, wrapped it in fine linen, and buried it in the garden of her own house, where shortly afterwards a church was built and called by Anastasia's name. This martyrdom took place on December 25, in the year 304, under Diocletian and Maximian. Her church in Rome gives title to a cardinal.

Formerly the Popes said their second Mass on Christmas Day at this church and made a commemoration of the saint. This commemoration is now universal.

