Mgr Paul Guérin

LES PETITS BOLLANDISTES: LIVES OF THE SAINTS, VOLUME XIV

1–31 December

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English translation

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About this translation

Translated from Mgr Paul Guérin, *Les Petits Bollandistes. Vies des saints de l'Ancien et du Nouveau Testament, des martyrs, des pères, des auteurs sacrés et ecclésiastiques, des vénérables et autres personnes mortes en odeur de sainteté,* seventh edition (Paris: Bloud et Barral), volume XIV, which covers 1–31 December.

Guérin's work grew out of his re-edition, in 1858, of Father François Giry's seventeenth-century *Vies des saints*, enlarged from the *Acta Sanctorum* of the Bollandists — whence its name — and from the histories and propers of the French dioceses. Each day opens with the martyrologies: the Roman Martyrology, the Martyrology of France, the martyrologies of the religious orders, and additions from the Bollandists and other hagiographers. The lives of the saints of the day follow, each with its dates, its epigraph, and, at the end, the cult and relics of the saint and the sources Guérin used. His footnotes are kept.

The fourteen volumes run through the calendar from 1 January to 31 December. Here each day is one section. The volume ends with Guérin's Dissertation on the Origins of the Faith in Gaul, and a supplement on St. Francis de Sales.

Words and notes that the translation first left illegible or doubtful have been read from the printed volume and supplied.

1 December

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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Martyrologies

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY.

The birthday of the prophet Nahum, who rests at Begabar.[1] 7th c. B.C. — At Rome, the holy martyrs Diodorus, priest, and Marianus, deacon, with several others, who obtained the triumph of martyrdom by the sentence of the emperor Numerian. About 283. — At the same place, the martyrdom of Sts. Lucius, Rogatus, Cassian and Candidus. — The same day, St. Ansanus, martyr, who, having confessed Jesus Christ at Rome under the emperor Diocletian and having been thrown into prison for it, was afterwards taken to Siena in Tuscany, where, being beheaded, he finished the course of his combats. About 304. — At Amelia in Umbria, St. Olympiades, a man of consular rank, whom Blessed Firmina had converted to Jesus Christ, and who, having been tortured on the rack, consummated his martyrdom under Diocletian. About 384. — At Arbela in Persia, St. Ananias, martyr. — At Narni, St. Proculus, bishop and martyr, who, after many great deeds, was beheaded by order of Totila, king of the Goths. — At Casale, St. Evasius, bishop and martyr. — At Milan, St. Castritian, bishop, who in the greatest troubles of the Church showed a consummate virtue and ruled his conduct by the maxims of religion and piety. — At Brescia, St. Ursicinus, bishop. — At Noyon, St. Eligius (Éloi), bishop, whose admirable life is further enhanced by the number of miracles he works. 659. — At Verdun, St. Agericus (Airy), bishop. 591. — The same day, St. Natalia, wife of St. Adrian, martyr, who long served the martyrs imprisoned under the emperor Diocletian and, after their execution, having withdrawn to Constantinople, there found a peaceful and blessed death.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED.

In the dioceses of Ajaccio, Albi, Amiens, Angers, Arras, Auch, Autun, Bayeux, Beauvais, Blois, Cambrai, Châlons, Chartres, Clermont, Coutances, Dijon, Laval, Le Mans, Limoges, Meaux, Montpellier, Nantes, Nîmes, Paris, Perpignan, Rennes, Rodez, Rouen, Saint-Claude and Soissons, St. Eligius, bishop of the old

see of Noyon, named in the Roman martyrology of this day. 659. — In the diocese of Avignon, St. John Chrysostom, patriarch of Constantinople and doctor of the Church, whose life we gave on 27 January. 407. — In the diocese of Carcassonne, St. Gelasius I, pope and confessor, whose notice we sketched on 21 November. 496. — In the diocese of La Rochelle, St. Trojan, bishop of Saintes, of whom we spoke on 30 November. 532. — In the diocese of Mende, St. Hère or Isère (*Ilerus*), bishop of that see and confessor. Nothing is known of him but his relations with St. Enimia, abbess in Gévaudan (5 October). We see in the old lives of that illustrious virgin that St. Hère had been a religious before being bishop, and that after receiving episcopal consecration he continued, as many holy pontiffs have done, to wear the venerable habit of his first profession.[2] 7th c. — In the diocese of Poitiers, St. Florence, virgin. 367. — In the dioceses of Quimper and Saint-Brieuc, St. Tugdual, bishop of the old see of Tréguier, whose notice we sketched on 30 November. 564. — In the diocese of Saint-Flour, St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, bishop and confessor, whose life we gave on 17 November. 270. — In the diocese of Tarbes, St. Sergius Paulus, bishop of Narbonne, whose life we gave on 22 March. 1st c. — In the dioceses of Bourges and Tours, the feast of the translation of the head of St. Martin, bishop of the latter see.[3] — At Fréjus, St. Leontius of Nîmes, bishop of that see (and martyr, according to some hagiographers), father of St. Castor, bishop of Apt. About 432. — At Maastricht (Dutch Limburg), St. Resignatus, bishop, heir of the see and of the virtues of St. Maternus and St. Servatius. Date uncertain. — At Amboise (Indre-et-Loire), in the diocese of Tours, St. Florentin, confessor, in whose honour Fulk, count of Anjou, founded a college of canons in that place. 7th c. — At Grenoble, St. Eure, priest, whose life was wholly heavenly and was nothing else than a continual meditation on death. Date uncertain. — At Le Mans, the death of St. Domnolus, bishop of that see and confessor, whose ordination is indicated in the Roman martyrology of 16 May.[4] 581. — At Maastricht (Dutch Limburg), St. Candres (Candidus), regionary bishop, whose relics were formerly kept at Lisieux (Calvados). 5th c. — At Vernon (Eure), in the diocese of Évreux, the death of St. Onoflète (Onoflède, Onollette, Agneflette, Noflète), whose relics were translated into Maine and placed in the crypt of Saint-Longis (Sarthe, arrondissement and canton of Mamers). 7th c. — At Ghent (East Flanders), St. Hildebert, abbot of the Benedictine monastery of Saint-Bavon in that town. 728.

MARTYROLOGIES OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

Martyrology of the Order of St. Basil. — At Rome, Blessed Gregory III, pope, of the Order of St. Basil, who, illustrious for his holiness and merits, passed to heaven on 28 November.[5] 741.

Martyrology of the Canons Regular. — St. Caesarius, deacon, crowned with martyrdom on 1 November, whose arm is kept in the Lateran basilica.[6] 300.

Martyrology of the Order of Camaldoli. — St. Martin, pope and martyr, of whom mention is made on 12 November.[7] 655.

Martyrology of the Congregation of Vallombrosa. — The dedication of the basilica of the Most Holy Saviour, of which mention is made on 9 November.[8] 324.

Martyrology of the Cistercian Order. — St. Didacus, confessor, whose memory is kept on 13 November.[9] 1463.

Martyrology of the Order of Friars Minor. — The feast of all the Saints of the Seraphic Order.

Martyrology of the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. — The octave of St. John of the Cross, confessor.[10] 1591.

Martyrology of the Order of Hermits of St. Augustine. — St. Stanislaus Kostka of Poland, confessor, of the Society of Jesus, whose memory is kept on 15 August and is kept today in our Order.[11] 1568.

Martyrology of the Order of Discalced Carmelites. — The same as with the Carmelites.

Martyrology of the Canons Regular. — At Rome, the holy martyrs Diodorus, priest, and Marianus, deacon, with several others, who by order of the emperor Numerian merited the glory of martyrdom, and whose bodies are kept in the *Sancta Sanctorum*. About 283.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS.

Among the Friars Preachers, Blessed Christian of Perugia, confessor, of the Order of St. Dominic. He was a disciple of St. Dominic himself, and with Blessed Nicholas Palea he cooperated in the foundation of the convent of Perugia. 13th c. — Also among the Friars Preachers, Blessed John of Vercelli, sixth general of the Order of St. Dominic. This blessed Father was in every way worthy of his glorious predecessors in the government of his Order. Pope Nicholas III (1277–1281) canonised him, so to speak, during his lifetime by praising his holiness. Among his virtues humility shone in the first rank. The Sovereign Pontiff had promoted him to the dignity of patriarch of Jerusalem; but by his entreaties and tears he obtained a dispensation from accepting it. Death served so profound a humility to perfection: the Sacred College had elected him to replace Pope Nicholas III, who had just died, when he himself died a holy death. In the *Familia sacra S. Dominici*, painted in a great number of churches of the Friars Preachers, he is shown with the halo round his head and the tiara in his hand. 1283. — At Ivrea, a town of the Sardinian States, St. Bès (*Bessus*), bishop, patron of that town, and martyr. — At Freising, a town of Bavaria, St. Marinus (Maurinus, Macerinus), regionary bishop, and St. Toéclan or Déclan, his deacon, who planted the faith in Carinthia and Styria. The monastery of Neustift (founded in 1141), near Freising, formerly possessed their relics. Date uncertain. — In Bavaria, St. Lui, first abbot of Ilmmünster. Date uncertain.

MOVABLE FEASTS OF DECEMBER.

On the first Sunday of Advent, in the diocese of Dijon, the feast of the octave of St. Benignus, priest and confessor, apostle of Burgundy, whose life we gave on 1 November. 178. — The same Sunday, in the diocese of Fréjus, the feast of the octave of St. Leontius, bishop of that see, named in the martyrology of France of this day. About 432. — On the third Sunday of Advent, in the dioceses of Paris and Tours, St. Gatian, first bishop of the latter see, whose notice we shall sketch on 18 December. 1st c. — On the first or second day of this month not impeded, in the three Orders of St. Francis, the Commemoration of all the departed, brothers and sisters, of the three Orders of the Seraphic religion, of all the religious men and women, of the brothers and sisters, of the living relatives and benefactors, and of all those buried in the cemeteries of the same Orders.

ST. ELIGIUS (ÉLOI) OF CHAPTELAT, BISHOP OF THE OLD SEE OF NOYON AND CONFESSOR (659)

659. — Pope: Vitalian. — King of France: Clotaire III.

To judge a man’s life, one must look at its end. *Maxim of the Saint.*

St. Eligius was born at Chaptelat, a chapel of ease in the canton of Nieul, near Limoges; he came of a Roman family settled in Gaul. His father was called Eucherius and his mother Terrigia. The education given him could not have been wiser or more Christian. He was early trained in all the exercises of piety, and such a contempt of the world was impressed on him that he seemed born only to trample it underfoot. As from the first he showed an extraordinary skill in the work of the hands, his father placed him with an excellent goldsmith of Limoges named Abbo, who was master of the mint of Limoges. In a short time he became very skilful in that craft, and because he joined to his work great assiduity at divine service, at prayer, at sermons, at spiritual reading and the other practices of devotion, he easily won everyone’s affection and acquired great esteem throughout the country. Having come to Paris, he became acquainted with the treasurer of Clotaire II. That king, to whom the treasurer praised the skill of our Saint, commissioned him to make a seat of royal

magnificence. He had a great quantity of gold delivered to him, with the number of precious stones with which he wished the throne to be enriched. Eligius worked at it diligently, and in a very short time, with the mere weight of gold that had been given him, he made two thrones of admirable workmanship, such as had never been seen. The king was equally surprised at the beauty of the work and at the fact that, without any addition of metal, he had made two thrones instead of one. Both were weighed, and it was found that he did not follow the bad faith of most workmen, who, to excuse their thefts, commonly allege that the file has worn away part of the metal and that another part has been consumed by the fire; it was proved that Eligius returned without any loss the whole weight he had received. “That is great exactness,” Clotaire said to him, “and you show thereby that you may be trusted in more considerable things.” It was by this action that our Saint won the good graces of his prince and the esteem of the whole court.[1] The excellent natural qualities Heaven had given him did no little to increase this credit. The king, who discovered from day to day the piety and virtue of this faithful subject, wished to have him in his service; and, to bind him to it more firmly, he required of him an oath of fidelity on the relics of the Saints. Eligius wished to be faithful; but, seeing no necessity for this oath, and being moreover filled with deep respect for the Saints and for relics, he humbly begged His Majesty to dispense him from it. He was nonetheless pressed to take it; but as tears came to his eyes — for on one side he feared to offend his prince and give him some distrust of his conduct, and on the other he dreaded failing in the reverence he owed to God and to His servants — the king approved this delicacy of conscience.

Far from the favour of so glorious a monarch lessening the spirit of devotion in him, as happens only too often to people of the world, who leave God to follow more comfortably the fair wind of fortune, he undertook to lead a more reformed and more spiritual life. First he made a general confession, to drown in the blood of Jesus Christ and in the ocean of His divine mercy all the sins of his childhood and youth; then he set himself to mortify his flesh by fasts, vigils and other extraordinary penances, in order to strengthen himself against the charms of the world and the dangers to which he saw himself exposed. He spent days and nights considering the inconstancy of human things, the severity of God’s judgments and the rigour of the eternal pains of hell; and, as this sight gave him a holy horror of his offences, he struck his breast hard, watered the pavement with his tears, sent up sighs and groans to heaven, and by often repeated ejaculatory prayers strove to bend the divine justice which he believed he had provoked by his actions. “Remember, Lord,” he said, “that my life is but a breath and a little wind; pardon me, my God, for my days are mere nothingness. Against Thee alone, my dear Master, have I sinned; have mercy on me according to Thy great mercy.” At last, after long sighing and afflicting his body with a pitiless severity, he besought his Saviour to make known to him whether his penance was pleasing to Him and whether his sins were forgiven. In his room there were several relics hanging from the ceiling, beneath which he made his prayer during the night, his body prostrate on the ground and his head resting on a hair-cloth. Being one night in this humbled posture, he dozed off for a few moments, and during this rest it seemed to him that he saw a man who said these words: “Eligius, your prayer is at last granted, and you are about to have the assurance you desire.” Thereupon he awoke and perceived that a most pleasant liquid was coming out of the case of the holy relics and falling on his head, that a miraculous balm was flowing down his robe, and at the same time he smelt a fragrance so delightful that it surpassed all the perfumes of the earth. He knew by this that Our Lord had shown him indulgence and had had the goodness to restore him to the state he was in at his baptism. No words can express the thanksgiving he rendered Him for it, and the resolutions he then made to work with more zeal and ardour than ever at the great business of his sanctification. This was properly the foundation of that eminent perfection to which he afterwards rose, and grace was all the more abundant as his humility had been deep. He confided secretly the favour he had received from Heaven to St. Ouen (Audoenus), who was then only a young lord of the court, and this account touched him so much that from then on, after the example of Eligius, he began to despise the pleasures and vanities of the world and to consecrate himself with all his heart to the service of God.

The affection Clotaire bore St. Eligius passed to Dagobert his son, and this prince honoured him with his familiarity to the point of leaving the company of the bishops and lords of his court to go to him and enjoy for a few moments his conversation, in which he found incomparable charm. Eligius for his part used this time to advantage in inspiring him with sentiments of clemency, piety and religion; indeed he drew him away from several youthful liberties and led him to great acts of virtue. This kindness of his king drew upon him the envy and hatred of the wicked, and some tried to blacken his reputation by calumnies; but people were so convinced of his integrity that their impostures only served to enhance his merit and make his holiness appear with greater lustre. His life was a continual meditation on divine truths; he had his last hour ever before his eyes, and this thought made him always walk in fear and watchfulness over himself. He loved God with all the affections and all the tenderness of his heart. His charity extended to those who wished him ill as well as to those who cherished him and loaded him with benefits. No one was more humble and modest than he, and yet one saw on his face a holy gaiety that charmed all who had the happiness of speaking with him. He was never seen angry, nor impatient, nor too bold in his speech, nor intemperate at his meals, nor eager for glory.

He implored at every moment the help of Heaven to avoid sin, to persevere in good and to make himself more and more pleasing to Our Lord. The king employed him on works of goldsmithry of great price, in which neither silver nor gold nor pearls nor gems were spared; but while he worked he always had a book open that furnished him with sentences of Scripture to occupy his mind divinely. His reputation became so great and so universal that the ambassadors of foreign princes who came to court had no sooner had audience of the king than they went to visit him, both to win his favour with the prince and to enjoy the happiness of his conversation. Besides, priests, religious, pilgrims and devout persons came to him from all sides to implore his help in their needs, and they always found in his charity the succour and protection they asked. Above all he had a wonderful zeal for the redemption of captives, and as soon as he knew that a slave was for sale, whether Frankish or foreign, he bought him with his own money to give him his freedom. Sometimes such great bands were brought, especially from the land of the Saxons, that his money was not enough for their ransom; but then he sold even his provisions, his clothes and his shoes to draw them out of so miserable a state. After delivering them, he obtained letters of enfranchisement for them from the king, then gave them the choice either of returning home or of becoming religious, and he furnished them with everything needed for either course. He used a like liberality towards strangers and pilgrims who lacked the necessities of life, and he often borrowed money, pledged his furniture, sold his jewels and gave away his cloak rather than abandon them in their need.

What shall we say of his mercy towards the poor? There was always so great a number of them at his door that, when people asked where his house was, no other sign was given but these crowds of beggars. “Go,” people would say, “to such a street, and where you find a great many poor, that is where the lord Eligius lives.” He never went out without a purse full of money, so as to satisfy them all and send none away. He was surrounded in the streets, says St. Ouen, as a hive is surrounded by honey-bees; he cut down his own drink and food to have the means of giving them more abundant alms. There were always poor at his table, and while he contented himself with a little bread and water for his own food, he treated them splendidly and served them good meat with wine as much as they needed. On these occasions he did them the office of a servant or steward. He relieved them of their bundles, gave them water to wash, seated them on fine chairs, brought and distributed the dishes that had been prepared, and offered them drink. Sometimes he ate their leavings, sitting on a little stool at the end of the table; at other times he touched nothing, but always stood before them as before his lords and masters. He had no less kindness for widows, wards and orphans, and when they implored his protection he served them with all his credit and courageously defended them against those who tried to oppress them by their power. For some time he wore silk garments and jewels, according to the custom of courtiers and so as not to appear singular, having only beneath them a rough hair-shirt that pricked him continually and so checked the revolts of his flesh; but later, being more advanced in the

spiritual life, he sold what he had that was most precious for the help of monasteries and the poor, and dressed only very plainly. He was quite often seen to put a cord round his body instead of those gilded belts enriched with pearls and diamonds that he had worn before. The king, who knew it was the poor who had thus stripped him, sometimes gave him his own cloak to cover him and his royal belt to gird him, saying very wisely that it was not reasonable that those who had left all for Jesus Christ should be despised for their too great poverty; but Eligius did not keep them long, and when beggars presented themselves and he had no other means of helping them, he parted with them for their support. He lived with St. Ouen in the royal palace, because of the special affection Dagobert bore him; but this did not prevent him from discharging his devotions and spiritual exercises exactly. If the prince sent for him while he was at prayer, he sent to beg him to wait a little, giving as his reason that he was engaged with a greater Master than he. He then received the gift of tears, and he shed them so abundantly, both for his own faults and for the sins and miseries of his neighbour, that it seemed his eyes would melt away. Having made it a habit to sleep hardly at all, he spent the greater part of the night in contemplation, and the rest he employed in singing psalms and reading spiritual books. His room was a sanctuary filled with images and relics, where he performed the same offices that the Angels and Saints perform in heaven.

The confidence the king had in his prudence and holiness led him to send him as ambassador to the duke of Brittany, to negotiate a solid peace between the two crowns. The princes and lords thought this treaty impossible, and that the quarrels of the two sovereigns must necessarily end in a cruel war; but Eligius, whose prudence was incomparable, conducted his negotiation so skilfully that he persuaded the duke to come and meet the king at Clichy, and when he was there he brought them into very good understanding again. No words can worthily represent the alms he gave on this journey. He never refused any poor man along the whole road; he gave to the religious, to the hospitals and to the beggars all the presents of his embassy, and he even sold, to help them, a belt of silver, gold, diamonds and embroidery that he had been persuaded to wear to uphold his dignity as ambassador of the Most Christian king. His intentions being so pure and his charity so abundant, not only was nothing he asked refused him, but people often anticipated him and sent him large sums so that he might have the means to satisfy the breadth of his mercy; and the prince made him very considerable presents, knowing that in giving them to him he was giving them to an infinite number of the needy. One of the chief requests St. Eligius made of him was to grant him the land of Solignac in the Limousin for the foundation of a monastery; he told His Majesty pleasantly that it was to set up there a ladder by which they might both climb to heaven. The king made him the gift of it, and Eligius had a celebrated abbey built there, which was at once filled with more than a hundred and fifty religious. He afterwards became so attached to this house that he sent there everything he could obtain from the king and the lords of the court, so that one saw making their way towards that holy place wagons of plate, clothes, blankets, linen, books and all the other things needed by a religious community. The rule was kept there in such purity that St. Ouen, who made a journey there, admitted that there was no monastery in France comparable to it for regular observance.

The foundation of this abbey being completed, he at once thought of establishing another at Paris for nuns; he devoted to this good work the house he had before the palace, which he held from Dagobert's liberality, and changed it into a monastery, where he assembled as many as three hundred nuns under the discipline of St. Aurea. Nothing more was lacking for the completion of the building but the extent of a small courtyard which belonged to the king's domain. He had it surveyed, so as to know exactly what it contained, and then asked His Majesty for it. He had no trouble obtaining it; but having afterwards noticed that a mistake had been made in measuring the ground and that there was one foot more than he had declared to the king, he was extremely distressed, and, stopping the work at once, he ran to the palace to ask his pardon for the error — which he did with tears in his eyes, on his knees, offering himself to death if the king judged he had deserved it for this fault. The king was not a little surprised at this delicacy of conscience, and, turning to a great number of lords who were present: "See," he said, "what the fidelity of those who love Jesus Christ is

like. My governors and officers often take from me by cunning and to their own profit whole lands and lordships without any scruple; and this servant of God has not dared to hide from us a single foot of the land we gave him for a religious house." As a reward for his sincerity he doubled the gift he had made him. Besides the regular buildings of the monastery, Eligius also had a magnificent church built outside the gates of the city, on the eastern side, in honour of the apostle St. Paul, for the burial of the nuns, and had it entirely roofed with lead. The body of Blessed Quintilian, who was apparently the director of these holy women, was buried there, and it is now one of the most celebrated parishes of Paris.

Lastly he built, or rather repaired, in the City the church of St. Martial, bishop and martyr, and when it was finished he had the relics of that glorious apostle of the Limousin brought there with great pomp and solemnity. When they passed before the prison, where seven men accused of crimes were shut up in the dungeons, they became so heavy that the man carrying them was obliged to stop; at the same time the chains of these wretches broke, and the doors of the dungeons, as well as those of the prison, opened of themselves with a great noise to give them their freedom. It was a miracle of St. Martial; but it was plain that St. Eligius had foreseen it and had a great share in it, since he had wished the procession to pass that way, though it was not the usual route. He worked a similar wonder at Bourges when he was bishop: by his prayer he opened the doors of the prison, brought out the prisoners and broke their irons, which they had carried to the church, where fear of being retaken by their guards had obliged them to take refuge. This great man, who breathed nothing but devotion, took extreme pleasure in frequenting monasteries and conversing with religious, especially those of the celebrated abbey of Luxeuil, founded by St. Columban and governed by St. Eustasius. He often went to visit them, and among those heavenly men he appeared as a model of holiness. As soon as he saw them he bowed to them to the ground in a deep sentiment of humility. He even made them give him their blessing; and after loading them with benefits, he asked of them on leaving, by way of thanks, only a piece of their bread, which was always very coarse, of which he took a mouthful every day fasting, out of devotion, preferring this food to the most delicious dishes that might have been served him at the king's table. He fasted when he was travelling or was to arrive in the evening at some holy place, and sometimes even two or three days beforehand, and walked a league or two on foot to the door of the church. Before going up to a room he sent for the poor, the sick and pilgrims to take his meal with them. He often went out to meet them, to receive them and show them more friendship. If the sick could not walk he had them carried, and when they had sores he dressed them with his own hands and gave them the remedies he judged useful to them. The feast prepared for him was not for himself but for these unfortunates; he contented himself with bread and water mixed with a little vinegar, and distributed to them the wine and meats that had been served; and after their meal he humbly washed their feet, as he had first washed their hands and faces, then had good beds made ready for them. During the night he visited all the places of devotion of the town or village, and in places where there was no church, as soon as his people were asleep he rose to spend the rest of the time in prayer, prostrate on the floor. He always went back to bed before daybreak, not to sleep, but so that, his mortification remaining hidden, he might avoid the applause of men. This he also did in his own house and practised faithfully until the grave.

This humility was so pleasing to God that, while still in secular life, he received in an eminent degree the gift of miracles. He healed a man crippled in all his limbs, two lame men, and a poor man one of whose hands had withered; he restored life to a dead man and sight to a blind man; he so prodigiously multiplied a few drops of wine left in a bottle that he had enough to give to a crowd of beggars who were asking him for alms. He miraculously found money in his purse after his charity had entirely emptied it; by a fervent prayer to God he forced thieves to bring back, the very next night, the richest ornaments of the church of Sainte-Colombe, which they had stolen. In short, he did so much good on all sides, for body and soul, that one may say he was in France an abundant and inexhaustible source of every kind of blessing. His works of piety did not prevent him from always working at goldsmithry, and among the fine works he made one notes above all the shrines of St. Denis and St. Germanus, bishops of Paris; of St. Lucian, apostle of Beauvais; of

Sts. Piatus, Quentin, Maximian and Julian, martyrs; of St. Martin and St. Brice, bishops of Tours; of St. Severinus, abbot; of St. Columba and St. Genevieve, virgins; besides several ornaments he made for various churches, and especially at Saint-Denis.

His zeal for the Catholic faith was admirable. Though he was still only a layman, he nonetheless obtained by his urging a council at Orléans against a heretic from the East who had come to sow Monothelitism and other errors in France. He attended this council himself to spur the prelates to fight vigorously against this impostor, and contributed not a little to his condemnation. He also drove from Paris and from the whole kingdom other apostates who tried by their talk to seduce the people and make them renounce the faith of the Church. He applied himself, too, with admirable vigour to rooting out simony, which disfigured almost all the dioceses. He always very faithfully carried out the just wishes of the kings under whom he lived; but when their edicts were contrary to justice he generously opposed them and remonstrated with them with such humility that they saw plainly it was the love of equity alone, and not a spirit of revolt or contradiction, that made him speak. “O most holy and most perfect servant of God,” cries St. Ouen, “whom bishops have made it their special glory to imitate, and who possessed in the lay state the most eminent virtues of the episcopate! Indeed, what naked has he not clothed? what hungry has he not fed? what afflicted has he not consoled? what ruined families has he not helped? what poor monasteries has he not maintained? and did he not obtain permission to bury, and have buried, all criminals executed by sentence of the judges throughout the whole extent of the kingdom?” Finally, one of his greatest desires was to die a martyr, so as to sign with his blood the faith he held in the depth of his heart and so give proof of the love he bore Jesus Christ.

So many rare virtues caused him to be raised, goldsmith and layman as he was, to the see of the Church of Noyon, to be its father and pastor. He did not, however, pass all at once to so eminent a dignity. He remained some time in the clerical state to satisfy the holy Canons; after that, Deodatus, bishop of Mâcon, ordained him priest. Finally he was consecrated bishop at Rouen, together with St. Ouen, in the third year of the reign of Clovis II, on 14 May, which fell on the Sunday before the Rogations. As soon as he had received the imposition of hands he went to his diocese, where his virtues, of which he had given fine examples at court, shone with new lustre. Far from lessening the exercises of his charity towards pilgrims and the poor, he increased them still more. He had a place where he received them in crowds, washed their feet, hands and faces, gave them food and drink, clothed them anew and gave them large alms. Every day he had twelve of them at his table, whom he served himself with the deepest humility, treating them with no less respect and care than if they had been his masters. “I frankly confess,” says St. Ouen on this point, “that I have never seen such promptness in helping the members of Jesus Christ, nor heard tell that anyone practised the works of mercy with such affection and perseverance. There are indeed some who perform them at certain times; but to see any who continue them without ever slackening, as St. Eligius did, is something very rare and almost without example.”

As his diocese extended far into the Low Countries, where idolatry still reigned in many places, the zeal with which he burned for the salvation of souls did not allow him to remain long without going there to work at their conversion. At first he met much resistance; but his patience and his assiduity in preaching the word of God at last made him victorious over the obstinacy of his peoples. He made Jesus Christ known to them, persuaded them of the sacred maxims of the Gospel, and made them abandon the worship of demons to adore only one God subsisting in three Persons. He did not limit his charity to the inhabitants of his province; he also undertook to draw to the faith those of Antwerp, the Frisians and the peoples scattered along the coasts of the German Ocean. He even went as far as Denmark and Sweden to carry the torch of faith there, and everywhere he dispelled the darkness of ignorance and the errors of pagan superstition. The temples of the false gods were changed into churches, and profane solemnities into holy and religious feasts. He founded monasteries, gathered congregations of virgins, ordained priests and inferior ministers whom he distributed among the parishes, and in short discharged in those places all the apostolic functions.

Having returned to his diocese, he applied himself with new care to governing it well. He preached often, and his word had a wonderful force and energy; but his example made still more impression on hearts than all his sermons. He was rigorous only with himself, for he always used admirable gentleness and kindness towards others, and this gentleness often won those whom too great a severity would have discouraged and cast into despair. Yet when the glory of God was at stake, his firmness was no less than his patience. A servant of Ebroin, mayor of the palace, relying on his master's authority, wished to usurp a wood belonging to the domain of the church of Noyon, and treated St. Eligius very shamefully to force him to give it up; the holy bishop bore all these insults with extreme moderation, but he always held firm and constantly refused to consent to the usurpation. "My friend," he said to him, "you ought to curb your covetousness and blush with shame before God and men at desiring, as you do, a property that belongs to Jesus Christ. If it were mine I would give it you very willingly; but I cannot allow you to seize what is destined for the use of the poor; if you go further and take possession of it, I shall know how to use against you the sword of the Church and cut you off by the severity of ecclesiastical censures." The man only laughed at his threats and, without troubling himself, went to seize the wood he coveted. Then St. Eligius stretched out his hand towards this incorrigible man and pronounced against him the sentence of excommunication; at that very hour divine Justice struck him in such a way that he fell to the ground as if dead and gave no further sign of life. Great entreaties were made to St. Eligius to pray for him and obtain time for him to do penance; but St. Ouen admits he could not learn whether he did so in fact or whether, to terrify the impious, he abandoned this man to the rigours of God's anger and indignation.

Preaching on the feast of St. Peter in a parish near Noyon, he inveighed with extraordinary force against the dances and other games of the people, which still had much of paganism about them, and forbade them absolutely. The villagers were stirred up by this, and, unable to bear being deprived of these amusements, which came from immemorial custom, they resolved to massacre their holy pastor if he persisted in his command. He was warned of this conspiracy; but far from retracting his order or withdrawing from so dangerous a place, he returned there at the next feast, moved by an ardent desire to suffer martyrdom, and preached with even more vehemence than before against their superstitious rejoicings. Upon this they heaped a thousand insults on him and openly threatened to put him to death; but he was not dismayed at these threats, and the apostolic zeal with which he was filled made him address this fervent prayer to Jesus Christ: "I beseech Thee, my God, that those who have the temerity to oppose Thy commandments, and who would rather obey the laws of Satan than submit to Thy divine will, may now be possessed by the evil spirit, both to strike terror into others and so that Thy faithful servants may exalt the glory of Thy name." Scarcely had he uttered these words when all those who were preparing to lay hands on him were seized by demons, who began to torment them in a frightful manner, especially the servants of Erchinoald, mayor of the palace; and these wretches, who were more than fifty, remained a whole year in this pitiable state, until on the same day of the following year the Saint, having again gone to that village and seeing their spirits perfectly subdued, had them brought publicly before him and, after a severe reprimand, delivered them by the sign of the cross and holy water.

While visiting his diocese he placed under interdict a church whose priest was vicious and gave great scandal. This cleric, mocking his interdict, still wished to say his Mass and sing the divine office as usual; for this he wished to ring the bell to assemble his people; but, as though it had been sensible of the holy prelate's word, it gave no sound until the end of three days, because, at the request of the inhabitants, who assured him that their priest had done penance and was resolved to live more piously, he lifted the interdict and allowed them to celebrate as usual. Then the bell was heard and began again to call the people as before. Another priest, whom he had excommunicated for his public and infamous crimes, having, in spite of this censure, had the temerity to go to the altar, fell stone dead on the steps, and showed by this terrible punishment how severely God will punish His ministers who by a sacrilegious outrage have had the temerity to say Mass in a state of mortal sin. We should never finish if we wished to relate all the other wonders of this incomparable

man. Often by a single command, or even by his mere presence, he forced the devil to leave the bodies of the possessed. By his word he made dry and barren a walnut tree whose owner, quarrelsome and impatient, insulted him daily for a few nuts his servants had knocked down, and whom neither the reprimand he had given them nor three pieces of gold he had given him in compensation had been able to appease. One of his officers being sick unto death, he ordered him to get up and set out on a journey with him, and at that very instant he rose in perfect health. He also healed, by his mere touch, one of his deacons who had an unbearable pain in the side which had made him entirely consumptive.

The gift of miracles was not the only one Eligius received from God; he also had that of prophecy in a very eminent degree. Distant things were no less known to him than those which happened before his eyes, and he saw the future as well as the present. He was told that a villain named Flavaud [Flaochad] had cruelly put to death a most virtuous nobleman of Burgundy named Willebaud; he said to his friends: “That nobleman was a true servant of God, and he now enjoys an immortal life in heaven; but as for Flavaud, he will die in ten days by a sudden and dreadful death” — which in fact happened. He also foretold the death of Simplicius, bishop of Limoges, and that Felix would be elected in his place; the deaths of Charibert and Dagobert, kings of France; the birth of Clotaire III, whom he held at the baptismal font; and the reign of the children of Clovis. He warned an abbot who had come to see him that in his absence the devil was causing great disorders in his monastery. And indeed on his return the abbot found that twelve of his religious had left the habit and gone back to the world. But the most striking of his predictions was that of the death of Erchinoald, mayor of the palace. This lord begged him to accompany him on a journey he was making on some important business; he went against his inclination, because he foresaw clearly that the outcome would not be happy. As he was walking one night with his deacon before the door of the house where they were lodged, meditating some verses of the psalms, he saw a column of fire come down from heaven which seemed to enter with great violence into Erchinoald’s room. He then told his deacon that this minister would soon die; and indeed he was struck at that very hour with a violent fever, which in a few days brought him to the grave. In the heat of this fever he sent for St. Eligius to commend himself to his prayers, hoping they would obtain his health. But the blessed prelate told him openly that he had only a very short time to live and that his only concern must be to prepare for a good death; that, moreover, if he wished to save his soul, he must carry out before that hour what he had never been willing to do during his life — namely, give to the poor all the gold and silver he had amassed from the people by his unjust exactions, because whatever he left in his coffers would serve only for his condemnation. The dying man saw clearly that this was necessary; but he delayed so long in making up his mind that he expired without having carried out so salutary a counsel. St. Eligius nevertheless had his body taken away and gave it honourable burial in the church of Mont-Saint-Quentin, near Péronne, which St. Fursey had built from the large alms he had received from him. This lord had in fact appeared liberal towards the poor and monasteries. But what use are liberalities made out of goods plundered from the people, if one does not restore all that one has taken, and restore it to those whom one has unjustly stripped?

Besides the churches and religious houses of which we have said our Saint was the founder, he also had the monastery of Saint-Martin built at Noyon. He enlarged that of Saint-Pierre of Ghent, on Mont-Blandin. He gathered hermits on a hill two leagues from Arras, which has since been called Mont-Saint-Éloi. He erected various oratories at Oudenburg, Rothenbourg and Bruges. In this last town he consecrated the church of Saint-Sauveur, and at Courtrai that of the monastery of Saint-Martin. In short, he knew how to engage kings and princes in these works of piety to such a degree that many others were carried out only at his instance and through his care.

He received from God a special gift of finding the bodies of Saints who had been honoured before without anyone knowing where their relics were. He made the happy discovery of the sacred remains of the martyr St. Quentin; by a like good fortune he discovered those of St. Piatus at Seclin and those of St. Lucian at Beauvais, and with his own hands he made them shrines of precious metal enriched with precious stones, as

he did also for Sts. Crispin and Crispinian at Soissons.

At last, after leading so exemplary and holy a life, undertaking so many labours for the conversion of peoples and performing so many works of piety and mercy, being seventy years old, he had a revelation of his death. Then he took new care to prepare for it well, persuaded that one cannot be too pure to appear at the judgment of God. On the eve of his death he called his disciples and servants and exhorted them powerfully to the fear and love of Our Lord, never to lose sight of the sufferings of His Passion nor of the rigours of His last tribunal, to observe His law faithfully and to put themselves every day in the state in which they would wish to be at the hour of death. He also commended to them the monasteries and houses of devotion he had built for the salvation of souls and the honour of the Church; then, prostrating himself on the ground, he made this prayer to God: “I beseech Thee, divine Shepherd, to give to this people whom I am about to leave a father after Thine own heart, and to surround them Thyself with Thy mercy; uphold them by Thy protection; guide them by Thy inspirations, and never cease to lead them in the way of the commandments.” Then he embraced them all one after another and bade them a last farewell. Finally, the following day, saying these words of Scripture, “Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, and enter not into judgment with me,” he expired in the fervour of his prayer, amid the tears and groans of his children. It was 1 December, at one hour of the night, in the year of Jesus Christ 659.

Several people saw his soul rise to heaven amid a great light and take, before they lost sight of it, the form of a globe of fire surmounted by a cross far more brilliant than the rays of the sun. Queen St. Bathildis, having learned of his illness, at once set out with the king and the princes her children to have the consolation of seeing him once more; but she reached Noyon only on the day after his death. Her plan was to have his body carried to her abbey of Chelles, and for this she had prayers and a three days’ fast made; but God did not allow him to be taken from Noyon. When they tried to move him, he became so heavy that there was no means of stirring him.

St. Eligius is represented: 1° standing, holding a hammer surmounted by a small crown, while in the background his workmen are making a shrine and other objects; 2° holding a hammer and the crosier; 3° facing a gallows on which a hanged man is seen, whom he seems to bless; 4° lying down, having a dream in which he sees the sun and the moon accompanied by three stars; 5° working in his workshop.

St. Eligius is patron of Antwerp, Béthune, Bologna, Dunkirk, Limoges, Marseilles, Noyon and Paris; and of goldsmiths, smiths, farriers, veterinarians, saddlers, wheelwrights, coppersmiths, cutlers, clockmakers, locksmiths, miners, spur-makers, coachbuilders, coachmen, farmers, horse-dealers, edge-tool makers, gold-beaters, gilders, tinsmiths, coiners, ploughmen and farm-hands. He is invoked for horses and against vicious horses.

VENERATION AND RELICS.

The body of St. Eligius was buried in the church of Saint-Leu, which had been the most usual place of his devotions. His funeral was so magnificent that none so illustrious had ever been seen in the kingdom. The king and the regent, with all the princes and lords of the court and many bishops, attended it. But what made it still more splendid were the crowds of freed captives, of poor people fed and widows supported by his alms, who sent their cries up to heaven for the loss they were suffering of so good a pastor. The miracles worked at his tomb by his intercession, and the chains of prisoners, which all broke when they were led before his basilica, further enhanced wonderfully the lustre of his merits.

The relics of St. Eligius rest in the cathedral of Noyon, to which they were awarded by a decree of the parlement of Paris in the year 1462, against the religious of the abbey of Saint-Leu, which had by then taken the name of Saint-Éloi. They are kept in a shrine of gilded wood beneath the high altar of the former cathedral. His head, which had been given to the abbey of Chelles, has been, since the destruction of that monastery, in the parish church of Saint-André in the same place. Several other churches glory in possessing

some parts of his rich remains, such as Saint-Barthélemy of Noyon, Saint-Sauveur of Bruges, Saint-Martin of Tournai, Saint-Pierre of Douai and the cathedral of Paris, to which a bone of one of his arms was given in 1212, as is stated in the breviary of the diocese.

Finally, the memory of this great prelate, one of the most illustrious of the kingdom, is still very celebrated there as well as in Flanders, and one sees churches and chapels built and confraternities erected in his honour.

Taken from the Life of the Saint by St. Ouen, archbishop of Rouen. — Cf. Vies des Saints du Limousin, *by M. Labiche de Reignefort.*

ST. FLORENCE, VIRGIN, IN THE DIOCESE OF POITIERS (367)

Florence was born in Phrygia, of parents wrapped in the darkness of paganism, who had brought her up in the same errors. In 359 St. Hilary, exiled for four years and defending the faith in those regions given over to Arianism, was on his way to Seleucia, a town of Isauria, where the heresy had summoned a council for the end of September. Passing one Sunday through a small town which history unfortunately does not name, he entered the church of the Catholics at the hour when the people were already assembled for prayer. Suddenly a young girl darted out from the midst of the crowd; she made her way through the packed ranks, crying out that a great servant of God was there, and at once, prostrate at his feet, she besought him to join her by a sign of the cross to the flock of Jesus Christ, protesting that she would not rise until she had obtained it. It was Florence, whom an impulse of the Holy Spirit drove towards the great doctor whose illustrious name filled the East, and whom He had just mysteriously made known to her. Hilary gave her his blessing: it was a pledge of the holy baptism she received a few days later. The pious child was not alone in this happiness. Instructed in the truths of the faith during the short time the great bishop could give them, her father Florentius, her mother and her whole family gave themselves to God and were washed in the same regeneration.

We do not know what became of this touching conquest of a whole household, into which “salvation had entered” through the ministry of a Saint and the moving example of the innocent virgin. For her, a miraculous path was traced; she followed it. A few months later, towards the spring of the year 360, St. Hilary — victorious over the enemies of Jesus Christ, and formidable enough to their cause that they recognised the need to be rid of him in the East — was returning by order of Constantius to the West, where the faith had no less need of his presence. Florence learned of it; she obtained from her parents leave to follow him, attached herself to his steps, crossed after him the seas that separate Greece from Italy, thence passed the Alps, travelled through the various provinces of Gaul, still stirred by the rapid passage of the great doctor, and arrived at Poitiers when every mouth there was celebrating his return.

The fervent traveller was welcomed with all his heart by the Saint, whom she called her father with far better title, she said, than the one from whom she had received the light of day, since from the second she held a life a thousand times more precious. The lessons she received from him, and the model of holiness she had before her eyes, soon led to high piety a heart so docile to the grace that had so admirably prepared it. The knowledge of God and of His divine Son and meditation on revealed truths produced in her a deep love for the things of heaven and a proportionate distaste for earth. This feeling only grew; she asked to flee the world in absolute retreat, and the holy bishop, yielding to her prayers after testing her perseverance, gave her at Comblé, near his estate of Celle-l’Évescault, a narrow cell and a small garden, where she shut herself up to give herself more continually to the pious exercises of the solitary life. It was at the same time that St. Triaise had embraced the same kind of perfection at Poitiers. Happy the great man, thus to set beside each of his dwellings visible angels whose virtues consoled him for the impieties of his enemies!

The excellent Father did not leave to herself in her solitude this daughter he had begotten to grace. He visited her, spoke with her of God, directed her soul, and so, on each of his journeys to the country, came to edify

himself by the progress the Holy Spirit was making there. This progress soon reached the point which the great Master had marked out in His providential wisdom. The pious virgin's continual prayer, her frequent vigils, her fasts and other austerities hastened the moment when heaven was to open to this angelic life. She lived hardly more than six or seven years after her voluntary enclosure, and her soul was united to the Lord on 1 December 367.

The holy Pontiff, whom she preceded by hardly more than a year, gave her a burial worthy of her and of himself in the same place she had sanctified by so admirable a sacrifice. Her body was honoured there for a long time, and miraculous graces drew the faithful. A church was built there shortly afterwards and became a priory of the neighbouring abbey of Nouaillé. When the centuries had brought to Poitou successive wars, with all the calamities that accompany them, the little building followed the fate of a crowd of others far more important, and through so many unhappy years the relics of the humble and glorious virgin were lost, and then completely forgotten. As the domain of Celle-l'Évescault had never ceased to belong to the bishops of Poitiers, from whom it took its name, it happened in the 11th century that Isembert I, one of his successors (1028–1047), discovered them at Comblé and solemnly translated them to Poitiers. They were placed in the cathedral, beneath the pavement, between the altar of the Blessed Virgin and that of St. Magdalen, and a chaplaincy under the title of St. Florence was annexed to the latter.

These remains, which became precious to the people of Poitiers, were not, however, left long buried. A magnificent silver shrine was given to them. Every year, during the processions of the Rogations, long so celebrated, this fine reliquary was carried beside the one containing relics of St. Peter. Recourse was also had to the good Saint in droughts and other public calamities, "to have," as an old historian says, "rain or fair weather from the day of the procession or the morrow, as I have seen done in several countries." But 21 May 1562 came. That day the barbarous hordes who protested against the faith and its temples pillaged all the churches of Poitiers. St. Florence found no mercy before those who burned all the relics, and hers became the prey of the flames like the others. Happily, in 1698 a discovery came to compensate the mother-church for this loss, which had been thought irreparable. A portion of the holy body had been left in its second burial-place, behind the choir of the cathedral, and its authenticity could be established. The church then lacked sufficient resources to have a suitable reliquary made. It was preferred to place the holy bones beneath the high altar, where they still are: that is why the chapter keeps every year, on 1 December, the feast of St. Florence with the rite of a double.

Vies des Saints de Poitiers, by the abbé Auber.

ST. AGERICUS (AIRY),[1] TENTH BISHOP OF VERDUN (591)

Agericus was born at Harville,[1] in the diocese of Verdun, of a humble but respectable family. Having long remained childless, his parents obtained him by dint of alms and prayers. Theuderic, king of Austrasia (511–534), consented to be his godfather. From the age of seven his parents took him to Verdun to make his studies there; he early gave signs of his future holiness. He was never seen running after the frivolities, games and amusements, sometimes dangerous, for which childhood has a passion, but was always serious, reserved and modest. The springtime of his youth was covered with the flowers of every virtue, and he was early admitted into the ranks of the clerical militia. With his age grew his piety, his assiduity in prayer and in the study of the holy books, so that he was raised to the priesthood and soon after to the episcopate as successor to the bishop St. Desideratus, who had just died (554). He was then only thirty-three years old.

Having reached this high dignity, he departed in nothing from his former poverty; there was always the same frugality in food, the same simplicity in furniture and clothing. Giving himself entirely to feeding the Lord's flock by word and example, he kept for himself of the prerogatives of his office only the labour and the care. Venantius Fortunatus, having stopped at Verdun on his return from a journey to Rome, witnessed his charity and celebrates it in these terms:

Sumit pauper opem, tristis spem, nudus amictum; Omnia quidquid habes omnibus esse facis. (The poor receive help, the sad hope, the naked a garment; whatever you have, you make it belong to all.)

Among other miracles that made his holiness shine, one must not forget the one he worked at Laon on a man condemned to death, whom he miraculously delivered from his bonds and for whom he obtained pardon. He raised from its ruins a chapel of St. John the Baptist situated outside the walls of the city and dedicated it to St. Medard, bishop of Noyon. Shortly afterwards a divine revelation taught him that the bodies of St. Maurus, St. Salvinus and St. Arator lay buried in that same place.

Our holy bishop was in great credit with the princes, whom he helped with his counsels and services in the administration of the kingdom. Sigebert, king of Austrasia (561–575), wished him to baptise his son Childebert. The latter, when raised to the throne, showed the holy bishop an entirely filial respect, as St. Gregory of Tours assures us. Once in particular, passing through Verdun, he stayed at the bishop's house, and there, touched by the bishop's virtues, his destitution and his trust in God, he made considerable donations of vineyards and lands to the church of Verdun. St. Agericus had at first obtained from Childebert the pardon of the general Guntram Boso, who had offended this king and Queen Brunhild; but afterwards he could not snatch him from the blows of justice. He also saw Berthefried, who had revolted, assassinated in his own chapel; what touched him most in this last event was the profanation of the holy place. He died on 1 December 591, in the fortieth year of his episcopate, and was buried in the chapel of Saint-Martin, which he had built and which later (1037) bore his name. His body is now religiously kept in the cathedral.

In the last century there was still kept in the treasury of the same cathedral the table spoon of St. Agericus; it was of wood, with a rather long handle decorated with a few small ivory studs; also two knives of the same Saint, with engraved ivory handles: the blades of these knives were about twelve to fifteen inches long; at their end was a kind of hook formed from the same blade, "as if to hook the meat," says Dom Calmet, "when it was not well cut, or to draw towards oneself what was on the table in order to distribute it to the guests."

The barrel is, in paintings, the attribute of St. Agericus, as the dragon is that of St. Vanne. The legend of Verdun will give us the key to this symbol. King Childebert II came one day to see the holy bishop at Verdun. Now the Franks were great drinkers: each lord of the royal retinue had brought many men with him; and as these guests were not expected, the provisions of the bishop's house were soon exhausted. The cellarer came in great distress, announcing that only a single barrel or small cask was left in the cellar; and besides, no wine worthy of such guests could be found in the town, because at that time there was no vineyard at Verdun. There was nothing for it but to trust in Providence. The barrel was brought up to the dining hall, and St. Agericus having blessed it with everything that was to be served, they saw with surprise that it was inexhaustible. The same thing happened on the following days and as long as the king was at the bishop's house. The king, learning by this wonder that the bishopric lacked vineyards, made him a present of two *amandus* in the country of Metz. (This word, according to scholars, means a piece of vineyard producing enough wine to fill one of those great casks then called *hama*, today *foudres*.)

Proper of Verdun; Histoire de Verdun et du pays verdunois, by the abbé Clouët; Histoire civile et ecclésiastique de Verdun, by Roussel.

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[2] Scripture tells us nothing else about the prophet Nahum except that he was of El-Kesal [Elkosh], a small village of Galilee. He prophesied in the time of Hezekiah, king of Judah (723–694 before Jesus Christ), after the carrying away of the ten tribes into Assyria by Shalmaneser, king of Nineveh (724–712). The whole prophecy of Nahum concerns the ruin of the kingdom of the Assyrians, but above all the taking of Nineveh by Astyages, last king of the Medes (595–560), and by Nabopolassar, father of the great Nebuchadnezzar and king of Babylon (626–605). Nahum's style is lively, grand and figurative; his descriptions are beautiful, his comparisons apt and well sustained. — Dom Ceillier, *Histoire des auteurs sacrés et ecclésiastiques*. Formerly the tomb of the prophet Nahum used to be shown at Begabar or Betogabra, in Palestine, near Emmaus or Nicopolis, two or three leagues from Jerusalem. — Baillet, *Saints de l'Ancien Testament*.

[3] Are St. Hilary (25 October) and St. Hère (1 December) the same person? Father Victor de Buck, Bollandist, is flatly of this opinion; but he is quite mistaken. The feast of St. Hère and that of St. Hilary have been celebrated at Mende from time immemorial; the

holiness of St. Hère is spoken of in the lives of St. Enimia. — 1° This last fact is denied by Father Victor de Buck; but he had before him only a part of the less ancient Acts of that Saint. The name of the holy prelate is found in the part he did not see, as well as in two much older lives. — 2° Father de Buck denies the value of these lives (which he has not seen) on the pretext that they swarm with errors. Now these errors come down to a single one, which is an evident slip of the pen by some copyist. (One reads in these lives: "Dagobert, full brother of St. Enimia… St. Enimia, full sister of Dagobert, of the Dagobert who greatly embellished Saint-Denis, whose father had governed with great wisdom".) — 3° Father de Buck claims that St. Hère is none other than St. Eligius. Now in the old calendars of the Church of Mende the name of St. Eligius is not found; it entered only with the Parisian liturgy, and even then the innovators gave him only a commemoration beside St. Hère, whom they kept. — 4° Finally, Father de Buck adds: "In the patois of the country St. Hère is called St. Chély, which can only come from the Latin *Eligius*." Against this interpretation, which seems a happy one, we read in the Romance poem of St. Enimia by Bertrand of Marseille (14th century) that the bishop who consecrated the virgin of Gévaudan as abbess was called St. Vies. — Note of the abbé Charbonnel.

[4] See the article "Veneration and Relics" in the life of St. Martin of Tours, which we gave on 11 November (vol. 13, pages 312–340).

[5] See note 3 to the Roman martyrology of 16 May (vol. 5, page 557).

[6] We gave the life of St. Gregory III on 28 November.

[7] St. Caesarius of Terracina is named in the Roman martyrology of 1 November, and we gave some details about him in note 1 to that martyrology (vol. 13, page 77).

[8] See the life of St. Martin on 12 November.

[9] See 9 November (vol. 13, pages 279–288).

[10] See the life of St. Didacus on 13 November.

[11] We gave the life of St. John of the Cross on 24 November.

[12] See the life of St. Stanislaus Kostka on 13 November.

[13] Clotaire II made Eligius master of the mint: his name is still seen on several gold coins of that period.

[14] Alias: Agéric, Agric, Agry, Arry, Airy, *Agericus*.

[1] This is not an incontestable fact: Airy being called in Latin *Agericus*, the legend will have wished Harville to come from *Agerici villa*, whereas Bertarius of Verdun, who always calls St. Airy *Agericus*, names Harville *Hairici villa*. — Cf. Clouët, *Histoire de Verdun* (vol. 1, p. 148).

2 December

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED.

In the diocese of Angers, the feast of the reception (1839), in the cathedral church of that city, of relics of St. Maurice and several of his companions, martyrs of the Theban legion.[2] — In the diocese of Beauvais,

St. Constantine, abbot. 570. — In several regions of France, St. Fré (*Fredus*), abbot in Ireland, French by origin. Date uncertain. — At Rouen, St. Avitian (Avit, Avidien), heir of the see and of the virtues of St. Mellon or Mellonius of Cardiff (22 October 311). At the request of Constantine the Great he went to Arles (314) with his deacon Nicetius to attend that first great council of the Gauls and the West. He signed the acts of that august assembly. After his death he was buried in the public cemetery, whence his body was later translated to the crypt of Saint-Gervais, which still shows his tomb. 325. — In Belgium, Blessed John Ruysbroeck, prior of Groenendael in the forest of Soignes (Hainaut). Born in 1294, he left his mother at the age of fourteen and went to Brussels, to John Hinckaert, his kinsman, canon of Sainte-Gudule. He began his studies in that town, received orders there and became chaplain of Sainte-Gudule. In 1343 John and his kinsman resigned their benefices, left Brussels and went to build a monastery in the solitude of Groenendael. There they lived in common with a few companions who had come to join in their exercises of piety. At the request of the abbot of Saint-Victor of Paris they embraced (10 March 1349) the Rule of the Canons Regular of St. Augustine, and John was named prior of the new community, which in a short time became the most flourishing in the region. Blessed John died among his brethren at the age of eighty-seven.[3] 1381.

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Martyrology of the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. — At Imola, St. Peter, bishop of Ravenna, surnamed Chrysologus, celebrated for his learning and holiness, whose feast is kept on 4 December. About 450.

Martyrology of the Order of Discalced Carmelites. — The same as above.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS.

Among the Friars Preachers, Blessed John Armero, confessor, of the Order of St. Dominic. He presented himself as a lay brother at the convent of Baeza in Spain (Andalusia); but because of his admirable holiness he was obliged to take the habit of the choir brothers. Study and prayer filled his whole life, together with the ministry of the salvation of souls. He spent whole nights before the Blessed Sacrament, and if he rested a little it was on the bare ground or on a poor chair. During the seventy years he lived in religion he never transgressed a single point of the Rule. His penances were extraordinary. During his life and after his death he worked a great number of miracles, which earned him from the faithful the marks of public veneration. His canonisation was sought; but the revolutions since his death have so far prevented the realisation of this plan. 1566. — In Egypt, St. Heracleamon, anchorite. 4th c. — In Ethiopia, St. Eliab, confessor. — Also in Ethiopia, St. Simeon l'Afamarie, confessor.

ST. PETER CHRYSOLOGUS, ARCHBISHOP OF RAVENNA AND DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH (450)

450. — Pope: St. Leo the Great. — Emperor of the West: Valentinian III.

This blessed man is truly an apostolic fowler: he catches on the wing the souls of the young in the nets of the divine word. *St. Adelphus of Metz, Eulogy of the Saint.*

St. Peter Chrysologus was from Imola, the chief town of Romagna in Italy. His youth having been spent in the exercise of virtue and the study of letters, he was made deacon by Cornelius, his bishop, who was well convinced of his merit. His promotion to the episcopate was wholly miraculous. John, the first of that name, bishop of Ravenna, having died, the clergy and people assembled to elect him a successor; they gave their votes to a cleric also named John, whom they thought worthy of that office, and sent their deputies to Pope St. Sixtus III to ask for his confirmation. While they were on the way, this Pontiff, who was a very holy man, had a vision in which the apostle St. Peter and St. Apollinaris, first bishop of Ravenna, warned him not to confirm the man who had been elected but to name in his place the deacon of Imola called Peter, whose portrait they drew for him. He saw clearly that this was a stroke from Heaven. So when the deputies appeared before him together with the same Cornelius, bishop of Imola, and Peter his deacon, he declared to them that the election they had made was not pleasing to God, and that Heaven had chosen the deacon Peter whom he saw before his eyes. The people of Ravenna were at first a little troubled by this change; but seeing afterwards that it came from on high, they accepted it gladly and even rejoiced that God had chosen with His own hand so worthy a pastor for them.

Peter, who had no less humility than greatness of soul, was the only one who opposed his promotion. He earnestly begged His Holiness not to lay so heavy and so fearful a burden on his shoulders; and his prayers would no doubt have gained something with that good Pope, had not the vision he had had convinced him that so holy a man must be set on the candlestick of the Church. That is what made him stand firm against all Peter’s entreaties. He commanded him to submit to the orders of God and, having at last brought him to this submission, laid hands on him, consecrated him archbishop, and sent him as soon as possible to govern the people whom divine Providence had entrusted to him.

The first thing he did after his entry was to represent to his diocesans that, since he had at last acquiesced in his ordination for the salvation of their souls, they on their side must also strive to profit by the good instructions he would not fail to give them; that he had come to them as a physician to heal them, as a shepherd to lead them, as a mother to nourish them and as a father to defend them and procure their eternal salvation; and that consequently they must have towards him the docility and submission needed to make all his functions profitable to them. He discharged them so worthily that, by the strong and moving sermons he gave his people, which were like a river of gold flowing from his mouth, he merited the glorious surname of Chrysologus (“golden word”).

While our Saint was working to form spiritual temples for Jesus Christ, he also gave his care to building Him material ones, or repairing those that had fallen into ruin. Above all he had a celebrated church built in honour of St. Andrew the apostle, and some public buildings for the convenience of the city. He was present at the death of St. Barbatian, priest, whose miracles were the astonishment of his whole diocese; he washed his body, embalmed it and buried it near the high altar of St. John the Baptist, which he had himself dedicated. He also took care to bury the body of St. Germanus of Auxerre, who died in his time at Ravenna and was afterwards brought back to his episcopal city. He inherited his poor hood and his hair-shirt, and thought himself happier with so rich an inheritance than if he had acquired all the treasures of the earth.

At that time the impious Eutyches began to make public his pernicious heresy, by which he confounded the natures in Jesus Christ and made of two only one, either by the mingling of one with the other or by the loss of one in the other. To gain supporters for his errors he wrote to the principal bishops of the West whom he wished to draw into his party, and as our Saint shone among the others, both by the dignity of his see and by his learning and piety, he was one of those to whom he addressed his letters; but Peter gave him the answer his malice deserved. He rebuked him for his obstinacy, showed him his blindness, and after this just reprimand exhorted him to subscribe to the doctrine of the Holy See. This answer is found at the beginning of

the Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, where it was inserted as an excellent document and a powerful proof that it is St. Peter, and after him Jesus Christ, who speak by the mouth of the Sovereign Pontiff.

The zeal of this blessed archbishop appeared also in the care he took to cut away from his diocese several pagan superstitions still practised in his time. In his homilies he inveighed particularly against the use of those abominable masks representing the false divinities, and against the custom of celebrating in honour of Jesus Christ, when some good fortune had come, the circus games, which were remnants of paganism. His remonstrances on this point were so effective that he entirely rooted out these impious and sacrilegious amusements. At last, after governing the church of Ravenna in holiness for nineteen years, he had a revelation that the time of his death was near; and as he had a singular devotion to St. Cassian, martyr, he made a journey to Imola, where there was a church dedicated in his honour, to beg him to obtain for him the grace of ending his days happily. While he was there he fell ill, and after exhorting the people of his diocese to elect a good bishop in his place and never to stray from the way of God's commandments, he peacefully gave up his soul into the hands of Jesus Christ. This happened on 2 December, about the year 450.

His body, according to his wish, was buried in the same church of St. Cassian; but one of his arms was taken to Ravenna, where it is seen in a gold reliquary enriched with precious stones. The voice of the people, which had always admired the holiness of his life, canonised him, and the Church has inserted him in her Martyrologies.

St. Peter Chrysologus may be represented either preaching to his flock against the scandals of carnival, or receiving the last breath of St. Germanus of Auxerre, who had come to Ravenna on some particular business of his Church.

WRITINGS OF ST. PETER CHRYSOLOGUS.

We have from him a certain number of sermons. Most are on Scripture, whose text he explains with as much charm as clarity. He ordinarily gives the literal sense, then the allegorical, to which he adds some moral reflections. He explains Scripture not continuously, but the passage that had been read in church on the day he preached. There are also discourses in which he treats expressly of fasting, almsgiving, prayer, the Lord's Prayer and the Creed; others in which he inveighs against hypocrisy, envy and avarice. Few are dogmatic; it is only in passing that he explains himself on some of our mysteries. He did, however, preach homilies on Christmas, the Epiphany and Easter. We also have some by him on the feasts of the Innocents, St. Andrew, St. Thomas, St. John the Baptist, St. Matthew, St. Stephen, St. Lawrence, St. Cyprian, St. Apollinaris and some others. All these discourses appear carefully worked; the terms are chosen but often unusual, the comparisons apt, the descriptions sustained, which supposes study and reflection. These were needed too for a quantity of plays on words, which seem to have been to St. Chrysologus's taste. Most of his thoughts are fine; but there are some that cease to please when examined closely, and others that are far-fetched and suit the subject less well. His style is extremely terse and broken, which makes it obscure and laboured. There are too many turns and too little naturalness. He preached the hundred and thirty-eighth discourse in another diocese, at the request of a bishop whom he calls the common father and master. In this discourse he shows a great fund of humility and modesty; he shows it in all the others too, treating his hearers with as much tact as charity.

Some manuscripts attribute to St. Chrysologus a sermon on the Birth of Jesus Christ which is the hundred and twenty-fourth in the appendix of those of St. Augustine; but its style is inflated and not broken like that of this Father. On the other hand, his genius and style are found in the seventy-third and ninety-seventh sermons of the same appendix. One is on Fasting and Prayer, the other on Peace. Neither appears finished. The sixty-first of this appendix is the fifty-third in the editions of St. Chrysologus, but much longer and with several variants; it too is on Peace. Father Labbe cites one on the Nativity of the Virgin. We do not have it; and there would be reason to think it is not by St. Chrysologus, since that feast was not celebrated in his time

— were it not known that the titles of his discourses have been corrupted, and that in the manuscripts there is none headed for any feast of the Blessed Virgin. So Dominic Mita, who in his edition followed the manuscripts exactly, does not give to the hundred and forty-second sermon the title of discourse on the Annunciation of the Virgin which it bears in the ordinary editions. Trithemius attributes several letters to St. Chrysologus. We have only the one this Father wrote to Eutyches. We see from the hundred and twelfth letter of Theodoret that the Orientals wrote to this Father in the year 431; but nowhere do we read that he answered them.

The letter to Eutyches has been printed with the Acts of the Council of Chalcedon in the collections of councils. As for his sermons, they were published first at Cologne in 1541, then in 1607 and 1678; at Paris in 1585; at Antwerp in 1618; at Lyons in 1636; at Rouen in 1640; at Bologna in 1643; at Toulouse in 1670; at Paris in 1614 and 1670 with the works of St. Leo, and in the Libraries of the Fathers. The best edition of the sermons of St. Chrysologus is that given in 1750 at Venice, in one folio volume, by Sebastian Pauli; it was reprinted at Augsburg in 1758, in folio, and lastly in the *Patrologia Latina*, vol. 52. Here are found: 1° a preface by Pauli; 2° a life of St. Peter from the Pontifical of Agnellus, edited by Bacchini, with Bacchini's observations on that life; 3° his Life by Castiglione (Castillus); 4° another Life by Dominic Mita; 5° testimonies in favour of St. Peter; 6° a literary notice by Schoenemann; 7° a dissertation on the ecclesiastical metropolis of Ravenna by J.-A. Amadesi; 8° critical remarks on the authenticity of some of the discourses. Then come: 1° the discourses, one hundred and seventy-six in number, with notes; 2° an appendix containing the sermons that had been attributed to this Father, seven in number. The letter to Eutyches is found in this volume at col. 71 ff. It is read also among the testimonies and in the letters of St. Leo the Great, Ballerini edition, where it is the twenty-fifth.

This account is by Father Giry, which we have completed with the Histoire générale des auteurs sacrés et ecclésiastiques *by Dom Ceillier. — Cf.* Histoire générale de l'Église *by the abbé Darras.*

ST. BIBIANA OR VIVIANA, VIRGIN AND MARTYR AT ROME (363)

Besides the glory of virginity and martyrdom, this illustrious Roman has the privilege of being the daughter and sister of martyrs. Her father, Flavian, who had been prefect of Rome, was put in prison for the faith under the reign of Julian the Apostate; but having refused with heroic constancy to adore the idols, whose worship that detestable emperor was trying to revive, he was branded on the forehead like a slave and sent to the Aquae Tauri in Tuscany, where, overwhelmed with every kind of misery, he ended his life gloriously on 22 December 362. As for Dafrosa, her mother, she was at first shut up in her house with her daughters so that they might all die of hunger there; but as this torment seemed too slow to the tyrant, he had her beheaded outside the walls of Rome on 4 January of the following year. Bibiana and Demetria, her daughters, were treated with no less cruelty: for Apronian, praetor of Rome, after confiscating all their goods, never ceased to persecute them. First he had them shut up in a narrow prison, with orders that they be given nothing to eat, hoping that the rigour of hunger would at last make them change their minds. Then, finding them stronger and in more flourishing health than ever, because God had fed them there miraculously, far from being touched by this wonder he threatened them with the most horrible torments and a cruel and shameful death if they did not yield to the emperor's will; whereas, if they obeyed him, they would recover their goods and advantageous matches would be found for them. But our generous virgins were too well grounded in the faith by the instruction and example of their parents to be shaken by these threats or charmed by the glitter of these promises; and so they answered Apronian courageously that the goods and advantages of this world had no attraction for them, and that they would rather endure a thousand deaths than fail in fidelity to Jesus Christ. Demetria, saying these words with inconceivable ardour, fell dead in her sister's presence, and by this blessed death went to receive in heaven the crown of martyrdom (362), as is noted in the Roman martyrology of 21 June.

As for Bibiana, the tyrant put her into the hands of a very wicked woman named Rufina, so that she might try to corrupt her. This wretch used every imaginable device. First she employed caresses, flattery and good treatment; then she passed to insults, threats and blows, to the point of ill-treating her every day in a most shameful manner. But as all these means were of no use and could never shake the Saint's constancy in her resolve to remain a virgin and a Christian, Apronian, angered at seeing himself vanquished by a young girl, had her stripped and tied to a pillar, and the executioners by his order scourged her with leaded cords until she gave up her soul through the violence of so great a torment (363).

Her holy body was thrown into a public place to be devoured by dogs; but divine Providence preserved it and they dared not approach it, so that after two days a holy priest named John found means to take it away and bury it beside that of her mother and sister. A pretty little church was raised in her honour in 363 by a Roman matron named Olympia, on the very site of her father's palace. A magnificent urn of oriental alabaster placed beneath the altar contains the body of St. Bibiana and also those of her sister St. Demetria and her mother St. Dafrosa. The walls of this church, restored under Urban VIII in 1625, are covered with frescoes reproducing the touching events we have just related; these frescoes are by Ciampelli and Pietro da Cortona. The white marble statue of St. Bibiana, a graceful work of Bernini, stands above the altar. In this church one still sees the pillar of *rosso antico* to which she was tied to be scourged. This little church now stands isolated in the countryside. It is touching to see, on the day of the feast, the whole chapter of the great and sumptuous basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore come in procession to this modest church and celebrate solemn and splendid ceremonies in honour of these two virgins and their mother.

St. Bibiana is represented: 1° holding in her hand a branch of a tree with several twigs: this is apparently an allusion to the *plombeaux* (whips loaded with lead balls) with which she was struck; 2° in a group with St. Demetria her sister, St. Flavian her father and St. Dafrosa her mother; 3° tied to a pillar and scourged; 4° sometimes holding a dagger in her hand, which would suggest that she consummated her martyrdom by the sword — which does not agree with her Acts.

St. Bibiana is patroness of Seville; in Germany she is the patroness of drinkers; she is invoked particularly against headaches and epilepsy.

We have completed Father Giry's account with the Caractéristiques des Saints *of Father Cahier and the anonymous work* Une Année à Rome *(Paris, 1866, Ambroise Bray).*

ST. CONSTANTIAN, ABBOT OF JAVRON, IN THE DIOCESE OF LE MANS (ABOUT 570)

St. Constantian, born in Auvergne, vowed himself to the service of God from his earliest years. Having completed his apprenticeship in the monastic life in his own country, he withdrew to the diocese of Orléans, to the monastery of Micy, which then enjoyed great renown under the direction of the holy abbot Maximinus. There he found St. Frambaud, his fellow-countryman, who had spent some time in the solitude of Ivry near Paris. The desire for greater perfection afterwards inspired them both with the resolve to seek some remote desert where they would be unknown to the world. They stopped in the forest of Nuz, in the territory of Herbon (Javron), in the country of Maine. St. Innocent, bishop of Le Mans, afterwards obliged Constantian to receive holy orders, so that he might be useful to the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages. His zeal, gentleness, example and prayers worked a great number of conversions. He continued his missions under St. Domnolus, successor of St. Innocent.

Miracles also came to the help of his preaching. There was a blind man to whom he restored sight during the celebration of Mass, by praying and making the sign of the cross over him. He foretold to King Clotaire I, who was going to make war in Brittany, where the revolt of his son Chramn was being supported, that he would gain the victory. To offer a refuge to the ever more numerous disciples who gathered around him, he

built a monastery on a piece of land that had been given him, among others by the king. This monastery was long illustrious, enjoying all the privileges of royal foundations, complete independence in its internal administration, and the protection of the monarch, who defended its properties from all outside interference. Later it was reduced to the condition of a simple priory dependent on the abbey of Saint-Julien of Tours. He composed a rule in which shone the reflection of divine wisdom; having designated his successor, he fell asleep in the Lord on 1 December, about the year 570.

The body of the holy abbot, long kept at the monastery of Javron, was afterwards carried to the cathedral of Le Mans for fear of the Normans. But towards the middle of the 11th century Avesgaud, needing the help of Gilduin of Breteuil, his kinsman, to defend himself against the harassment of Herbert, count of Maine, gave him in recompense the relics of St. Constantian, with which the newly restored monastery of Breteuil, in the diocese of Beauvais, was enriched. From that moment St. Constantian was counted among the patrons of Breteuil; he soon enjoyed great veneration throughout the country because of the miracles he worked particularly in favour of those afflicted with madness or suffering from headache. A precious testimony to the frequency of these miracles and to the devotion they inspired in the people is that given in the 13th century by Pope Innocent IV.

The holy body is still kept today in the little town of Breteuil, ever in possession of the confidence and homage of the faithful.

Proper of Beauvais; Histoire de l'Église du Mans *by the Rev. Father Dom Paul Piolin;* Vie des Saints du diocèse de Beauvais *by the abbé Sabatier.*

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[1] Valerian, furious at the freedom with which he heard Maximus speak against the idols, had him thrown from a bridge into the Tiber. Eusebius found the martyr's body and buried it in the cemetery of Callistus. His tomb could still be seen in the catacombs in the time of Baronius (1538–1607). Adrias, Paulina and their children were arrested with Eusebius, Hippolytus and Marcellus. They were all shut up in the Mamertine prison, from which they were brought out three days later to be frightened by the sight of the torments: they despised them and remained unshaken. Paulina expired in the hands of the executioners; Eusebius and Marcellus were beheaded. Their bodies were buried a mile from Rome on the Appian Way. Adrias and Hippolytus were beaten with leaded whips until they expired. Neon and Maria were beheaded. It is asserted that the bodies of St. Hippolytus, St. Adrias, his wife and his children are now at Rome, in the church of Sant'Agata. — Godescard, Tillemont.

[2] The cathedral church of Angers formerly possessed several relics of the holy martyrs of Agaunum: 1° an ampoule containing some of their blood, a gift of Blessed Martin; 2° the head of St. Innocent, a gift of Eusebius, bishop of Angers, who had brought it (11th century) from the monastery of Saint-Maurice in Valais; 3° an arm of St. Maurice, a gift of the archbishop of Philippi, who had obtained it (13th century) from Constantinople; 4° a whole leg-bone of one of the soldier-martyrs, and the radius of the left arm of St. Victor, gifts of Peter, abbot of Saint-Maurice (17th century). These precious relics, placed first in the church of Saint-Lô-hors-des-Murs, were solemnly translated to the cathedral church by Claude, bishop of Angers. The Revolution profaned this treasure. However, thanks to the pious zeal of Charles, bishop of Angers, several fragments of the bones of St. Maurice, obtained from the Swiss monastery, could be placed in the cathedral on 28 April 1839. — Proper of Angers. — Cf. the life of St. Maurice on 22 September.

[3] His body was buried within the chapel of the monastery; but in 1386 John Serclaes, bishop of Cambrai, translated it into the choir of the new church. On 8 November 1622 James Boonen, archbishop of Mechlin, solemnly exhumed the body of Blessed John, put it in a wooden shrine and placed it before the high altar in a magnificent mausoleum which the Infanta Isabella had adorned at her own expense, after visiting these venerable relics at Groenendael on 17 November of the same year. They were kept there until the end of the last century. After the suppression of the monastery (1784) they were placed in the church of Sainte-Gudule in Brussels. — Continuators of Godescard.

[4] We have related the life of St. Anianus, bishop, in that of St. Mark the Evangelist, on 25 April (vol. 5, pages 15–25).

[5] See the life of St. Catherine on 25 November (vol. 13, page 589).

3 December

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Martyrologies

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY.

In the island of Sancian, near China, the feast of St. Francis Xavier, of the Society of Jesus, apostle of the Indies, celebrated for the countless multitude of unbelievers whom he converted, for the great favours he received from God and for his miracles; full of merits and worn out with labours, he died on the second day of December. His feast, however, is kept today, by order of Alexander VII. 1552. — In Judaea, St. Sophonias (Zephaniah), prophet.[1] 7th c. B.C. — At Rome, the holy martyrs Claudius, tribune, Hilaria his wife, Jason and Maurus their sons, with seventy soldiers. Claudius, by command of Numerian, was tied to a stone of prodigious size and thrown into the river; as for the soldiers and the two sons, they were beheaded. Finally, a short time afterwards, as St. Hilaria, who had buried them, was praying at their tomb, she was seized by the pagans and so gave up her soul to God. About 257. — At Tangier, in Mauretania, St. Cassian, martyr, who long performed the office of clerk of the praetorium; but God having made known to him how execrable a crime it was to co-operate in the death of Christians, he renounced that employment and himself obtained the honour of martyrdom by confessing Jesus Christ. 398. — Also in Africa, the holy martyrs Claudius, Crispin, Maginus, John and Stephen. — In Hungary, St. Agricola, martyr. — At Nicomedia, the execution of Sts. Ambicus, Victor and Julius. — At Milan, St. Mirocles, bishop and confessor, of whom St. Ambrose makes mention in several places in his writings. About 318. — In England, St. Birinus, first bishop of Dorchester.[2] About 650. — At Chur, among the Grisons, St. Lucius, king of the Britons, who, first of all the kings of that country, embraced the faith in the time of Pope Eleutherius.[3] End of the 2nd c. — At Siena in Tuscany, St. Galgano, hermit. 1181.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED.

In the diocese of Paris, St. Francis Xavier, of the Society of Jesus, named in the Roman Martyrology of this day. 1552. — In the diocese of Strasbourg, St. Attala, virgin, first abbess of the monastery of Saint-Étienne in that city. 741. — At Bedderwalde or Bedun, near Groningen (Holland), St. Walfrid or Waufred and St. Radfrid or Rafrer, his son, martyred by the Normans in hatred of religion while they were at prayer.[4] 9th c. — At Jonzac (Charente-Inférieure), in the diocese of La Rochelle, St. Anthemius, bishop of Poitiers. After preaching the faith in Saintonge, he accompanied Charlemagne on his expedition into Spain. In hatred of religion and of the king of France, the Saracens put him to death and so procured him the palm of martyrdom. On his return to his States, Charlemagne, who had had the venerated body of the holy prelate brought along with him, gave him an honourable burial at Jonzac, in the church of the martyrs St. Gervase and St. Protase. 8th c. — At Laon, in the diocese of Soissons, St. Eloquius (Elogius, Eulogius), priest and confessor, second abbot of the Benedictine monastery of Lagny-sur-Marne, in the diocese of Meaux; the translation of his relics to the former Benedictine abbey of Wasor or Waulsor [Waulsort], in the diocese of Namur, is noted in the Martyrology of France for 8 October. 7th or 8th c. — At Auxerre, the death of St. Abbo, monk and then regular abbot of Saint-Germain in that city. On the death (857) of his brother Heribald, bishop of Auxerre, he ascended his see by way of succession. Much was expected from the zeal and virtues of this prelate, but death did not allow him to fulfil the hopes he had raised. He resigned the bishopric in 859, attended the council of Pouzy on 22 October 860, and died on the following 3 December.[5] 860. — At Paris, in the church of Notre-Dame des Victoires, the anniversary feast of the erection of the Archconfraternity of the Most Holy and Immaculate Heart of Mary. 1836. — Among the Friars Preachers, Blessed Bernard of Toulouse, martyr, of the Order of St. Dominic. He laboured with great zeal to bring the Albigensians back into the fold of holy Church. Angered by the many conversions worked by the servant of God, some of them succeeded in drawing him into a trap and seizing him. They loaded him with ill-treatment, tortured him in a thousand ways, and at last, stretching him on the ground, had the barbarity to saw him through the middle of the body. He is represented holding in his hand the instrument of his martyrdom. 1320.

MARTYROLOGIES OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

Martyrology of the Canons Regular. — Among the Canons of the Lateran: St. Peter, surnamed Chrysologus, canon regular and bishop of Ravenna, who, illustrious for the holiness of his life, the strength of his doctrine and the glory of his miracles, passed to heaven on 2 December 450.

Martyrology of the Congregation of St. Silvester. — The octave of our Father St. Silvester, abbot.[6] 1267.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS.

In Germany, St. Sola, priest, disciple of St. Boniface of Mainz, who led the eremitical life on the banks of the little river Altmühl, on the borders of Bavaria and Thuringia. His body was buried in the chapel of his hermitage. Fifty years later the deacon Gundram, nephew of the celebrated Rabanus, bishop [archbishop] of Mainz, having been made prior of this hermitage, translated his relics and placed them in a more fitting place. The Lutherans profaned them. About 790. — Among the Greeks, St. Theodulus of Constantinople, stylite. At first governor of that city, he suddenly grew disgusted with the disorder of the world and, after the example of the great St. Simeon, had a pillar raised for himself in the territory of Edessa in Mesopotamia, with the permission of the bishop of the place; there he spent forty-eight years in prayer, abstinence and the contemplation of heavenly things. 5th c. — In Spain, the birthday in heaven of St. Lucy the Chaste, virgin, of the Third Order of St. Dominic. Born in France, she followed St. Vincent Ferrer into Spain. A young man, ravished by Lucy's beauty, made vain approaches to her to win her affection. As he persisted, the young virgin sent to ask him what there was in her capable of inspiring so lively a passion. "It is your eyes," the young man sent back, "that have captivated my heart." At these words Lucy went into her room and set herself to prayer; then, yielding to a divine inspiration, she took a penknife, removed her eyes from their sockets and sent them on a dish to the foolish man, with the message: "You claim that my eyes have charmed you: here they are, I offer them to you." This heroic act had two excellent results: struck by Lucy's generosity in preserving her purity, the young lord who loved her so wildly was converted and entered the Order of St. Dominic, where he became holy. On the other hand, Our Lord was so pleased with this courageous act of our Saint that he provided her with other eyes much more beautiful than those she had sacrificed to remain faithful to her divine Spouse.[7] 1420.

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ST. FRANCIS XAVIER, APOSTLE OF THE INDIES (1552)

1552. — Pope: Julius III. — King of Spain: Charles V.

Vas electionis est iste ut portet nomen meum coram gentibus. I have chosen him out of a thousand to pour upon the nations the floods of light of my Gospel. — Acts 9:15.

St. Francis Xavier was born at the castle of Xavier, in Navarre, on 7 April 1506. His father was Don Juan de Jasso, a lord of great merit who held one of the first places in the council of State of John III [of Navarre], and his mother was María Azpilcueta de Xavier, only daughter and sole heiress of Don Martín Azpilcueta and Juana Xavier, heads of those two families, which were the most illustrious of the kingdom. When he had finished his humanities in his own country he came to Paris to take his course of philosophy, and he succeeded in it so well — as much by the subtlety of his mind, which easily penetrated the greatest difficulties, as by his assiduity in study and disputation — that, having become master of arts, he was judged worthy to teach the sciences he had just learned at the collège de Beauvais, one of the principal colleges of the University. The beauty of his genius appeared more than ever in this new exercise, and the great reputation he acquired in it brought him many more pupils than he could have hoped for at his age.

St. Ignatius also arrived in Paris at that time, to perfect himself in humane letters. As God had inspired him with the design of assembling a company of learned and zealous men who should have no other aim and no other employment than to labour for the glory of God and the salvation of souls, he cast his eyes on this professor to make him one of the most solid foundations of that society. For this he took lodging near him, in the collège de Sainte-Barbe. Francis Xavier was ambitious: because of the extraordinary success of his lectures he hoped to climb, by the ladder of learning, to some high dignity in the Church. Ignatius undeceived him of the vanity of all earthly things, whose brilliance passes like a dream and a flash of lightning, by often repeating to him these words of Our Lord: “What does it profit a man to gain the whole world, if he is so unhappy as to lose his soul?” He persuaded him at last to undertake with him an evangelical life and to devote himself to that noble work, the conversion of sinners.

So, after making the Spiritual Exercises under the guidance of so great a master; after effacing the offences of his past life by the abundance of his tears and by very severe penances (he covered his bare flesh with a rough hair shirt; he bound the various members of his body with cords, like a victim offering itself to be slain by the knife of divine justice; he spent three and four whole days without taking any food and almost always in prayer); and finally after completing the course of philosophy he was teaching and beginning his theology, he made a vow, together with St. Ignatius and five other companions, in the church of Montmartre on the day of Our Lady’s Assumption in the year 1534, to go as soon as possible to the Holy Land to help the Christians who groaned under the yoke of Mahomet, and, if after waiting a year they did not find the means of making the journey, to go and throw themselves at the feet of the Sovereign Pontiff and offer to serve the Church in whatever place in the world His Holiness should think good to employ them. Thus began to be fulfilled the prophecy of a sister of our Saint, named Magdalen Xavier, abbess of the monastery of St. Clare at Gandía, who, learning from her father that he intended to withdraw him from his studies, begged him earnestly to do nothing of the kind, assuring him that he would one day be the apostle of the Indies and a preacher of the Gospel mighty in work and word.

After this vow, the chosen one of God finished his theological studies on the advice of St. Ignatius, who knew that piety and fervour are of no great use in evangelical labourers unless they are accompanied by solid doctrine and a perfect understanding of the Holy Scriptures. At the end of a year or eighteen months he left Paris with his companions to go to Venice, which was where they were to embark. At his departure, the spirit of mortification with which he was filled led him again to bind his arms and thighs with small cords, which, being drawn extremely tight by the movement of the journey he was making on foot, entered so deeply into his flesh that they could scarcely be seen, and the surgeons judged it impossible to remove them without very painful incisions. His companions, moved with compassion and seeing besides that the operation would greatly delay their journey, had recourse to God, and their prayers were so effective that the very next night the cords fell off of themselves and left our blessed pilgrim free to walk. When he was at Venice he would have no other lodging, while waiting for the time to put to sea, than the hospital of the Incurables. It is impossible to describe worthily what he did there for the help and consolation of the sick: not content with spending the whole day dressing their wounds, making their beds and rendering them still lower and more repugnant services, he spent whole nights beside them. Nor did his care stop at relieving their bodies. Although he knew hardly any Italian, he did not fail to speak to them very often of God, and he exhorted above all the most dissolute to penance, making them understand as best he could that, if their bodily diseases were incurable, those of their souls were not. He won over himself a signal victory which well deserves to be told. One of the sick men had an ulcer horrible to see, whose stench was still more unbearable than its sight; scarcely anyone dared approach the poor wretch, and Xavier himself once felt great repugnance at serving him. But he then remembered a maxim of St. Ignatius, his father, that one advances in virtue only so far as one overcomes oneself, and that the occasion of a great sacrifice is one of those precious encounters which must not be let slip. Strengthened by these thoughts and spurred by the example of St. Catherine of Siena, which then came to his mind, he embraced the sick man and kissed his sores; at that

very moment all his repugnance ceased, and afterwards nothing was hard for him any more — so important is it to conquer oneself once and for all.

Having spent two months in these exercises of charity, he set out for Rome with the other disciples of St. Ignatius, who alone remained at Venice. They had much to suffer on this journey: the rains were continual, and bread often failed them just when their strength was most exhausted; but our Saint gave them courage, and he sustained himself by the strength of that apostolic spirit with which God had begun to fill him. In Rome he visited the principal churches, and there he consecrated himself to the ministry of the Gospel over the tombs of the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul. He had the honour of speaking several times to Pope Paul III, who had been informed of his merit and that of his companions; he received his blessing for the journey to the Holy Land and obtained, for those who were not yet priests, permission to be promoted to holy Orders. Finally, feeling himself fired with a new ardour to labour for the conquest of souls, whom corruption of morals was causing to perish on every side, he took the road back to Venice, where St. Ignatius was waiting for him.

On his arrival he made a vow of perpetual poverty and chastity with the others, in the hands of Girolamo Verallo, nuncio of the Pope, and, entering the hospital of the Incurables, he continued there, until the time of embarkation, the exercises of charity which the journey to Rome had made him interrupt. Meanwhile, the war which broke out between the Venetians and the Turks broke off the trade of the Levant and closed the gate of the Holy Land, and our generous pilgrims were compelled to take other measures. St. Francis, in order to make himself more useful to his neighbour in whatever place divine Providence might lead him, prepared to receive the priesthood; he did in fact receive it, with feelings of piety, fear and confusion that cannot be expressed. The city seemed to him ill suited for preparing to say his first Mass. He therefore withdrew for that purpose to a hut near Padua, covered only with thatch, abandoned and all in ruins. How different were his exercises in that place from those of the undevout priests who prepare for their first Mass only by visits and useless gatherings, which take from them the little recollection and interior spirit they had received in their ordination! He spent forty days in continual solitude, exposed to the inclemency of the weather, sleeping only on the bare ground, chastising his body severely and living only on a few morsels of bread which he begged round about, almost without breaking the silence he had prescribed for himself. He then spent more than two months instructing, by catechisms and familiar talks, the villages and hamlets of the neighbourhood, above all that of Monselice, which was the nearest, where the people were the most rough and had almost no knowledge of the duties of Christianity. At last he said his first Mass at Vicenza, where St. Ignatius had brought all his companions, and he said it with such an abundance of tears that those who were present could not help weeping themselves.

Shortly afterwards he fell very gravely ill, and in that great need he had no other refuge than one of the hospitals of the town, where he was given only half of a wretched bed, in a room open on all sides, with remedies and food so poor that they could in no way cure him. But St. Jerome, to whom he was extremely devoted, appeared to him one night in the midst of a great brightness, and after disclosing to him what would happen to him later, he put him in a state to recover his health soon. Thus, the year during which his company was to wait in the territory of the Republic of Venice for a favourable occasion of crossing to the Levant having expired without any likelihood of going there, he went to Bologna by order of St. Ignatius, to labour there for the salvation of souls until the Pope, whom some of the others went to consult, should have prescribed to each of them what he was to do for the glory of God and the service of the Church.

The hospital was at first his place of retreat; but in the end he could not refuse Girolamo Casalini, a priest of great merit and parish priest of Santa Lucia, to go and live in his house. He refused only his table and would never live on anything but what he begged from door to door in the city. Every day, after celebrating the divine mysteries in that wise churchman’s church, he heard there the confessions of all who presented themselves. He then visited the prisons and hospitals, taught catechism to the children and preached to the

people in the public squares; and he always continued to do this in spite of a very malignant and very obstinate quartan fever, which threw him into extreme languor and wasted him so much that he looked like nothing but a skeleton.

He was occupied in Bologna with these excellent duties of charity when St. Ignatius, who had been very well received by the Pope, called him to Rome to help him in establishing his company. There he found new occasions to exercise his zeal. His Holiness assigned him the church of San Lorenzo in Damaso as the place of his functions, and he worked wonders there by the power of his preaching and by his assiduity in hearing the confessions of penitents. Death, hell and judgement were the most usual subject of his sermons, and although he set forth these terrible truths simply, he did so in so moving a way that the people, who had come in crowds to hear him, left the church only with tears in their eyes, thinking much more of converting themselves, to escape the chastisements of God's justice, than of praising the preacher. What did this incomparable man not do in a dreadful famine that came upon Rome and almost depopulated the whole city? What care did he not take, whether to bring to the hospitals the poor whom he found lying on the pavement and dying of hunger in the streets and squares, or to carry them there himself on his shoulders when they were too weak to drag themselves along, or finally to procure them help by persuading the rich to open their purses and their granaries to give them alms?

At that time John III, king of Portugal and the most religious prince of his age, pressed the Pope very urgently, through Don Pedro Mascarenhas, his ambassador at the court of Rome, to have six companions of Ignatius to go and carry the light of the Gospel to the East Indies. The holy Founder, to whom His Holiness was pleased to refer the matter, replied that, being only ten, he could by no means give six, since Europe, all disfigured by vice and heresy, had no less need of evangelical labourers than those distant lands still bound in paganism; but that he would give two of great merit, who would satisfy the king's desires. The Pope approved this answer and wished Ignatius himself to choose these missionaries. The Saint first named Father Simão Rodrigues and Father Nicolás Bobadilla; but the latter having fallen ill of a continual fever, and the matter brooking no delay, he was inspired from heaven to name St. Francis, whom divine Providence had destined from all eternity for that work. He called him therefore at that very moment and, in the movement of the divine Spirit with which he was filled, declared to him the choice that heaven had made of him for the conversion of the Indians. "It is from His Holiness," he added, "that you must receive this mission: I am only his instrument to announce it to you, as he is only the instrument of the Holy Spirit to make known to you His will. This employment must be all the dearer to you since it will satisfy the ardour you have to carry the faith beyond the seas. It is not a province or a kingdom of the East that is proposed to you to convert; you are offered a whole world, made up of more kingdoms than there are in all Europe. A field so vast and wide was alone worthy of your courage and your zeal. Go then generously, my brother, where the voice of God calls you and where the Holy See sends you, and set everything ablaze with the divine fire with which you yourself are aflame."

The joy which this news gave our Saint cannot be expressed. He had often been warned by mysterious dreams that Our Lord had caused him to be born to be the apostle of a world of idolaters; but when he saw clearly what divine Providence asked of him, and that he might find the occasion of suffering martyrdom, he gave great thanks to God for it, and, without offering any other resistance than to declare his incapacity, he answered that he was ready to go wherever the Pope wished to send him. He had only the rest of that same day to prepare for this great journey. When he went to kiss the Pope's feet and ask his blessing, His Holiness showed him a singular affection and tenderness and exhorted him to walk in the footsteps of the Apostles, since he shared in the excellence of their ministry. He also recommended him to have constant recourse to the protection of St. Thomas, who first carried the Gospel to the Indians. Finally he embraced him more than once and gave him a most ample blessing.

St. Francis left Rome on 15 March 1540 in the company of the ambassador of Portugal, with no other possessions than a poor cassock, an old cloak and a breviary. He made the whole journey to Lisbon by land, passing through France and Spain. On this long journey, which lasted more than three months, he gave admirable proofs of his virtue. He often got down from his horse to let the footmen who were walking ride; in the inns he gave up to the others the beds that were there and contented himself, for his own part, with a little straw in the corner of a stable; in short, he made himself the servant of the whole company and stooped for that purpose to the tasks of the lowest valets. At Bologna, where he had earlier proclaimed the word of God, he was received with a thousand marks of respect and gratitude; he preached and heard confessions there, and these functions, which he performed with marvellous zeal, gave the inhabitants an extreme desire to keep him. Several of the ambassador's officers were miraculously delivered from very great dangers by the power of his prayers. He also exhorted them pressingly to apply themselves seriously to the affair of their salvation, and the success of his fiery discourses gives us reason to say that he was their apostle before being that of the Indians.

His detachment from his kindred and from all the persons of his acquaintance was above all an example of the rarest and most heroic virtues to be read in the history of the Saints. His mother was still living, and he had many brothers, relatives and old friends, both at the castle of Xavier and round about. As he passed through Navarre and the city of Pamplona, which was not far from it, the ambassador urged him to honour them with a visit, pointing out that, leaving Europe perhaps never to return, he could not decently dispense himself from giving them so legitimate a consolation. But this heavenly man, in whom the world was dead as he himself was dead to the world, steadily answered His Excellency that he reserved seeing his kindred for heaven — not in passing only, with the sorrows that separations and farewells usually cause on earth, but for all eternity and with a joy that would never be mingled with grief: which filled the ambassador and all his suite with astonishment.

His conduct in Lisbon was no less admirable than it had been throughout the journey. He was received there by the king and the whole court as a man come from heaven, and His Majesty gave orders for him to be lodged and treated honourably with Father Simão Rodrigues, who had arrived by sea before him. They nevertheless took no other lodging than the hospital and would have no other food than what they collected in the city, begging alms from door to door. While waiting for the time to embark, they applied themselves to their usual exercises of preaching, hearing confessions, directing souls and instructing children by catechisms; their labours had such success that in a short time they reformed the whole city and even the whole court, so much so that the gentlemen closest to the king went to confession and communion every week and gave the people rare examples of modesty and devotion.

The king, who believed that his States of Portugal were to be preferred to the lands he possessed in the East, resolved to keep these holy missionaries with him and to have their obedience for the Indies changed. The matter was carried to Rome, and the Pope having left its settlement to St. Ignatius, that blessed founder wrote to the two Fathers, who had written to him to prevent a change, that the king must stand to them in the place of God and that they must obey him blindly; but at the same time he wrote to Don Pedro Mascarenhas that both of them were at the prince's disposal, and that he thought it fitting to use moderation in this, keeping only Father Simão Rodrigues for Portugal and letting Father Xavier go to the Indies. His Majesty agreed to this division, and our Saint, who greatly feared that his mission might be revoked, felt an extraordinary joy at seeing himself chosen anew for this great enterprise. Shortly afterwards four apostolic briefs were put into his hands: two by which His Holiness made him his nuncio in all the East and gave him very ample powers to spread and maintain the faith in Persia, the Indies, Japan, China and the other kingdoms round about; and two others in which he recommended him to the Christian princes who had States from the Cape of Good Hope to beyond the Ganges.

This rank of papal nuncio did not make him lessen in any way his humility and his poverty. He was offered money, furnishings and provisions for the voyage; but he steadily refused them, intending to live everywhere as an apostle, begging his bread, even in the ship in which he would sail. He accepted only a few little books of piety which he foresaw he would need in the Indies, and a garment of coarse cloth against the excessive cold that has to be endured beyond the Cape of Good Hope. He put to sea on 7 April 1541, full of the apostolic spirit, with Fathers Paolo de Camerino and Francisco Mansilhas, Portuguese, who, having embraced his institute, wished also to share in his labours. The viceroy Don Martim Afonso de Sousa begged him to embark in the flagship, and he could not refuse him this favour, which the viceroy desired with extreme eagerness; but he would never eat at his table, remaining firm and unshakeable in his resolution always to live as a beggar.

Meanwhile, the services he rendered in the ship, where there were no fewer than a thousand persons of every condition, are past belief. By his prudence and wise remonstrances he banished from it games of chance, quarrels, blasphemies, oaths, slander, dissolute talk and the other disorders that idleness usually produces on ships. He preached there on every feast day at the foot of the mainmast with marvellous fruit, and he never failed each day to catechise the sailors, who were little instructed in the principles of our faith. He had public prayer said; he heard confessions with surprising assiduity and patience; he assisted the sick and served them at once as doctor, nurse and priest; in short, among the great diversity of persons who filled the vessel, he made himself all things to all men to win them all. His charity and zeal shone out above all in the grievous and even pestilential diseases with which most of the passengers were attacked beyond the Line. He wiped their sweat, cleaned their ulcers, washed their linen and rendered them the most abject services; but above all he took care of their consciences, and his principal occupation was to dispose them to die as Christians. Having himself fallen into extreme languor, he did not interrupt these offices of charity; and when he was given a somewhat better cabin than before and the viceroy sent him dishes from his table, he put the sickest men in the cabin and distributed to them the food brought to him, contenting himself with the deck for a bed and very poor fare for food.

The fleet having stopped at Mozambique, on the east coast of Africa, to winter, he continued there his help to his dear sick, who had been landed, and he was to be seen in the hospital going from ward to ward and from bed to bed, giving remedies to some and administering the sacraments of the Church to others. He also watched by the dying during the night and did not leave them until they had breathed their last. In a malignant fever which so many fatigues brought upon him, he did not cease to visit these poor sufferers and to help them as far as his great weakness allowed.

As soon as he was cured, they had to put to sea again, and his ship arrived safely first at Malindi, then at Socotra, where he spread so sweet an odour of holiness that, when he was obliged to set sail, the natives of the country, though barbarous and of a very strange religion, wept bitterly to see themselves deprived of such amiable company, from which they hoped for great help. From Socotra he was soon at Goa, which was at that time the capital of the Indies, the seat of the bishops and viceroys, and the most considerable and most frequented place of the East for commerce. His arrival is dated 6 May 1542. When he had landed he went to lodge in the hospital, and, after paying his respects to the guardian angel of the Indians and to the apostle St. Thomas, who first announced the Gospel to them, he went to greet the bishop, who was Dom João de Albuquerque, a religious of St. Francis, a prelate of very great merit and one of the most virtuous then in the Church. He explained to him the reasons for which the Sovereign Pontiff and the king of Portugal had sent him into that country, and, presenting to him the briefs of His Holiness which established him apostolic nuncio in all the East, with letters patent of His Majesty, he declared to him that he wished to use neither the one nor the other except with his blessing and in dependence on his authority.

His first care was to tend, instruct, console and strengthen the sick. He then began to reform all the classes of the city, which were in a strange depravity; for there was still to be seen a great number of idolaters whose

life was much more that of beasts than of men, and who, changing their gods every day, performed abominable ceremonies in their honour. Even among the Christians there were tolerated adultery, concubinage, usurious and fraudulent contracts, murder and a thousand other disorders worthy of the thunderbolts of heaven. Justice was sold in the courts, and the most enormous crimes remained unpunished when the criminals had the means to corrupt their judges. Ignorance of the mysteries of our religion and of the rules of Christian morality was extreme, and no one took the trouble either to be instructed or to send his household to the public instructions. The use of the sacraments of Confession and the Eucharist was almost abolished; and if anyone by chance, touched by remorse of conscience, wished to be reconciled with God through a priest, he dared do so only at night and in secret, so extraordinary and shameful did the act appear. In short, contempt for ecclesiastical censures had come to such a point that they were no longer able to stop the torrent that was sweeping everyone down into hell.

What did the great Francis not do to remedy so many evils? He began with the catechism of the children, whom he instructed so well in the truths of the faith and in the rules of piety and Christian modesty that they put their parents to shame and obliged them by their example to come and hear this heavenly missionary. He then went up into the pulpit and began to thunder against vice, and his word had such power that he won the most hardened sinners and made them weep bitterly for their offences. The fruits of penance that accompanied those tears were certain proofs of their conversion. False contracts and usurious agreements were broken; ill-gotten goods were restored; slaves unjustly held were set free; concubines whom men would not marry were sent away; justice was given back the splendour and freedom it ought to have; and the use of the sacraments became as frequent as it had been in the first fervour of that Church. It was chiefly at this time and for this great success that men began to call him the Apostle, just as his signal piety had earlier earned him the name of the holy Father.

As soon as affairs at Goa were in the state we have just described, he crossed to the Fishery Coast, which stretches from Cape Comorin to the island of Mannar. The inhabitants of that country, called Paravas, that is, fishermen, because their occupation was pearl-fishing, had received Baptism; but nothing Christian remained to them but the character. The depravity of their morals was general, and their life was rather that of idolaters than of disciples of Jesus Christ. In crossing Cape Comorin he converted a whole village sunk in the darkness of idolatry by the miraculous deliverance of a woman who had been three days in the pains of childbirth. His labours among the Paravas had a still more complete success. He won back to Our Lord the thirty villages of which that district was composed; by a thousand holy devices, and without knowing their language, he taught them the first elements of Christian doctrine; he heard the confessions of a vast number who had violated by their unfaithfulness the purity of their baptism; he baptised more than forty thousand who had not yet been washed and regenerated in the blood of Jesus Christ; he healed hundreds of them, either by making the sign of the cross over them or by sending to them young children newly baptised with his rosary, his crucifix or his reliquary, to touch them with these and say over them the Lord’s Prayer or the Apostles’ Creed. In each village he had a church built in honour of the true God, in place of the abominable temples they called pagodas, where false gods were worshipped. In short, he entirely rooted out paganism and had all the idols burned to which public worship had so long been paid.

His admirable life and his miracles contributed not a little to these conversions; for he had no other food than rice and water, which was that of the poorest on the coast; he slept only three hours each day, and, as the bare ground was his bed, so he had no other lodging than a fisherman’s hut. The process of his canonisation mentions four dead persons to whom God restored life at that time through his ministry; and the healings of which we have just spoken were so many wonders that came not from the efforts of nature but from the working of divine power.

The following year, after making a journey to Goa to establish there a seminary for young Indians, and returning to the Fishery to console and succour his dear Paravas, whom the Badagas, their enemies, had

plundered and put to flight, he went to the kingdom of Travancore, where he gathered inestimable fruit by the power of his preaching. The king himself was so moved by it that he gave the Saint permission to preach throughout his States and consented that all his subjects should embrace Christianity and be baptised by his hand. It was there that he received the gift of tongues, so as to be able to speak to the idolaters without an interpreter; that he put to flight an army of barbarians who were coming to attack the new Christians, by saying to them only, crucifix in hand: “I forbid you, in the name of the living God, to go further, and I command you on his behalf to turn back”; that, being persecuted and sought out to be put to death by the Brahmins, who were the priests of the country, he escaped their snares and was preserved from the blows they dealt him by a singular protection of divine goodness; that he baptised ten thousand pagans in a single month; that he had forty-five churches built at once; and finally that he confirmed the Catholic truths by raising several dead, and confounded the obstinacy of the unbelievers who would not yield to his reasons or his prayers. These wonders won him so high an esteem among the Indians that there was no province, town or village that did not ardently desire to have him.

This made him wish for new companions to help him in so abundant a harvest. In this frame of mind he often said that the great number of idle priests to be seen in Europe were very guilty in not coming to employ their talents for the salvation of so many souls who were perishing miserably for lack of preachers to announce to them the truths of the Gospel; and he wrote to the University of Paris to rouse it to send him some of its members, full of learning and zeal, to labour at so glorious a conquest. At the same time he had the consolation of learning not only of the conversion of the inhabitants of the island of Mannar, whom one of the priests he had left at the Fishery had drawn to the faith, but also of the martyrdom of six or seven hundred of these neophytes, who were put to death by order of the king of Jaffnapatam. The fury of that prince against the faithful went so far that he had the eldest of his children slaughtered for having embraced Christianity; and when the body of that glorious soldier of Jesus Christ had been buried, there appeared on his tomb a very beautiful cross which the idolaters could never efface, and which, remaining radiant, was the cause of the conversion of a very great number of barbarians. As for the tyrant, who also pursued his wife and his other son as Christians, he died miserably and lost, with his life, the kingdom he had usurped from his brother.

After so many victories won over Satan, over the unbelievers and over their priests, blessed Francis made a journey to Meliapor, which the Portuguese call the city of St. Thomas, because that holy Apostle suffered martyrdom and received burial there. He found there a chapel dedicated in his honour, with a great slab of white marble placed at the back of the altar, on which he is held to have been put to death; and for this reason, the first time Mass was said in that oratory, the stone exuded blood in the sight of all. Our Saint often prayed there in order to merit the help and protection of that admirable preacher of the Gospel, and he soon saw that his sighs had been heard; for when the demons attacked him most furiously one day while he was in that chapel, he laughed at their assaults and by his constancy forced them to withdraw in confusion. Moreover, he received in that place wonderful consolations and a very clear light about the journeys he was to make to extend the kingdom of God. From there he set out for Malacca, for Amboina, for the little islands round about, for the Moluccas, whose capital is Ternate, and for the great island of the Moro, where the town of Monoya [Mamoya] stands. Everywhere he won a countless number of servants for Jesus Christ and performed glorious deeds, several of which were miraculous and beyond all the powers of nature.

At Malacca he healed a young man whose health was entirely despaired of; he restored to life a young girl who had been buried in his absence; he obtained for the inhabitants a signal victory at sea, with only seven or eight old *fustas*,[1] against Soora, admiral of Alaradin [Alauddin], king of Achin, who had come to insult them with an armament of sixty great ships and a quantity of frigates, barques and fire-ships. At Amboina he assisted with untiring charity a Spanish fleet that had put in there, whose soldiers were stricken with the plague; and, not content with procuring alms for those afflicted with that disease, he exposed himself a thousand times to infection by the spiritual and temporal help he gave them. Near the neighbouring islands he

plunged his crucifix into the sea to calm a furious storm; and when he let it fall by accident, as soon as he had reached the shore a crab brought it back to him in its claws, holding it upright and raised, as though to display the triumphs the Cross had won over so many unbelieving hearts. In the Moluccas he converted King Tabarija and Queen Neachile, with two princesses, sisters of Cachil, king of Ternate, and moved them so strongly that they entered the ways of the greatest detachment and the highest piety. Finally, at Monoya and in the island of the Moro, which had been described to him as incapable of instruction and of dealings with Christians, since the inhabitants had renounced their baptism because of the ill-treatment of the Portuguese, he spoke with such power and unction of the eternal pains of hell that he struck terror into their minds and obliged them to return to the practices of Christianity.

It is time to speak of the journeys he made to the various kingdoms of Japan, which by their happy success earned him the name of apostle of that nation as well as of the Indies. Beforehand he passed again through the islands, cities and provinces he had watered with the saving rain of the Gospel. He planted crosses there in the public squares and the busiest streets; he confirmed the Christians in the doctrine of the faith and of true morality which he had taught them; he fought by word and in writing the licentiousness of those who belied the holiness of their religion by the corruption of their morals; on a thousand occasions he showed his zeal for the glory of God, his ardour for the salvation of souls, and the eminent gifts he had received, both of speaking tongues and of healing all kinds of diseases. For this reason men tried to turn him from his great enterprise of the spiritual conquest of Japan; but as he knew for certain, by the supernatural lights God had given him, that it was His will that he should pursue it, he courageously put to sea, and after a thousand dangers he ran there — whether from the fury of storms or from the malice of a Chinese captain who had taken him on his ship and who, in the false zeal of his idolatry, was often on the point of murdering him or throwing him into the water — he at last landed safely near Kagoshima, one of the chief cities of Japan, on 15 August 1549.

His first refuge was with a man named Anger [Anjir■], whom he had converted at Goa and to whom he had given in baptism the name of Paul of the Holy Faith. Through him he gained access to the king of Satsuma, and he won so far the good graces of the king and of the queen his wife that he obtained from them permission to preach the Christian law in all the lands under their rule. He did so first at Kagoshima, and he had the consolation of seeing there many great lords embrace, through his ministry, the doctrine of the Saviour of the world. The bonzes, who were like the religious of the country, enclosed in various monasteries, opposed the progress of his preaching. They slandered him and did their utmost to discredit him before the people; they often entered into disputation with him and used all the subtlety of their minds to throw him into confusion; they instilled into the first men of the court secret suspicions of his conduct; but they made little progress by these artifices. Francis dispelled their calumnies by the innocence and purity of his life, which was always irreproachable. His austerity and disinterestedness were proofs that he sought neither pleasures nor riches, and that it was the sole desire of winning souls for God that had already made him travel more than half way round the world. He refuted the extravagances of these evil doctors with such force, and established so solidly the unity of God and the other mysteries of Christianity, that they no longer dared enter into combat with him.

Finally, he confirmed by miracles the truths he taught. Walking one day by the seashore, he noticed some fishermen spreading their empty net and complaining that they had caught nothing. He took pity on them, and after his prayer he advised them to fish again; then Our Lord gave so great a blessing to their work, and they caught so many fish and of so many kinds, that they could scarcely draw in the net. They continued their fishing on the following days with the same success, and what is more surprising, the sea at Kagoshima, which had hardly been rich in fish, was afterwards extremely so. He healed a child whom a swelling of the whole body made extraordinarily deformed, merely by taking him in his arms and saying to him three times: “God bless you!” He healed also a leper cut off from the company of other men, by having three signs of the

cross made over him after he had declared that he believed in Jesus Christ and would be baptised. He raised to life a girl whose father came to implore his help, by saying simply to the man: “Go, your daughter is alive.” An idolater, carried away by his own fury or stirred up by that of the bonzes, one day loaded him with atrocious insults. He saw at that very hour the terrible punishment that divine justice was preparing for him, and said to him with a rather sad look: “God preserve your tongue!” At once the wretched man felt his tongue eaten by a canker, and there came out of his mouth a quantity of pus and worms with an unbearable stench.

These miracles and this punishment, which were new sources of conversions, only irritated the bonzes the more. At last they intrigued so well at the court of Satsuma that the king, who had shown such great dispositions towards Christianity and had even had letters patent issued by which he gave all his subjects leave to embrace it, entirely changed his mind and, by a wholly contrary declaration, forbade anyone either to leave the ancient religion of Japan or to attack it by word of mouth or in writing. St. Francis, recognising by this that divine Providence wanted him elsewhere, after strengthening that nascent church of Kagoshima by powerful discourses full of the unction of the Holy Spirit, left his kingdom with a few zealous companions and took the road to Hirado.

On the way he won to Jesus Christ almost the whole of a castle belonging to a lord called Hexandono; he baptised there his wife and his eldest son, gave them the form of Christian assemblies and prayers, and marked out a place in the castle for holding them; in short, he laid there, as at Kagoshima, the foundations of a flourishing church that was formed afterwards, when a sufficient number of priests and ministers were sent there to confer the sacraments and celebrate the holy Mysteries. On leaving he gave the lady a little book written in his own hand, and Hexandono’s steward an iron discipline he had used, and these afterwards became sources of supernatural healings.

The welcome the king of Hirado gave him was wonderful. He granted him the permission the king of Satsuma had taken from him, namely to preach the faith in his lands; and he did so with such happy results that in less than twenty days he baptised more pagans there than he had in a whole year at Kagoshima.

This ease made him think that one of his companions would suffice to enlarge this new Christian church. So, wishing to attack heresy in its very stronghold, he set out for Meaco [Miyako, Kyoto], which was the seat of the empire of Japan. As he had to pass through Amanguchi [Yamaguchi], capital of the kingdom of Naugata [Nagato], he found there such great corruption of morals that he believed himself obliged to stay there for some time to try to bring a remedy; but his remonstrances and exhortations were useless: the shameful and brutish passions to which the inhabitants of that place had made themselves slaves prevented them from listening to the words of life he preached to them and from seeing the heavenly light he held out to them. The king was no more docile than his people: he was willing to hear Xavier, but he rejected his doctrine as a fable and remained obstinate in the worship of idols and demons, refusing to acknowledge the true God, who had the goodness to manifest himself to him by the mouth of His servant.

The same thing happened at Meaco. The hardships which the Saint and his companions suffered on that journey are past belief. It was winter, which the winds, rains and snows make extraordinarily severe in that country; they were poorly clothed and had neither money nor any provision for their subsistence; they went on foot, and, for lack of good guides, they often lost their way in the woods and in the windings of the rivers and mountains. From this one may judge what Xavier’s courage was, not to succumb under so terrible a fatigue. He would have been consoled if his labour had contributed to the conversion of a single idolater; but he found the whole city in such great preparations for war that no one thought of the things of religion; so that, having been unable to obtain an audience either of the emperor or of the *zaso*, who is the great Pontiff — above all because he was asked for a great deal of money to arrange it — he took the road back to the city of Amanguchi.

It was then that, at the persuasion of his friends, or rather by a heavenly inspiration which made him understand that the preacher of the Gospel must sometimes accommodate himself to the weakness of his hearers in order to win them more easily, he put on a garment somewhat more decent than the one he had worn before, having often found that so ragged a habit made princes and persons of rank reject him and shut him out of their palaces. This precaution was of use to him with the king of Amanguchi, together with some European curiosities which he gave him as a present. For this prince, who had been so little favourable to him the first time he came to the city, this time gave him full power to preach, to dispute, to baptise and to form an assembly of the faithful. Upon this permission, every day a great concourse of the learned men of the country gathered at the place where he lived, to put their doubts to him. He listened to them attentively, and — what is surprising, and of which no other example is to be found in Church history — by a single answer he satisfied at once ten or twelve quite different difficulties on subjects that had no connection with one another, so that each of those who had questioned him found in the word he answered the true clearing up of his doubt. God also restored to him, on various occasions, the gift of tongues He had granted him in the Indies; for, without ever having learned the Chinese language, and having studied Japanese only very little, he preached every morning in Chinese to the merchants from China who traded at Amanguchi, and in the afternoon he preached to the Japanese in their own language, but so easily and naturally that, to hear him, one would not have taken him for a foreigner.

By this means many idolaters recognised their errors and opened their eyes to the sacred light of the Gospel; the bonzes lost their credit, their corrupt morals came to be held in horror, their monasteries were emptied and their colleges abandoned. They made extraordinary efforts to hold their ground; they often renewed the disputation with St. Francis; they invented a thousand calumnies against him; they even had the skill to win the king back and to engage him in a cruel persecution of the Christians; but all their intrigues could not prevent the progress of religion. In a few days the number of the faithful in that city rose to more than three thousand, and they were all so fervent that there was not one who was not ready not only to lose his goods but also to shed his blood in defence of the faith. Meanwhile various reasons obliged our Saint to take the road back to the Indies, where the affairs of his Society and of the new Christendom necessarily required his presence. He therefore left Father Cosme de Torres and Brother Juan Fernández at Amanguchi and went to the port of Figen [Hiji], near Funai or Fuchéo, capital of the kingdom of Bungo, to board a Portuguese ship that had arrived there full of merchandise.

We shall not stop here to describe the honours paid him when he arrived at that ship, and when from there he was conducted to Fuchéo, to the prince’s palace: his procession was no less stately than that of a sovereign; the welcome he received from the king of Bungo was so glorious that never had a private man been seen in Japan treated with such respect and magnificence. This king, after having a thousand honours paid him by his officers, bowed three times before him to the ground, took him by the hand, seated him at his side and, laying aside the pride of royal majesty, which the kings of Japan never put off in public, conversed familiarly with him as with a particular friend. Then, by an altogether extraordinary favour, he had him eat at his table; and, as he conceived a high idea of the Christian religion, he gave him power to proclaim it in his States and to confer baptism on all who should ask for it. In this city too Francis had to withstand the fury of the bonzes. He often entered into formal disputation with them and showed the folly of their imaginings and the extravagance of their sect. On the other hand he established the truth of Christianity with marvellous light and solidity, and God poured such unction upon his words that even the idolaters, above all the king, the princes and the lords of the court, applauded all he said and gave the case to him. Nevertheless, few of those who listened to him were judged worthy to receive the sacrament of regeneration; for although they submitted their minds to the truths of the faith, they were still bound by shameful vices which they were not yet resolved to give up. That happened only some years later, when new missionaries were sent to cultivate this field which our blessed apostle had discovered and in which he had sown the first seeds of Christian doctrine.

Everything being ready for embarkation at the port of Figen, St. Francis at last took leave of the king of Bungo, who had shown him so much kindness. It was 20 November 1551, two years and nearly four months after his arrival in Japan. His design was to go to Malacca, which he knew by revelation to be besieged by sea and by land by a powerful army of Javanese and Malays, and from there to go on to Goa, where the Holy Spirit was calling him and telling him inwardly that his presence was necessary. The voyage was at first fairly prosperous; but in the neighbourhood of the island of Méléitor there arose a storm so furious that none more terrible can be imagined. The ship's boat, in which there were fifteen men, was torn by the winds from the side of the great ship and carried away into very distant seas. The ship itself came within a hair's breadth of shipwreck, so that the passengers, almost overwhelmed by a mountain of water, were awaiting only the final stroke of death; but the Saint did so much by his tears at the foot of the crucifix that he obtained from Our Lord the safety of his whole company. The storm abated, the ship in which he was was brought out of danger, and those who were sailing in the boat saw him sitting beside them, holding the helm and bringing it back, amid the squalls and storms, straight to the ship from which the winds had separated it. Many other miracles occurred in the course of that voyage; but what is much more remarkable is that, having told his pilot that none of the ships he should sail in would ever be wrecked, the truth of this prediction was afterwards seen, in that this pilot, having sailed in several in very bad condition, trusting in that promise, never met with any accident. Likewise, the Saint having declared of a ship called the *Santa Cruz* that it would not perish at sea but would fall to pieces of itself in the place where it had been built, it afterwards sailed all the seas of Asia for more than thirty years, amid a thousand dangers and with cargoes much heavier than it could bear, without suffering from calm or storm, and at last went to pieces on the shore of Cochin, which was the place where it had been put together.

The brevity this abridgement requires does not allow us to dwell on what St. Xavier did, both at Malacca and at Goa, at the time of his return. We shall say only that he resolved there to carry out as soon as possible what he had proposed to himself while in Japan, namely to go and carry the faith into China, because he saw more and more that all the corruption of the Indies and of Japan came from there, and that idolatry would never be overthrown in those vast countries until it had first been overthrown in China. He had his plan approved by the viceroy of Portugal and by the bishop of Goa, whose authority extended over all the Indies. He settled the affairs of the other missions and those of the Society, and provided for the needs of all the Christians he had won for Jesus Christ since his arrival in the East. He named as rector of the college of Goa and vice-provincial of the Indies the Reverend Father Gaspar Barzaeus, a man of consummate prudence and virtue; he gave him in writing admirable instructions for governing his subjects well and labouring usefully for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Finally, recognising him thenceforth as his superior, he knelt before him in the presence of the whole community and promised him obedience. So, everything being arranged for setting sail, he embarked on Maundy Thursday, 14 April 1552, and took the route to China. Passing through Malacca, he gave himself there to the service of the plague-stricken with the same generosity he had shown on so many other occasions. He also raised to life a dead man who had killed himself through carelessness by putting into his mouth the head of a poisoned arrow. But his voyage was thwarted there by the governor of the city in so malicious and obstinate a way that nothing was ever more barbarous. He was forced to leave at Malacca the ambassador of Portugal who was to take him to China, to board a different ship from the one that had brought him, and to put himself in the company of the men of that perfidious governor, who, after their master's example, had nothing but harshness for him. Nevertheless, on the way he did not cease to load them with favours. When their water was used up, he changed sea water into fresh water to deliver them from a cruel thirst that was burning their entrails. He often preached to them to make them renounce sensuality and self-interest, which are the passions that most dominate merchants. He made them various predictions whose truth the event did not fail to justify. A child having fallen to the bottom of the sea, he brought him back six days later and restored him full of health and life to his father: which was the cause of the conversion of that man, who was a Mahometan.

At last he arrived at Sancian, which is an island facing Canton, a city of China, and only six leagues from it. It would have been easy for him to cross over, but for the prohibition then in force, which allowed entry to no foreigner whatever; but as this order was strictly observed, and the gates were guarded with extreme rigour for that purpose, he was forced to seek various means of obtaining an opening. While he was employing to this end now prayers and tears at the foot of the crucifix, now the prudence and light God had given him, he fell gravely ill of a malignant fever, accompanied by nausea, colic and headaches, which soon made it plain that he would not recover. He withdrew at first into the ship, which was the common hospital of the sick, in order to die a poor man as he had always lived a poor man. But as the continual motion he felt there increased his headache and prevented him from applying himself so freely to his God, he asked the next day to be put ashore again. He was carried there and left on the beach, exposed to the inclemency of the weather and to a piercing north wind that was then blowing. He would have died deprived of all help had not a Portuguese more charitable than the rest, named Jorge Álvares, had him carried into his hut, which was hardly better than the shore and was open on all sides. This servant of God spent thirteen days in this extreme poverty, deprived of absolutely everything. He was bled twice; but he was bled so badly that the nerves were injured and each time he fell into a faint and convulsions. In this extremity he had no other food than a few almonds which the captain of the ship gave him out of charity.

Meanwhile, the nearer his last hour came — and God had given him knowledge of it — the more he was inflamed with desire for blessed eternity. There was nothing but devout aspirations, short and loving prayers. He said unceasingly: “Jesus, Son of David, look upon me with an eye of mercy”; or, adoring the three divine Persons: “O most holy Trinity!”; or, invoking the Queen of heaven: “Show thyself a Mother.” At last, on 2 December, which was a Friday, his eyes all bathed in tears and tenderly fixed on his crucifix, he uttered these words: “In thee, my Lord, have I hoped, and I am sure that I shall never be confounded.” And at the same moment, filled with a heavenly joy that appeared on his face, he gently gave up his spirit about two o’clock in the afternoon. It was in 1552, in the forty-sixth year of his age.

His virtues appear clearly enough in this history without our dwelling on them further. During his life he sometimes enjoyed such an abundance of heavenly consolations that, unable to bear their vehemence, he was obliged to open his garment with both hands, as though to give air to his breast and cool the ardours that consumed it, and to say: “It is enough, Lord, it is enough; spare my poor heart. I cannot bear any more. It is enough, my God, it is enough.” He was often seen in ecstasy and wholly carried away into God, and this ecstasy was sometimes so powerful that it raised him several cubits into the air and held him there a very long time. Nothing can be added to his tenderness for Jesus Christ, to his devotion to the Blessed Sacrament or to his confidence in the holy Virgin. His charity extended to all men, and he gave such shining proofs of it — whether in procuring salvation for countless idolaters and sinners, or in succouring a countless multitude of the poor, of captives, of the sick, of the plague-stricken and of every kind of unfortunate — that one may say it surpasses in brightness the rays of the noonday sun. In his life will also be found heroic examples of humility, patience, austerity, obedience and all the other moral virtues.

St. Francis Xavier is represented: (1) in conference with mandarins; (2) healing a sick man; (3) raising a woman to life; (4) at prayer beside St. Ignatius of Loyola; (5) in company with St. Ignatius and St. Aloysius Gonzaga; (6) standing, his breast uncovered, on which is a flame, symbol of his burning love of God and of the salvation of men.

VENERATION AND RELICS.

St. Francis Xavier was buried on the Sunday following his death. His body was placed in a fairly large chest, in the Chinese manner, and the chest was filled with quicklime so that, the flesh being consumed the sooner, the bones might be carried to Goa. On 17 February 1553 the coffin was opened to see whether the flesh had been consumed; but when the lime had been removed from the face, it was found fresh and ruddy like that of

a man gently sleeping. The body was likewise quite whole and without any mark of corruption. To make more sure of it, a little flesh was cut near the knee, and blood flowed. Nor had the lime damaged the priestly vestments in which he had been buried. The holy body gave off a sweeter and more agreeable odour than that of the most exquisite perfumes. It was put on board ship and carried to Malacca, where they landed on 22 March. The inhabitants of that city received it with the greatest respect. The plague, which had been making its ravages felt there for some weeks, ceased suddenly. The body of the holy missionary was buried in the common cemetery. Having been found fresh and whole in the following August, it was carried to Goa and laid in the church of the college of St. Paul on 15 March 1554. Several miraculous cures took place on that occasion.

In 1612, when it was wished to detach from the body — still fresh, flexible and coloured — the right arm, to send it to Rome, great difficulties were met; at last the Saint, yielding to the entreaties of those present, himself held out the arm to the surgeon, and at the first incision the blood flowed as abundantly as if the body had been full of life! Linen cloths were soaked in it, which the Fathers of Goa sent to Philip IV, king of Spain, and some was collected in a phial, which was sent with the arm to the House at Rome. The hand was divided among the colleges of Cochin, Malacca and Macao. The ship carrying these holy relics to Europe was met and pursued by corsairs; it was about to be overtaken when the captain cried: “Carry the holy Father’s arm up to the top! He will put the pirates to flight.” The order was carried out, and the sea-rovers, going about, made off under full sail and were seen no more.

Of these precious relics, the arm has remained in Rome; the phial of blood is at the Professed House in Paris. The court of Rome, urged by the sovereigns of Japan and by the king of Portugal to proceed to the canonisation of Francis Xavier, examined his cause and recognised twenty-four resurrections juridically proved and eighty-eight striking miracles worked during the life of the illustrious Saint; a bull of Pope Paul V, dated 25 October 1605, declared him Blessed. He was canonised by Gregory XV on 12 March 1621, with all the usual ceremonies; but the death of Gregory XV delayed the publication of the bull, which was issued by Urban VIII, his successor, under the date of 6 August 1623.

In 1670, by a decree of 14 June, Pope Clement X fixed the feast of St. Francis Xavier on 3 December and ordered by the same decree that his office should be of double rite for the whole Church.

Since the death of our Saint, the number of resurrections obtained by invoking his merits — recognised by the court of Rome and joined to the acts of the canonisation, whether before or after the publication of the bull — had risen by 1715 to the enormous figure of twenty-seven, fourteen of which had been obtained within the last few years.

It would be hard to say in what Catholic country this Saint is not invoked with ardent devotion; everywhere many miracles due to his intercession are published.

They were multiplied perhaps even more than elsewhere at the castle of Xavier. The room in which he was born was made into a chapel, and pilgrims flocked there. Navarre chose him for its patron, and even today all Navarrese give their children the name of Xavier in baptism, and pilgrimages are still numerous to this chapel, opened to the public by the descendants of our Saint’s family. All of them have preserved with religious respect this noble manor, made illustrious by such glorious memories. The castle of Xavier is still what it was in 1524, when Don Francisco left it for ever… The chapel of the noble family has remained what it was in the time when the happy and sorrowful mother of the great apostle of the East went there to draw the strength to thank God for so much suffering and so much happiness.

In 1744, by order of King John IV, the archbishop of Goa and the marquis of Castelnovo, viceroy of the Indies, accompanied by all the great dignitaries, made a visitation of the remains of St. Francis Xavier and established, with all the required formalities, the perfect preservation of his body. Pope Benedict XIV, seeing the numberless miracles obtained every day through his merits, declared him protector of the East by a brief

of 24 February 1747.

In 1782 Father Cicala, of the Congregation of the Lazarists, attended the exposition of the relics of the great apostle on 10, 11 and 12 February. He wrote that the concourse of people had been so considerable that year that it surpassed all that had been seen for thirty years of their eagerness to come and visit the holy tomb. People had hastened there from every part of the Indies. The coffin, eight feet long and two feet high and closed by three locks, was opened in the presence of the bishop of Cochin, administrator of the diocese of Goa, of all the clergy, of all the religious Orders, of the viceroy and of all the great dignitaries and magistrates. The Saint's body was entirely covered by a veil of silk stuff, which was removed, and all present could contemplate what remained of the great apostle of the East. He was clothed in priestly vestments; his chasuble, a present of the queen of Portugal and bordered by her hand, was perfectly fresh. The body showed not the least sign of corruption; but it no longer had the appearance of life which it had kept for more than a century. "The skin," wrote Father Cicala, "the skin and the flesh, which is dried, is entirely united with the bones; a fine white is seen on the face; it lacks only the right arm, which is at Rome, and two toes of the right foot, as well as the intestines. The feet above all have been preserved in the greatest beauty."

A fragment of the right arm had been granted to the college which the Society of Jesus had established at Macao; but under English influence, or rather domination, the Jesuit college was turned into a barracks; only the church was kept. In 1834 the carelessness of the soldiers set the barracks on fire; the help was badly directed, the fire devoured the buildings, reached the church and left nothing but ruins… We are mistaken: in the midst of that great and deplorable destruction a striking miracle was established. Only four statues had been spared by the flames; only four statues had remained standing, and all four perfectly intact: those of St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Francis Xavier, St. Francis Borgia and St. Aloysius Gonzaga.

Many relics of the Martyrs of Japan disappeared in that disaster… That of St. Francis Xavier alone was saved! Today the mummy [at Goa] is still to be seen, clothed in the dress the Saint wore in his lifetime. The face is ruddy, a few grey hairs adorn the temples, the orb of the eye stands out under the strongly marked arches of thick eyebrows; only the nose seems to have suffered a little. Formerly this holy relic was exposed without the precaution of placing it in a glass case; an over-fervent lady bit off one of the Saint's toes; since then precautions have had to be taken so that such acts should not be repeated.

We could cite still more recent facts attesting that the power of the illustrious apostle's merits is far from weakened. In Belgium an association has been formed for the conversion of sinners under the patronage of St. Francis Xavier, and this association obtains many miracles of conversion. Who does not know the good done by an association of another kind, founded in Paris for working men under the same patronage and the same invocation? And who does not know the marvellous and ever-growing progress of that of the Propagation of the Faith, likewise placed under his protection?

The tomb of St. Francis Xavier having been opened at Goa in 1859, the Saint's body was found intact and as well preserved as on the day after his death.

This account is by Father Giry. We have completed it from the Revue catholique de Louvain, *1859. — Cf. the* Histoire du Saint *by Daurignac.*

ST. ATTALA, FIRST ABBESS OF THE MONASTERY OF SAINT-ÉTIENNE AT STRASBOURG (741)

The abbey of Saint-Étienne is the oldest of all the religious houses of Strasbourg. It was founded about the year 717, under the reign of Chilperic II, king of Austrasia, by Adalbert, duke of Alsace and brother of St. Odile.

As soon as the buildings of the monastery were finished, the duke chose to govern it Attala, his daughter, whom he had had by Gerlinde, his first wife, and who had been formed by the care of St. Odile, her aunt. Attala introduced into her community the canonical Rule then followed at Hohenburg, as being better proportioned to the delicacy of her sex than that of St. Benedict. She walked in the footsteps of her blessed aunt and gave Strasbourg the fine examples of virtue that the latter gave at Hohenburg. She knew how to join to the most tender piety an unalterable gentleness that won all hearts; for her piety had nothing harsh or forbidding about it. Amiable in all her ways and attentive to others, Attala was always severe with herself, granting her nuns what she refused herself, and fulfilling towards them with studied care the duties of a good mother who tenderly loves her children.

Attala was the edification of her community until the end of her days, which came about the year 741. The city of Strasbourg regarded her as a guardian angel and had the highest veneration for her. To satisfy the devotion of the faithful, her body had to be left exposed for five weeks; the idea people had of her holiness was so great that they hastened from all sides to commend themselves to her intercession. It is related that Werentrude, abbess of Hohenburg and a particular friend of Attala, burning with the desire to have some of her relics, had recourse to a means which the lively eagerness then felt to possess relics of the Saints made allowable. Having disclosed her plan to a priest named Werner, she sent him to the church of Saint-Étienne on the pretext of praying there by the body of the Saint, which was exposed, but in fact with the secret commission of taking her right hand by cutting it off. Werner went there and found the means of faithfully carrying out Werentrude's order. He was on the point of returning to Hohenburg to hand over to the abbess the relic he had removed when he was discovered. The hand was enclosed in a crystal box and kept in the church of Saint-Étienne, as was a mantle of black wool said to have belonged to St. Attala, which every abbess was obliged to put on her shoulders at her accession. The hand is kept today in the church of Sainte-Madeleine, where it is exposed every year to the veneration of the faithful on 3 December.

St. Attala is represented with a well beside her, because in the abbey of Saint-Étienne the crypt contained a well whose water was sought for many cures.

The abbé Hunckler, Saints d'Alsace*; Father Cahier,* Caractéristiques des Saints.

ERECTION OF THE ARCHCONFRATERNITY OF THE MOST HOLY HEART OF MARY IN THE CHURCH OF NOTRE-DAME DES VICTOIRES, PARIS (1836)

The present church of Notre-Dame des Victoires in Paris was at first a church of the Discalced Augustinians, commonly called the Petits-Pères, which Louis XIII had built under the title of Notre-Dame des Victoires in thanksgiving for various victories he had won, and above all for the reduction of La Rochelle against the Protestants. The king himself had laid its first stone on 9 December 1629. Then, as the population of the quarter grew and the faithful flocked to the chapel of Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows which was honoured in that church, the building proved too small. In 1656 the edifice that still exists today was built; and Anne of Austria, to whom a religious of that convent had foretold the birth of Louis XIV, herself had the chapel of the holy Virgin — since become so famous — decorated and faced with marble in gratitude. Enlarged in 1737, made a constitutional parish in 1791 after the expulsion of the Augustinian religious, and then a parish church by the Concordat of 1802, it was for more than thirty years a deserted church which almost no one frequented. Situated at the centre of commerce and business, surrounded by theatres and places of pleasure, shaken by all the political movements that seemed to start from that quarter and end in it, one would have said it was there only as a useless appendage: its worship neglected, the sacraments abandoned, pious practices and even the greatest solemnities given up as outworn customs good for the simplicity of our fathers — everything pointed to a population dead to the faith. The abbé Desgenettes was named pastor of this church in 1832; for four years he groaned over his barren ministry. At last, on 3 December 1836, during

Mass, he felt himself inwardly urged to consecrate his parish to the most holy and immaculate Heart of Mary. At first he took this feeling for an illusion, for he had never thought of honouring the Heart of Mary. But during his thanksgiving, and even after he had finished it, the same feeling grew livelier, more penetrating, more urgent. Then, though with difficulty, he decided to follow this interior movement; he went back to his room, set about drawing up the statutes of an association of the holy Heart of Mary, and was quite surprised at the ease with which he carried out this unaccustomed task. Without delay he went to present it to Mgr de Quélen, archbishop of Paris, who at once approved the association. The following Sunday he announced the new confraternity at the sermon and appointed the first meeting for that same day at seven in the evening: it was the third Sunday of Advent, 11 December 1836. Hardly had he come down from the pulpit when two merchants of his parish, who were never seen in church, came to ask him to hear their confessions: such were the first fruits of a work that was to produce so many others.

All that day the zealous pastor was divided between fear and hope; but in the evening, what was his surprise and joy when, entering the church at the appointed hour, he found it full of people who had come for the inauguration of the new work, and among them a great number of men. The exercise began with the chanting of Vespers of the holy Virgin, which were heard with some indifference; but the instruction that followed on the object of the meeting was listened to with remarkable recollection; and the spirit and animation of all the voices in singing the prayers of Benediction and the Litany of the holy Virgin, and the spontaneity with which the invocation *Refugium peccatorum, ora pro nobis* was repeated three times, as well as the *Parce, Domine*, showed that all hearts were won and the success of the work assured. M. Desgenettes took advantage of the general emotion to have the assembly ask of God the conversion of one of his parishioners, a former minister of Louis XVI, who, brought by great age to the doors of the grave, was still living in unbelief. The next day he went to see the old man; he was well received; he reawakened Christian sentiments in him; at last he heard his confession and had the consolation of seeing him enter on a new way in which he persevered until death.

The following Sunday the same exercises took place at the same hour with the same concourse; and when, on Sunday 12 January 1837, the statutes of the association had been published and the register for enrolling associates opened, there was a crowd to enrol. Ten days had not passed before two hundred and twelve associates were counted, nearly all parishioners; in the following days the eagerness of the faithful of the various parishes of Paris and elsewhere who came to be enrolled could not be met. The Holy See, informed of the prodigious development of the good work, erected it into an archconfraternity with the right to affiliate similar societies; and soon requests for affiliation arrived from every point of the Catholic world, so that Notre-Dame des Victoires has become a great centre of prayer for the conversion of sinners, the essential aim of the confraternity. At each meeting certain conversions are commended to Mary, and wonders of mercy are obtained; sometimes even temporal graces are asked of her, as a means of touching hearts and bringing them back to salvation, and the number of cures and other favours obtained cannot be told. So the church, once so deserted, is today the most frequented in the capital; at whatever hour of the day there is a throng before Mary's altar, and at the evening meetings each Sunday the crowd presses in, attentive, recollected, moved: it is one of the finest spectacles religion can offer.

Finally, what crowned the renown of this church, the Sovereign Pontiffs, after granting it the most abundant indulgences, added a privilege reserved to the most venerated sanctuaries of the holy Virgin. Mgr Pacca, nephew of the illustrious cardinal of that name, came on 9 July 1853 to crown solemnly the statue of Notre-Dame des Victoires in the name of the Sovereign Pontiff and of the chapter of St. Peter's in Rome.

Notre-Dame de France, *by the curé of Saint-Sulpice. — Cf.* Le Pèlerin à Notre-Dame des Victoires, *by the abbé V. Dumas (Paris, Poussielgue, 1867).*

[1] Sophonias, son of Chusi, lived under the reign of Josias, king of Juda (639–608 B.C.). Ninth of the twelve minor prophets, he foretold the ruin of the Assyrian empire and the taking of Nineveh. A great conformity of style is noticed between Sophonias and Jeremias: it is because they lived at the same time and foretold much the same things. Sophonias threatens the peoples of Juda, and above all the inhabitants of Jerusalem, with the vengeance of the Lord because of their idolatry and contempt of God. He exhorts them to forestall the days of his anger and to return to him by leaving their disorders. He foretells the happy times of the new law, the calling of the Gentiles, the establishment of the Church. In popular representations Sophonias bears inscribed on his scroll: "Wait for me in the day of my resurrection." The gloss sees in this passage (Soph. 3:7) the triumph of the Church after the infidelities and apostasy of the Synagogue. — Dom Ceillier, *Histoire des auteurs sacrés et ecclésiastiques*; Father Cahier, *Caractéristiques des Saints*.

[2] Birinus was a priest of Rome who obtained from Pope Honorius permission to go and preach the Gospel to the idolaters of Great Britain. He worked countless conversions there and built many churches. When he had fallen asleep in the Lord, his body was buried in his episcopal city. His relics were afterwards translated to Winchester by Bishop Hedda, who placed them in the church of the Holy Apostles. — Godescard.

[3] Lucius, or Lever-Maur (that is, Great Light), was the military chief of one of the little States of Great Britain. Though brought up in paganism, he professed a traditional and hereditary veneration for the God of the Christians. Bound by his political alliances to the Roman empire, to which his family owed its power, he probably took advantage of the stir which the miracle of the Thundering Legion had made throughout the whole world to ask Pope St. Eleutherius (170–186) for zealous priests who could instruct his subjects in the faith and procure for them the benefit of the light of the Gospel. According to the *Liber Pontificalis*, the pope sent him two apostolic missionaries, Fugatius and Damianus. This tradition of the Roman Church, long rejected by criticism, has just been confirmed by modern archaeological discoveries, and it is no longer possible today to doubt the evangelisation of England in the 2nd century. — Darras, *Histoire générale de l'Église*, vol. VII, p. 401.

[4] As many miracles were worked through the intercession of these two martyrs, a church was built on the spot where they died for the faith (that is, on the site of their dwelling at Bedun), first of wood, then of stone; their relics were translated into it, and it was dedicated in honour of the most holy Virgin, of the apostle St. Paul and of St. Walfrid. — Continuators of Godescard.

[5] He was buried at Saint-Germain, clothed in a hair shirt and his monastic habit. The feast of St. Abbo has never been celebrated; it is only seen that he was invoked in the litanies of the monastery he governed. — *Gallia christiana nova*.

[6] We have sketched the notice of St. Silvester on 26 November.

[7] St. Lucy the Chaste worked during her life and after her death an infinite number of miracles. At Jerez de la Frontera (intendancy of Cadiz) a very ancient statue representing her is venerated on an altar. Her likeness is in a great number of churches, and she is effectively invoked against ophthalmia. A similarity of names has caused painters often to substitute St. Lucy the Martyr for St. Lucy the Chaste. The latter has the exclusive privilege of being represented holding in her hand a dish on which are two eyes. It is by an abuse that St. Lucy the Martyr is represented with the same emblems. — Local notes.

[8] A small, long, low-sided vessel, going under sail and oars.

4 December

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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Martyrologies

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Constantinople, St. Theophanes and his companions. 780. — In Pontus, St. Meletius, bishop and confessor, illustrious for his learning and still more for his virtue and candour. About 330. — At Bologna, St. Felix, bishop, who had earlier been a deacon of the church of Milan under St. Ambrose. — In England, St. Osmund, bishop and confessor.[2] 1099. — At Cologne, St. Anno, archbishop and confessor. 1075. — In Mesopotamia, St. Maruthas, bishop, who rebuilt in Persia the churches ruined during the persecution of King Yazdegerd, and worked so many miracles that he was honoured even by the enemies of our religion.[3] About 449. — At Parma, St. Bernard, cardinal-bishop of that city, of the Congregation of Vallombrosa, Order of St. Benedict. 1133.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED.

In the dioceses of Ajaccio, Avignon, Gap, Mainz, Perpignan and Tarbes, St. Barbara, virgin and martyr at Nicomedia, named in the Roman Martyrology of this day. 235. — In the diocese of Verdun, St. Peter Chrysologus, bishop of Ravenna and confessor, whose life we have given on 2 December. 450. — At Bourges, St. Berthoara, foundress of the abbey of Notre-Dame de Sales under the Rule of St. Columban. About 689. — At Le Mans, St. Adnette (Adna, Acbieta, Adrechildis), nun of the monastery of Soissons, then abbess of that of the Holy Apostles at Le Mans, where she was placed by Aiglibert (670– 705), bishop of that see. She attained so high a degree of merit, and her credit with God was shown by signs so evident, that the Church of Le Mans has always honoured her with public worship. Her body was buried in the basilica of the Holy Apostles.[4] About 689.

MARTYROLOGIES OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

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Martyrology of the Congregation of Vallombrosa. — At Parma, St. Bernard, cardinal and bishop of that city, of the Congregation of Vallombrosa. 1133.

Martyrology of the Cistercian Order. — At Siena in Tuscany, St. Galgano, hermit, under the Cistercian Rule, renowned for his holiness and miracles, who on the eve of this day was called to eternal glory as he was saying: “What you have done is enough; now reap what you have sown.” 1181.

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Martyrology of the Order of Friars Minor. — The same as among the Canons Regular.

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Martyrology of the Order of Discalced Carmelites. — The same as among the Canons Regular.

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Among the Friars Preachers, Blessed Cecilia of Rome, virgin, of the Order of St. Dominic. This blessed woman was the first nun of the Order in Italy. Her admirable piety earned her the confidence of St. Dominic, who showed her a wholly fatherly affection and freely shared with her the most intimate favours he received from heaven. She has left very interesting memoirs on the life of the blessed patriarch. Barely twenty-two years old (1219), Cecilia was sent by Pope Gregory IX to Bologna to found a monastery of sisters of the Order there. She had indeed all the qualities of a foundress: she was seen first at all the exercises of piety, most fervent at prayer, most remarkable in works of penance. After leading a wholly pure life and forming as many Saints as she had nuns under her direction, she fell asleep in the Lord at the age of ninety. Two hundred years after her death (1487), when her tomb was opened for the translation of her relics, a delicious perfume came from it which delighted all present. Today her bones are enclosed in one shrine with those of Blessed Diana d’Andalò (10 June 1236) and Blessed Amata (10 June 1236). They are honoured at Bologna in Italy. 1287. — In Egypt, Clement of Alexandria, doctor of the Church. About 216. — In Japan, the blessed martyrs Francisco Gálvez, priest of the Order of Friars Minor, a Spaniard; Girolamo de Angelis, priest of the Society of Jesus, a Sicilian; Simon Yempo, of the Society of Jesus, a Japanese. 1623.

ST. BARBARA, VIRGIN AND MARTYR, AT NICOMEDIA IN BITHYNIA

235. — Pope: St. Anterus. — Roman emperor: Maximinus I.

Martyr dedit Sponso rosas, Deditque virgo lilia.

As martyr, Barbara offered roses to the Bridegroom; as virgin, she gave him lilies.

— Santeul, Hymn of St. Barbara.

Usuard and Ado, in their Martyrologies, say that St. Barbara was from Tuscany; Metaphrastes, on the contrary, and Mombritius write that she was from Heliopolis; but it is more probable, according to Baronius, that her country was Nicomedia. Her father was a man of rank named Dioscorus, who was much given to the worship of idols.

Seeing that his daughter, now come to adolescence, was of very remarkable beauty, and understanding the dangers to which graces without equal joined to an immense fortune would soon expose her, he conceived the idea of shutting her up in an inaccessible stronghold. The famous tower was far from resembling a prison; it could rather be regarded as a magnificent palace, remarkable for its height and for the number and sumptuousness of its apartments, protected at the same time by enclosing walls like ramparts. The young virgin was soon brought into it, and no one could enter except her servants and her teachers. Dioscorus, in thus sequestering her, wished at the same time to make her solitude pleasant; to this end he had a garden laid out at the foot of the building, full of the most varied delights, where Barbara could take her recreation and breathe pure air; and, as he was the most superstitious of men, numerous statues of the false gods had been placed by his orders before the eyes of the innocent captive, in the hope that they would gradually become the object of her veneration and worship.

Her father, happy to find in her fine aptitudes for study, hastened to cultivate them. He entrusted her to the ablest masters, who made her study the poets, the orators and even the philosophers. The application of the young pupil, the fruit of her ardent desire to learn, and her extreme facility in overcoming the most serious difficulties, won her the greatest success. Her penetrating mind was struck by all the absurdity in the teachings of paganism about a plurality of gods, born of one another and slaves of the most shameful passions; and at the same time, like the bee that knows how to draw from the bitterest and most poisonous flowers the sweet juice of which it makes its honey, she discovered among these gross errors of polytheism the fundamental truths that the primitive traditions had preserved in them, and, thus separating pure gold from a base alloy, she rose by degrees to the notion of one sovereign God. These first rays of truth, spread in her soul and made fruitful by the gentle influence of grace, left there the liveliest and deepest impression.

One day, inspired by the ardour of her zeal for the true God, whom she saw unknown to the persons dearest to her, she said to her father: “What do these figures of men in front of us mean, father?” — “What are you thinking of, my daughter?” Dioscorus answered at once; “they are the figures of our gods, whom we must all adore.” — “But were they not once men?” Barbara went on. — “Yes, certainly,” the father replied; “but they are gods today, and one cannot doubt it without crime.”

The young girl, whom God had endowed beforehand with a wisdom far beyond her age, became, by the good use of the Lord’s graces, ever more worthy of the gifts of faith, ever more able to believe and adore the great mysteries that religion teaches. God, continuing to surround her with the care of his Providence, arranged for her the favour of coming into contact with Origen, the first of the Christian doctors of his time. Among her servants she found one to whom she could communicate her design and entrust her delicate commission. Her faithful messenger carried to Origen, on her behalf, a letter in which the dispositions of her soul and the ardour of her holy desires were set out. Origen, full of joy at the news brought to him, prostrated himself face to the ground, praising and blessing the Lord, who by his grace worked such wonders and never ceased to make the light of truth shine amid the thickest darkness of paganism; and this act of mercy served him to

strengthen the Christians more and more in the faith and to revive their confidence and fervour. After giving himself up to the feelings of gratitude and piety that filled his soul, the zealous doctor wrote to her, and, choosing one of his most learned disciples, named Valentinian, sent him off to Nicomedia with our neophyte's envoy. Barbara found the means of bringing Valentinian into the tower, and she received him with the greatest respect, as if he had been a messenger come down from heaven. Valentinian carried out his holy mission with ardour, and by long and frequent instructions on the mysteries of the Holy Trinity, the Incarnation and the Redemption, on the divine law and the sacraments, and on our eternal destinies, he supplied all that Origen had not been able to put into his letter. Good seed cast on well-prepared ground yields abundant fruit. So the word of God, which Barbara had the happiness to hear, was for her mind and heart a source of vivid light and excellent sentiments. She began to conceive a deep contempt for the passing and frivolous goods of this world and to sigh for the joys of eternity. Baptism, the first and most necessary of all the sacraments, became the object of her most ardent desires; her wishes were soon granted.

Some authors say that this sacrament was conferred on her by Valentinian, Origen's envoy, with nothing happening outside the ordinary ways of Providence. According to others, whose authority is much greater, Barbara was baptised amid wholly miraculous circumstances, as we shall see.

Being one day at prayer, prostrate on the ground in one of the lower rooms of her dwelling, and moved no doubt by a divine inspiration, she cried out: "My most sweet master and sovereign Lord Jesus Christ, who once by Moses your servant drew water from a rock in the desert, open for me in this place a spring of living water and deign to bless it, so that in the name of the holy and undivided Trinity I may receive baptism and be cleansed of all my sins." Suddenly an abundant spring gushed out before her, which, after first filling a large vessel placed there, went on flowing and divided into four parts in the form of a cross. Having prepared by a first wonder the matter of the sacrament she was to receive, God completed his work by a still more striking miracle. St. John the Baptist appeared beside the gushing water, and to reassure the fervent catechumen he said to her: "Peace be with you"; and having told her in a few words the reason for his presence, he crowned her happiness by himself conferring on her a baptism far more efficacious than the one he once gave the Jews in the waters of the Jordan.

The holy Precursor, having performed the functions of this extraordinary ministry, disappeared, leaving the new Christian given up to the transports of her joy and the outpourings of her gratitude. But, as if he had come to prepare the ways of the Saviour of the world in this circumstance too, as soon as he had withdrawn, Jesus Christ himself, under the form of a young man radiant with beauty, favoured St. Barbara with his presence, and, granting her a grace like that received by several other Saints, and in particular St. Catherine, virgin and martyr, he gave her a palm and a gold ring, saying to her: "I come, in the name of my Father, to take you for my bride."

Enlightened by the vivid lights of faith, filled with the grace of baptism, become the bride of Jesus Christ, Barbara will appear to us from now on as wholly transformed in God, drawing her inspiration only from the most perfect maxims of the Gospel. To set an impassable barrier between herself and the world, she renounced every earthly establishment and consecrated her body and soul for ever to the love and service of God. It was not indeed for men that God reserved this privileged creature whom he had loaded with his favours; he alone was worthy to gather this so pure lily. Barbara's generous sacrifice being accomplished, and her divine Bridegroom having received her vows, there remained for her only to keep inviolable fidelity to him; this was for her, it is true, a sweet obligation; but how was she to fulfil it in the midst of a family devoted to idolatry? The chaste bride of Jesus Christ could not raise the standard of virginity without lively opposition.

The solitude in which Barbara lived did not make the world forget her; those who aspired to obtain her as wife had long turned looks full of hope towards her dwelling. The more her father took care to hide her from the eyes of men, the more they occupied themselves with her. People loved to talk of her brilliant qualities;

they spoke with admiration of her beauty, her wisdom, the nobility of her family, the great wealth reserved for her. She was therefore soon sought in marriage by the most powerful lords of the province.

Dioscorus, despite his wish not to be parted from his daughter, thought he ought to make overtures to her about her future and speak to her of the advantageous proposals that had been made to him. Barbara was not only unmoved by such communications, but hastened to show the liveliest repugnance for marriage, and in particular for anything that might separate her from her father. She aspired only, she told him with outpouring of heart, to live with him, so as one day to be the support and consolation of his old age. Charmed by these words and touched to tears by his daughter's fine sentiments, the father took good care not to insist; he tenderly embraced his dear child and promised to redouble his attentions to make her stay more and more pleasant.

The young virgin, while sincerely expressing her great affection for her father and her aversion to any marriage alliance, had had to keep silent about the chief motive of her conduct; but the days of peace and quiet she had thus been able to obtain did not last long. The young princes who wished to marry her, and who had seen their first requests fail, pressed again and easily won Dioscorus over. They represented to him the advantages of a rich and powerful alliance, which would make him live again surrounded by the respect and love of his descendants. Barbara, for her part, ever more strengthened by grace in her holy resolutions, rejected, as the first time, every proposal contrary to her vow, and remained wholly deaf to the voice of flesh and blood. Her father still saw in her conduct neither obstinacy nor disobedience; he thought he should use patience and have recourse to persuasion rather than violence, hoping that with time fresh reflection would bring about a change in his daughter's dispositions.

Dioscorus, convinced that a prolonged absence on his part would make an impression on his child's heart, would stir in her the feeling of filial tenderness and make her at last more docile to his wishes, resolved to go away as soon as possible. Before leaving his daughter, he gave orders to have a bath-room luxuriously prepared in the tower, so that nothing should be lacking that could procure her well-being and prove her father's devotion to her. But the young and noble captive was thinking of something very different from her pleasures; she spent the days and part of the nights in prayer and in singing hymns and canticles: "I will bless the Lord at all times," she said with the Prophet, "and his praise shall be always in my mouth." The reading of the holy books was her delight; she loved especially to meditate on the eight beatitudes, that sublime summary of the maxims of the Gospel, which presents eternal happiness to us under so many attractive aspects. By her reading she trained herself in the practice of all the virtues, but above all of unalterable gentleness and unshakeable patience, foreseeing the need she would one day have of them. With this thought she nourished her mind especially on this maxim: "Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake." To be still better prepared for martyrdom, she mortified herself unceasingly, fasting every day and habitually wearing a rough hair shirt. By such means she tamed the rebellions of the flesh, accustomed it to sacrifice, and assured the victory and triumph of the spirit over the senses.

The Lord, for his part, to dispose the young heroine for the fulfilment of her great destiny, loaded her with new graces; the angels consoled and strengthened her by frequent visits; Jesus Christ himself deigned to appear to her again several times. One day he showed himself to her under the features of a wonderful child full of grace, who the next instant appeared all covered with wounds and blood. This sight left in her soul a mixture of sadness and joy and inspired her with the most tender and ardent feelings of love for Jesus. Fired with fresh zeal against idolatry, wholly penetrated with horror for the hideous objects of that infernal worship, she went through the tower, which these images of the false gods, placed everywhere, made like a temple of idols. Armed then with a supernatural strength, she overturns these divinities of wood, stone and metal, disfigures them, breaks them under her feet, and throws these odious objects out of the windows, repeating these words of the psalmist: "Let them that make them become like unto them, and all such as have the folly to trust in them."

Filled with the spirit of God, and considering that the three divine persons are the source of all the lights that enlighten men, she wished to make this truth manifest by an outward symbol visible to all, in the highest part of her dwelling. She had a third window added at the top of the tower to the two that her father had had built there, so that a light of one nature, entering through these three distinct openings equal to one another, might be the image of the unity of the divine light which, through the three adorable persons of the Holy Trinity, enlightens and gives life to all men.

This work finished, Barbara went into the new bath-room and had the sign of the cross engraved on every side by the workmen; she herself, with the thumb of her right hand, pressed this sacred sign on a marble column, which softened under her delicate hand like wax exposed to the sun and so miraculously received the sacred imprint; and at the same time the mark of the Saint's right foot was deeply imprinted on the flagstone of the floor.

Dioscorus's absence could not last long; the thought of his daughter preoccupied him too much for him not to hasten to cut short the time of his absence, despite his intentions to the contrary. Having returned to Nicomedia, then, driven by paternal tenderness, he ran to embrace his child. Fear and hope divided his anxious mind by turns: he longed to come out of this painful uncertainty. So, after the first outpourings of his heart, he pressed Barbara to give him a definite answer to the proposals that his absence had left her time to ponder and weigh, because the moment had come to decide between the various suitors who were impatiently awaiting her decision, and he absolutely wished her to accept one of them without further delay.

While her father was speaking, the young virgin, troubled, lowered her head. The flush on her brow and the sadness of her face showed clearly how painful this speech was to her heart. Breaking silence at last, she declared that, being already united to a heavenly and wholly divine Bridegroom, she would never abandon him to accept an earthly and mortal husband, and that she was ready to bear the greatest evils and even death rather than break her word and betray her vows.

At this firm and courageous language Dioscorus stood dumbfounded, as if struck by lightning; he does not know whether to believe his ears or whether he is the plaything of a cruel dream; yet he restrains the first movements of his anger, not daring to provoke explanations that would reveal to him the mystery whose existence he is beginning to suspect. He has recourse to threats and promises, and uses by turns what is most seductive in the one and most terrible in the other. But, seeing that all his pleas are useless against Barbara's unshakeable resolve, he withdraws with rage in his heart.

It was quite another thing when, going through the whole building, he saw everywhere the idols overturned, broken and destroyed, and on all sides the cross, which he abhorred, engraved on the walls and columns of the tower. He questions, he multiplies his questions, and hears only this answer: "that everything was done by Barbara's order." Transported with fury, he retraces his steps and, with a feigned appearance of calm, orders his daughter to explain her conduct. The young and fervent Christian was trembling all over with emotion, but also all on fire with zeal for the glory of her divine Bridegroom and for the salvation of her beloved father's soul. Hoping that God had at last arranged the occasion she had long awaited, she declared herself a Christian with courageous frankness, and strove to show the vanity of the worship of idols and to establish the truth of the religion she had just embraced.

"How," she said respectfully to her father, "how can you regard as gods statues of gold and silver, of wood and stone, these vain idols that have eyes and see not, ears and hear not, feet and cannot walk? How can you adore as divinities images of mortal men whose lives were stained by so many crimes, and whose examples you would not let me imitate? Ah, my dear father, renounce all these shameful superstitions, and, like me, leave the darkness of idolatry and open your eyes to the true light; acknowledge the true God; render him the tribute of adoration that belongs to him alone; pay homage to the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, three distinct persons who are but one God. It is this mystery that I wished to represent, though very imperfectly,

by having a third window added to the other two in the upper part of the tower; I wished to make it understood that, as through these three windows one and the same light of the sun comes into the building, so the three persons of the Holy Trinity are the single source of the true light which enlightens every man that comes into this world. The Son of God, the second person of this adorable Trinity, became man to deliver us by his death from sin and its terrible consequences and to save us. It is to him that I have consecrated my virginity; he is called Jesus Christ, and I am a Christian for ever."

These words, which Dioscorus had the strength not to interrupt, made known to him the full extent of the supposed misfortune he dreaded. Barbara had just declared it: she was a Christian. Not knowing what course to take, he fell into a dejection deeper than the first time, when he had had only simple signs of the young virgin's change. Still ruled by his extreme tenderness for an only daughter, the sole heir of his titles and great wealth, he paints for her the most frightening picture of all that he and all his kin would have to fear from an emperor who was a relentless enemy of Christianity, if he came to learn that it was practised even in Dioscorus's house; and he accompanies his words with tears and entreaties. But all is useless: tears, entreaties, promises, threats, human considerations — nothing can shake the intrepid heroine. Then, like a torrent whose impetuous waters have long been held back and which, at last breaking its dykes, carries desolation and death everywhere, Dioscorus's fury knows no more bounds. Forgetting that he is a father, he listens only to his despair and rage, which at once turn him into a cruel tyrant. He seizes his sword to run his daughter through with it, and swears by all the gods that he will be her executioner. Barbara burned with the desire to shed her blood for Jesus Christ; but, frightened at the thought of seeing her father defile himself with an enormous crime if she were slain by his own hand, she begged the Lord to come to her help and deliver her from this pressing danger. Her prayers were promptly granted.

While she was fleeing before her father, a new miracle made him lose sight of her at the moment he was about to catch her. A rock, which she could not get over, split open to let her through and at once returned to its former position; at the same moment Barbara was carried as by a violent wind to the top of the mountain, where a deep cave, hidden by thick bushes, served her as a refuge. These so striking marks of divine protection for the poor fugitive should have calmed the persecutor's wrath and brought him back to himself. But, like a wild beast thirsting for blood and slaughter, he listens only to his fury and lets himself be carried away by the thirst for vengeance that devours him. Seeking his victim on all sides, he goes along every path and searches every hiding place. Overcome with weariness, exhausted by the violence of his passion, he was at last about to withdraw, despairing for the moment of seizing his prey, when he caught sight of two young shepherds. He runs up at once, presses them with questions and frightens them with threats, until one of the two, trembling, pointed with his finger to the place where the Saint was hiding.

At this sign Dioscorus rallies his strength and rushes to the cave where his daughter has taken refuge. She, hearing him come, leaves her retreat and goes out to meet him full of courage and dignity, imitating the divine Master who in the Garden of Olives went out to meet his enemies. The sight of this innocent child throwing herself at his knees, far from appeasing him, seemed to redouble his anger; like a wild beast he seizes his prey, rains blows on her, tramples her underfoot, drags her by the hair along the mountain paths among the stones and thorns, and so brings her back half dead to his house; there he throws her into a dark dungeon, loaded with heavy chains that bind her tightly.

Yet the tender victim, amid this cruel treatment, uttered not a complaint and kept an admirable firmness. She thought herself happy, after the example of St. Paul and the Apostles, to be a prisoner for the cause of God. Her divine Bridegroom did not forsake her in her distress; he sent her an angel to console her, relieve her and revive her exhausted strength: "Fear not, Christian virgin," he said to her; "God will always be with you, to protect you and sustain you in your combats." She herself implored the help of heaven for her final struggles, and repeated with confidence these words of the Prophet: "Lord, my soul hath cleaved unto thee; let thine almighty hand be my support."

St. Barbara has already taken the first steps in the bloody arena of the martyrs; she will walk in it for two days more, as she desired, so as to pay homage, by three days of combat, to the three persons of the Holy Trinity, the constant object of her tender devotion. Dioscorus will go on behaving towards her as an unnatural and barbarous father. Had he followed only his own inclinations, he would himself have promptly taken her life; but he feared, on the one hand, making himself odious to his fellow citizens, appearing to encroach on the rights of the emperor's representative and angering him if he acted without his consent; on the other hand, he was anxious to show before all his attachment to the gods of the empire. Guided by these various motives, he hastens to go to the governor Marcian, and, summing up in a few words his grievances against the young virgin, he accuses her of having outraged the gods and abandoned their worship to embrace a religion proscribed by the decrees of the princes; at the same time he asks that an officer of justice come and seize the accused to bring her before the judges, and that she be treated with all the rigour of the edicts issued by the emperors against the followers of Christ.

The Saint soon found herself in the hands of the officers of her new persecutor. Raising her mind to God to implore his help, she said: "Lord, be with me, do not forsake me; help me to overcome my enemies, who are also yours; for it is because of you that the wicked pursue me; clothe me with a divine armour, so that nothing may triumph over my weakness. If I come out of the combat victorious, all the glory will be yours, and the unbelievers themselves will be forced to acknowledge your power and pay it homage."

Barbara came before the governor bound like a criminal and all bruised from the blows she had received the day before. When Marcian saw this young girl, whose modesty and gentleness equalled her beauty, he was touched with compassion: far from treating her with extreme rigour, as he had agreed with Dioscorus, he ordered her bonds removed, blamed the severity that had been used towards her, and neglected nothing to win her by gentleness. "How," he said to her, "could you let yourself be seduced by the vile sect of the Christians — you, the daughter of so powerful a lord? Why sadden the old age of your father, who had so tender and lively an affection for you? Do you not see that by persisting in your error you will deprive yourself of all the advantages that your noble birth and rare merit would procure you? Be wiser; renounce your vain superstitions, and hasten to sacrifice to the gods to avoid a death as shameful as it is cruel." The intrepid Christian answered: "I offer every day a sacrifice of praise to my God, creator of heaven and earth and of all they contain. Your gods are only vain images, works of men's hands; under their name you adore demons, or men dishonoured by every kind of vice. As for the goods you speak of, I make no more account of them than of the mud trodden underfoot. I desire and value only the true and eternal goods promised me by Jesus Christ, my Lord and my God."

These noble and courageous words irritated the governor all the more because he saw his advances thus scorned and rejected by a young girl. From then on, keeping no more restraint, he went to such excesses against the generous Christian as hell alone could inspire, and whose account one cannot hear without being seized with horror. He had her stripped of her clothes and so cruelly scourged that the blood, flowing in streams, ran over the pavement; then he ordered the many wounds with which the rods had covered her body to be torn with iron hooks. The pagans themselves could not hold back their tears, and loudly expressed the compassion the frightful tortures of the young victim inspired in them.

St. Barbara alone, as if rapt out of herself, seemed insensible to all the torments. She did not cease to show her contempt for the idols and to sing the praises of the God of the Christians. She cried out: "Blessed be the Lord, who has heard my prayer and has not turned his mercy from me! Here is the day I was awaiting, that I called for with my most ardent wishes, and which is far more pleasing to me than all the feasts of the world!"

The governor, made more furious by the young athlete's invincible courage, ordered her to be hung up in the air, feet upward; her head to be struck with iron hammers until the blood came out on all sides; and, after a thick layer of salt had been put on her wounds and a rough garment of horsehair placed on her flesh, that she be rolled, all bruised, over fragments of broken pots, and finally thrown into a narrow prison with fetters on

her feet, so that she could not take a moment's rest. He thought he would thus weaken her courage. But the Saint, joyful and triumphant, went on despising the torments and rejoicing at being judged worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus Christ. She was occupied with pious thoughts and strengthening herself by prayer in her generous dispositions, when she saw herself surrounded, in the middle of the night, by a brilliant light. The Saviour himself was appearing to her for the third time, and came to give her fresh courage and new strength, to prepare her for the last combats she would still have to sustain.

A lady named Juliana, having witnessed our Saint's supernatural courage, understood that God alone could have inspired and sustained it, and that consequently the religion for which people were ready to fight so generously was divine. Wholly penetrated with these thoughts, she hastened to declare openly that she belonged to Jesus Christ and wished to live and die a Christian. Thus suddenly fired with the desire of martyrdom, she was associated with the last sufferings and the triumph of St. Barbara.

The very next day Barbara, taken out of her prison, was brought again before Marcian's tribunal; but what was the astonishment of this cruel man when he saw her perfectly healed of the wounds with which he had torn her the day before! Not wishing to bear witness to God and to the truth, he had the effrontery to attribute this wonder to his chimerical divinities. "See," he said to the victim, "what care our gods take of you, and how they have rescued you from the sad state to which you were reduced. Be grateful to them, then, and, touched by so great a benefit, do not refuse them your adoration any longer." Barbara, indignant at this sacrilegious deceit, in a grave and solemn tone of voice answered without hesitation: "How are you senseless enough to dare speak so? What! you attribute my healing to your vain idols, which could not defend themselves when my weak hands burned them and threw them shamefully out of my dwelling? No, no, it is not your chimerical gods who have worked the wonder of goodness you speak of; it is Jesus Christ, my Lord and my God, who came to the help of his humble servant and healed my wounds. It is he whose almighty power will raise me up again when you have put me to death; so I sacrifice myself willingly now for love of him, because I know that he will make me live eternally happy with him in heaven."

This admirable answer brought Marcian's fury to its height. To the torments of the day before, renewed with greater relentlessness, he had others added still more terrible. So, after a hail of blows has once more, as it were, broken the body of St. Barbara, after the iron hooks have a second time torn open her bleeding wounds and run them into one another, she is stretched on a rack. Her sides are burned with blazing torches, and plates of iron reddened in the fire are applied all over her body. The heroine's intrepidity seemed to grow in proportion as her torments increased. She drew this supernatural strength from her union with God and from her fervent prayers. "Lord," she said, "I can do nothing of myself, but I can do all things in you; turn not your adorable face from me; take not your holy Spirit from me." She also commended to God Juliana, the companion of her martyrdom, consoled her and urged her to persevere to the end.

One might have thought that the barbarous governor, however inventive his mind in the matter of torments, was incapable of finding new ones to torture his victim, and that he had exhausted against her all the torments the malice of his heart could suggest to him; but the devil, the enemy of God and of men, who was a murderer from the beginning, has taken possession of his soul; he inspires him and drives him to new and inconceivable excesses of cruelty. The order is therefore given to tear off the young virgin's breasts with burning pincers, and in this frightful state to lead her naked through the streets and squares of the city, striking her unceasingly on her raw wounds, and finally to cut off her head.

On hearing this infernal sentence pronounced, Barbara was pierced with deep grief; the atrocious cruelties inflicted on her poor body were nothing to her in comparison with what her modesty would have to suffer from the execution of her tormentor's last orders. So it was with a kind of joy that she offered her chaste breasts to the burning pincers that were to disfigure her and make her body an object of horror; likewise she felt real satisfaction at the thought that soon, all covered with blood from the rods that would tear her miraculously healed flesh, she would be unrecognisable. Yet she prayed ardently; she asked her divine

Bridegroom to guard the honour of his bride and not to allow her to be exposed thus to public derision: “Lord,” she said, “you who cover the sky with clouds and wrap the earth in impenetrable darkness, who give the flowers of the field their magnificent array, come to my help in this critical moment. In the name of your infinite goodness, veil the body of your servant, so that it may not be exposed to the shameless gaze of the unbelievers. Deliver me from the criminal and shameful mockery of this brazen crowd that surrounds me.”

The Lord, who had until then led the modest virgin as it were by the hand, hastened to grant her ardent prayer and give her striking help in this pressing need. After healing all her wounds a second time, he surrounded her with such splendour that she seemed clothed with a long robe and wrapped in a vast cloak, which not only hid her from the greedy gaze of the pagans but also dazzled the eyes of her guards. At the sight of so unexpected a miracle Marcian was struck with stupefaction. Forced to own himself beaten, he utters cries of rage and despair mingled with broken and incoherent words. He pronounces the names of sorceress, seductress, enchantress, which are repeated by the most hardened of those around him. Fearing to cause wonders to multiply whose eloquent meaning might detach a great number of people from paganism, as often happened in such circumstances, he decided to make a quick end, and ordered the executioner to cut off the head of this indomitable virgin without further delay.

St. Barbara could hear nothing more agreeable. Death, so dreaded by the wicked, was the object of all her desires. It was going to put an end to her cruel trials and bring her into possession of the immortal crown of virgins and the palm of martyrs; it was at last going to unite her for ever with her heavenly Bridegroom.

St. Barbara’s last hour had come; the sentence of death had been pronounced; there remained only to carry it out. But who would believe it? It is her father who will give her the death blow. After being present at all his daughter’s torments and asking that she be treated with the greatest rigour, after applauding all the acts of barbarity committed against her, her father himself, the fanatical Dioscorus, wishes to be her last executioner. His request makes all who hear it recoil in horror, and yet it is granted. The governor orders Barbara to be handed over to him at once, and without losing time the wretch proceeds to carry out his horrible design. He seizes the innocent victim, drags her out of the city escorted by a following worthy of him, and leads her up a neighbouring mountain. Our Saint, far from offering the least resistance, walks with a firm and assured step, joy in her heart, like an athlete who, having fought well, is going to receive the palm of victory. She unites her sacrifice with that of Jesus Christ, who was also led out of the city and climbed a mountain to consummate there, on the cross, the work of our redemption.

Having reached the top of the mountain, she knelt down to prepare to receive the fatal blow; and, understanding from her own case how necessary the help of the sacraments is in order to appear before the sovereign Judge, and how painful it is to be deprived of them, she asked, for all who should honour her martyrdom, the grace of receiving the divine Viaticum at the hour of death with holy dispositions. “Lord Jesus,” she said, “infinite goodness, you who are the solid foundation of the hope and salvation of those who believe in you, grant, I pray you, that all who invoke you in remembrance of my sufferings and death may feel the effects of your mercy in all circumstances, and above all that at the end of their life they may receive the last sacraments with a truly contrite and humbled heart and be delivered from the snares of the devil. Amen.” A heavenly voice at once replied: “Come, beloved of the Lord; come and enjoy eternal rest in the bosom of your heavenly Father; come and receive the crown you have merited; the gate of heaven is open to you. All that you have asked shall be granted you.”

These words filled the holy martyr with consolation. All present heard them distinctly, and several of them, touched to the depths of their souls, proclaimed the divinity of Jesus Christ and were converted. As for Dioscorus, deaf to every voice but that of his hatred of Christianity and his rage against his innocent daughter, he struck her with his axe so violently that with a single blow he sent her head rolling in the dust. This gentle victim had turned towards him, bowing respectfully and commending herself to God with these words: “Lord, into your hands I commit my soul.” This last prayer was dying on her lips when the death

blow separated her beautiful soul from her virginal body, and, while her blood flowed on the ground, the angels, who were awaiting her deliverance, received her soul and carried it in triumph to heaven. This glorious martyrdom was consummated, as we have seen, in the year 235 of the Christian era, on 4 December, the day on which the Church honours its memory.

If the death of the Saints is precious in the eyes of God, that of the wicked can only be frightful; while the first puts the Saints in possession of eternal life, the second delivers the ungodly to the avenging blows of God's justice. The criminal Dioscorus, whose name will be for ever odious, had terrible experience of this. Heaven, which had applauded St. Barbara's generous combats and had opened to receive her with honour into the abode of rest and peace, shuddered with horror at the sight of the parricide proud of his crime and all covered with his child's blood. The wrath of God could not bear him any longer on the earth. He was coming down the mountain, holding in his hands the bloodstained axe, the instrument of his last crime, extolling his gods, cursing the Christian name and congratulating himself on the murder he had just committed. Suddenly, in a cloudless sky and while the sun was shining in the vault of the firmament, a flash of lightning gleams with a dismal fire, and while a violent thunderclap shakes the mountain and spreads terror everywhere, the lightning strikes the guilty man, consumes him in an instant, and in a black whirlwind so scatters his impure ashes that no trace of them remains. The governor Marcian, who had so cruelly associated himself with the same crime, was involved in the same punishment. The fire of heaven did justice on him likewise.

St. Barbara is represented: (1) with cannons, powder barrels, fuses, bombs and grenades near her — we shall say why in a moment; (2) carrying a ciborium, or a chalice surmounted by the host, as if she were bringing or guaranteeing the holy Viaticum to those who implore her. According to her legend, the Saint, at the moment of her last torment, had asked God precisely this favour for those who should commend themselves to her, and a heavenly voice had guaranteed her the effect of her prayer; (3) leaning against a tower pierced with three windows — we have said why; (4) with her father struck down by lightning at her feet.

St. Barbara is invoked chiefly against lightning and sudden death (in allusion to her father's); hence she is the natural patroness of all craftsmen whose trade exposes them to sudden death: firework-makers, artillerymen, founders, armourers, roofers, carpenters, masons, miners. The tennis-court keepers and racket-makers also honoured St. Barbara as their patroness, no doubt because the game of tennis is risky enough for human life when it is played vigorously. A pun, of which there are a fair number in our popular devotions, has made St. Barbara the patroness of brush-makers, broom-makers and hatters (because brushes and hats are made with various kinds of hair, which naturally leads to the idea of a *barbe*, a beard).

VENERATION AND RELICS.

The body and head of the glorious Martyr were embalmed by a pious Christian named Valentinian, then buried with respect in a place called Gélasse, twelve miles from Euchaita, a town near Nicomedia, or, according to others, at Heliopolis. Numerous miracles revealed the existence of this treasure, and countless sick people obtained such striking cures there that the place of her burial acquired very great celebrity from the seventh century. So many wonders led the people to enrich Nicomedia with her relics. They placed them in a shrine, which they covered with plates of gold and silver and precious stones. They hung it from the vaults of the temple with chains to which were attached lamps always alight, in which precious spices burned. The Saint's body was translated, according to some, from Nicomedia to Rome and from Rome to Piacenza. According to others, whose opinion is much more probable and better supported, the translation of her relics took place from Nicomedia to Constantinople and from Constantinople to Venice.

St. Barbara is the patroness of the Metz country. Her cult probably goes back to the time of the Crusades and the expeditions of the Venetians, Genoese and Pisans, who, by bringing a great number of bodies of Saints from the East, made their cult famous in our regions. For several centuries St. Barbara had a famous sanctuary a short distance from Metz, in the village that still bears her name today. Numerous bands of

pilgrims flocked there every year, especially during the feasts of Pentecost. The people of Metz invoked her in all the calamities that afflicted the city. The lords and dukes of Lorraine also frequently visited her sanctuary at the beginning or end of some great undertaking. These pilgrimages were carried out with all ducal pomp; the majesty of the princes of Lorraine was displayed in all its splendour to give more honour to the patroness of the Metz country; Metz-la-Riche received them magnificently; the Metz nobility escorted them, gave them presents and did them the honours of their opulent city. In 1449 John of Calabria, son of good King René, governor for his father of the duchies of Bar and Lorraine, on returning from his brilliant campaign in Normandy, where he had fought under the eyes of Charles VII, came to Sainte-Barbe with a great company of lords, knights, gentlemen and squires. He offered a candle of twenty pounds of wax and a gold crown. In 1472 Nicholas I, duke of Lorraine, on returning from his journey to Flanders, passed through Sainte-Barbe with his troops and wished to hear Mass there. Three years later the young duke René II came there to invoke the help of the illustrious patroness against Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy, who was threatening his States. In 1494 Philippa of Guelders, his pious wife, wishing to fulfil a vow, came there with a train of two hundred persons, lords and ladies of the highest houses of Lorraine. On 23 February 1515 Claude de Guise, son of René II and Philippa of Guelders, and father of the illustrious François de Guise, the defender of Metz, went to Sainte-Barbe before leaving for Italy, where he was to accompany Francis I with the flower of the Lorraine nobility. He took part in the battle of Marignano at the head of the Landsknechts. After the battle he was found under a heap of dead, his body covered with twenty-two wounds and trampled by the horses' hooves. Amid so pressing a danger the young hero promised God, if He delivered him, to make the pilgrimage of Sainte-Barbe and of Saint-Nicolas-de-Port on foot and armed as on the day of the battle, and to offer a wax candle of his own weight. Claude de Guise arrived at Metz on 8 May 1519, and the next day he was escorted to Sainte-Barbe by several lords of the city. He also offered his statue in wood, life-size. However, the church of Sainte-Barbe was far from corresponding to the fame of the place and the crowds of pilgrims. Claude Baudoche, lord of the place and last gentleman of that illustrious and wealthy family which had given so many magistrates to the Republic, conceived the plan of raising to the patroness of the Metz country a sanctuary more worthy of her and of the people's homage. In 1516 the foundations of the new church were laid; the plans were taken from the church of the Grands-Carmes, the work of Pierre Perrat, the great Metz architect. Nothing was spared to make it one of the most magnificent sanctuaries of the country. Valentin Busch, who adorned Metz cathedral with such sumptuous windows, was commissioned at the same time to make those of Sainte-Barbe. While the church was being built it was visited in 1523 by the good duke Antoine of Lorraine and the duchess Renée de Bourbon, sister of the Constable of France. Antoine was accompanied by his young brother François, count of Lambesc, barely seventeen years old, who was to fall a few months later at the battle of Pavia. The illustrious pilgrims were well received by the lords of the city. After hearing Mass, the duke and duchess made rich offerings to Sainte-Barbe. The cathedral chapter, which had acquired the sanctuary on the death of Claude Baudoche, offered it to the abbey of Saint-Arnould, which took possession of it in 1634 and founded a priory there that lasted until 1790. The church, spared by the revolutions, fell in 1823 under the pick of the jobbing restorers, who replaced it with one of their barn-churches. The bell tower is the only remnant of that magnificent church. Some fragments of the windows were saved from the barbarous ignorance of the iconoclasts of the century and taken to the cathedral to be used in restoring its sumptuous stained glass.

To compose this biography we have used the Histoire de sainte Barbe *by the abbé Villemot, and local notes kindly supplied by the abbé Noël, of the clergy of Metz.*

CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH (216)

Clement of Alexandria has been given the title of Saint; but this title has long been disputed. It was formerly in the Roman Martyrology, into which it had passed from that of Usuard; but it has been removed from it, and Benedict XIV, in his letter to John V, king of Portugal, justifies this removal. The abbé Bergier, who

devoted a learned article to this doctor of the Church in his *Dictionnaire de Théologie*, calls him only Clement of Alexandria.

Titus Flavius Clemens, whom some authors make an Athenian by birth, began his studies in Greece; he continued them in Italy, Asia Minor, Assyria and Palestine, and completed them in Egypt. An incredible desire to learn thus made him travel through the different parts of the world. Among others he had five famous masters: one in Greece, who was of the Ionian sect, two in Calabria, and two in the East. Although he was very well versed in the philosophy of Plato, he gave preference to the principles of the Stoics; but he would not hold to any particular sect; he chose what was best wherever he found it. One of the masters he had in Palestine was of Jewish extraction; it even appears that he was a Christian. The last he heard, and whom he himself places above all the others, was the celebrated Pantaenus, who was at the head of the catechetical school of Alexandria.

Clement, whose studies had the search for truth as their object, discovered the errors of idolatry and saw the light of faith shine before his eyes. However well versed he was in the various branches of profane literature, he saw that he lacked the most essential of all knowledge, that on which man's happiness depends and which can be found only in the true religion. He therefore set himself to study theology, a science which, according to him, has no other aim than a life perfected by all the virtues. He tells us that some of the immediate successors of the Apostles, who had kept the true tradition of the blessed doctrine taught by St. Peter, St. James, St. John and St. Paul, were still living in his time. "They sow," he said, "in our hearts the divine seed which they received from the Apostles, their predecessors."

Pantaenus having been sent to the Indies by Bishop Demetrius in 189, Clement succeeded him in the post of catechist of Alexandria, which he filled with great success. Among his chief disciples are counted Origen and St. Alexander, later bishop of Jerusalem and martyr. His method was first to teach those who came to hear him what was good in pagan philosophy, so as to lead them by degrees to the knowledge of Christianity. To make them love it and inspire them with the desire to embrace it, he insisted on certain points of morality which natural reason discovers and which are found scattered in the writings of the philosophers. He was ordained priest towards the beginning of the reign of Severus, for Eusebius gives him this title in 195.

The persecution stirred up by that emperor in 202 forced him to abandon his school. He withdrew into Cappadocia. We see him at Jerusalem a little later, and we learn from a letter of St. Alexander, bishop of that city, that he preached there with much zeal and success. From Jerusalem he went to Antioch. In all the places through which he passed he encouraged the disciples of Jesus Christ and tried to increase their number. From Antioch he returned to Alexandria.

The ancients gave great praise to his virtue and learning, and this praise is well justified by what remains of his writings. We shall describe them in a few words.

His *Exhortation to the Gentiles* aims at making the absurdity of idolatry felt; and this absurdity becomes singularly striking through the historical summary of pagan mythology that the author gives. Clement has put into this work several curious discoveries he had made on his travels, which he uses to strengthen his arguments and which pleasantly hold the reader's attention.

He then composed his *Stromata*, or tapestries, which are only a collection of miscellanies divided into eight books, with little order. One cannot, says the author himself, compare this work to a garden where the trees and plants are arranged symmetrically; it rather resembles a mass of wild trees, grown of themselves and scattered here and there. He adds that he had made it to serve him as a storehouse in his old age, when his memory should begin to fail him. He has been accused of following the doctrines of the ancient philosophers too closely and of not always expressing himself with sufficient exactness. But one cannot in general explain favourably the passages that seem reprehensible. If the style of this work is a little hard, one is compensated by the erudition that reigns in it and by the abundance and variety of the materials it contains. Clement treats

in it soundly various questions of morality, metaphysics, the heresies that had appeared up to then, paganism and theology. In the sixth book he draws the character of the true Christian, to whom he gives the name of gnostic. He wants him to command his passions, keep exactly the rules of temperance, and grant his body only what it needs to sustain it. The true gnostic, he adds, must love God above all things, and creatures for God's sake; nothing must be able to separate him from the love of God. He bears all the accidents of this life with patience and is occupied only with the means of uniting himself to the sovereign good: he never lets himself be carried away by anger; he prays continually to obtain the remission of his sins, with the grace to sin no more in future and to practise virtue.

In the seventh book Clement speaks of the virtue of his gnostic. "He applies himself with all his strength," he says, "to honour God and love him, to listen to and imitate his Word who became man for our salvation; he is gentle, upright, affable, patient, charitable, sincere, faithful, temperate; he despises the goods of this world and is disposed to suffer everything for Jesus Christ; he does nothing out of ostentation, and his actions have no other motive than the love of justice and of God's goodness. In short, he is a man wholly holy and wholly divine. The gnostic prays in every place, but chiefly in secret and in the depth of his heart; he prays unceasingly — in the morning on rising, at noon, on a journey, when he rests — seeking in everything to glorify God, after the example of the Seraphim spoken of in Isaiah." He distinguishes the true Gnostics from the heretics known by that name, who were then troubling the Church with their abominable doctrine of an imaginary perfection. To guard the faithful against the errors and extravagances of the false mystics, he explains the nature and extent of each theological virtue, and shows above all in what pure love consists. He teaches not to confuse resignation with indifference; he treats of activity, transformation and union, but in such a way as to avoid extremes and fix the limits that separate true mysticism from the illusions of fanaticism.

The treatise entitled *Who is the rich man that shall be saved?* is an explanation of the words Jesus Christ addressed to the rich young man spoken of in the Gospel. The author shows in it that it is not necessary, in order to be saved, to renounce riches, provided one makes good use of them. He also treats in it of the love of God and of neighbour, and of penance, whose efficacy he proves by the story of the young robber whom St. John converted.

Clement's *Paedagogus*, divided into three books, is an excellent summary of morality, in which one sees how good Christians lived in those early times. In the first book the author shows that Jesus Christ is the Master, Guide and Shepherd of men, who all need to be taught, and that a Christian's life must be an uninterrupted series of virtuous actions. In the second book are found rules of conduct concerning certain particular duties, such as abstinence, mortification, humility, prayer, almsgiving, and chastity, both in the state of marriage and in that of virginity. According to Clement's teaching, simple food is to be preferred, if only for reasons of health; one meal a day should suffice, two at most — that is, besides supper, a breakfast of dry bread without drink. Against the Encratites he proves that the moderate use of wine is permitted, but he forbids it to the young. He speaks out strongly against luxury in furniture and tableware. He wants people to sleep little, and never by day; to begin the night with prayer, and no longer to be in bed when day appears. He proves against the pagans that all impure actions are crimes even in the eyes of reason. In the third book he treats of modesty and several other virtues. He concludes it by exhorting his readers to listen to the divine lessons of Jesus Christ, whom he thanks for having made him a member of his Church. The prayer he addresses to him is addressed equally to the Father and the Holy Ghost. This work contains excellent maxims for reaching Christian perfection; but it could only be translated by softening certain expressions, out of regard for present-day manners.

Photius observes that Clement's style is florid, elegant and sublime in the *Paedagogus* and the *Exhortation to the Gentiles*, although his diction is not perfectly pure. We have remarked that the style of the *Stromata* is somewhat harder than that of the holy doctor's other works. But in all of them one admires a vast erudition.

St. Jerome calls Clement of Alexandria the most learned of ecclesiastical writers. Theodoret says that he surpassed all others in the extent of his knowledge. St. Alexander of Jerusalem and the ancient authors give great praise to the holiness of his life.

Clement died at Alexandria before the end of the reign of Caracalla, who was assassinated in 217. *Godescard, Lefort edition, Lille.*

ST. ANNO, ARCHBISHOP OF COLOGNE (1075)

Anno, born of a family remarkable for its piety, took up arms in his youth. A pious canon of Bamberg (Bavaria), his uncle, having spoken to him of the vanity of the goods of this world, he renounced them and resolved to consecrate himself to God in the clerical state. He began his studies at Bamberg and made such progress in sacred and profane letters that he was charged with teaching them in the same city. His virtues and learning made him known at the court of the Emperor Henry III, called the Black (1039–1056); that prince summoned him to his person. He was admired for his love of justice and right and for the freedom with which he defended them. He possessed in an eminent degree all the qualities of heart and mind and all the advantages nature gives: a tall stature, an imposing appearance, eloquent and easy speech, a rare endurance of vigils and fasts, a wonderful aptitude for carrying out great and fine undertakings. He was raised to the archiepiscopal see of Cologne after the death of Hermann II. His consecration took place with extraordinary pomp in the year 1055, on 11 March. The tears he shed during the ceremony justified the idea people had of his humility and piety. Henry III having died, the Empress Agnes had him appointed regent and first minister to govern during the minority of Henry IV. This young prince, corrupted by flatterers and the companions of his debauchery, soon would no longer endure the holy archbishop's remonstrances; he even took the government of the State from him. But the injustices and exactions of those in whom he placed his confidence aroused general discontent; Anno was recalled and resumed the administration of affairs.

The care of the State did not make him forget his duties as bishop. He constantly sought at the foot of the altars the help and consolation he needed; he macerated his body by continual fasting; most of the time he spent the night in prayer; he usually visited the churches barefoot, followed by a few pious companions, sometimes only by a child; a rough hair shirt chastised his flesh; his charity towards the poor was extreme; every day he received twenty-four poor people in his house, washed and kissed their feet and served them food. Besides, he built a hospital at Cologne. The poor besieged the gates of his palace in crowds and ran after him when he went out. He helped the children of the poor with particular affection, and redoubled his alms to them from Christmas to the Purification. He gave away all he had, not wishing death, when it came, to find him possessed of any wealth. It turned out as he had wished, for, except for his pastoral ring and the rest of the furniture indispensable to a bishop, he found himself reduced to not having a penny, and in his last illness the charity of strangers had to come to his help.

He showed a munificence towards churches and religious houses that all those of his diocese felt: here he had buildings put up, there he gave estates, elsewhere annual revenues, furnishings for divine worship, relics of the Saints, and so on. He founded at Cologne two colleges of clerics, one under the title of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the other under that of St. George, martyr. He built the three monasteries of Grafschaft, Saalfeld and Siegburg, which he endowed with both good revenues and excellent rules; he reformed several others. He gave the town of Dortmund (Westphalia) the body of the blessed martyr Reinold. His eloquence was so moving that often, when he preached, the congregation, pierced with compunction, made the church resound with its weeping and sobbing. When he dispensed justice he consulted only equity, and always resisted the unjust claims of the great and powerful. He gave back his holy soul to God on 4 December 1075. His body was laid in the monastery of Siegburg, where it still rests in a precious shrine. His tomb has been made illustrious by miracles.

As founder of churches and monasteries, his usual emblem is a small model of a church that he carries in his hand.

Proper of Cologne.

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[1] We have given the life of St. Peter Chrysologus on 2 December.

[2] Osmund (Osimond, Edimond, Edmund), count of Séez in Normandy, followed William the Conqueror (1027– 1087) to England, and that prince made him earl of Dorset and then high chancellor of England. But dignities, joined to the prince's favour, had no charm for a heart that loved only heavenly goods. He even left the world to embrace the clerical state. His virtues and talents did not allow him to be left in the obscurity he desired: he was drawn from his solitude (1078) to be placed on the see of Salisbury (county of Wilts). All the acts of his episcopate breathe a great zeal for the glory of God. When death had taken him from his dear flock, his body was laid in his church (1099). It was later translated to the new cathedral, and in 1457 it was placed there in the chapel of Our Lady. The fine shrine in which it was enclosed was plundered under the reign of Henry VIII (1509–1547). His bones were left in the same chapel, and they are still there. They are covered by a marble stone whose inscription gives only the year of the holy bishop's death. He was canonised by Calixtus III in 1458. — Godescard.

[3] Maruthas, bishop of Tagrit (today Miafarakin), in Mesopotamia, is one of the most illustrious doctors of the Syrian Church. He left several works in Syriac: (1) a Liturgy, which exists in manuscript at Rome; (2) a Commentary on the Gospels; (3) a great number of hymns and other pieces of verse in honour of the Syrians who suffered martyrdom in Persia at various times — they are found in the Syrian and Maronite missals; (4) a History of the Council of Nicaea, with a Syriac translation of the canons; (5) the Canons of the Council of Seleucia which he held in 410, and which were drawn up by him — they are found in a manuscript of the library of Florence; (6) a History of the Martyrs of Persia. Maruthas was buried in his church of Tagrit; his body was carried to Egypt during the incursions of the Persians and the Arabs. It is still in the monastery of Our Lady in the desert of Scete, inhabited by Syrian monks. The Copts of Egypt honour him on 19 February, the Syrians and Melkites on the 6th of the same month; but he is honoured on 4 December by the Greeks and the Latins. — Rohrbacher and Godescard.

[4] Under the episcopate of Cardinal Charles d'Angennes de Rambouillet (1556–1587), the city of Le Mans had much to suffer from the brigandage of the Huguenots, and the relics of St. Adnette were profaned. — Dom Piolin, *Histoire de l'Église du Mans*.

[5] See the life of St. Peter Chrysologus on 2 December.

5 December

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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Maximian, by sentence of the proconsul Anulinus. St. Augustine praised her in several places of his works. 304. — At Thagara, also in Africa, the holy martyrs Julius, Potamia, Crispinus, Felix, Gratus and seven others. — At Nice, on the Var, St. Bassus, bishop, who, during the persecution of Decius and Valerian, was for the faith of Jesus Christ tormented on the rack by the governor Perennius, burned with red-hot plates, bruised with blows of cudgels, torn with whips armed with iron points; having come out of all this safe and sound, he was pierced with two great nails, and so consummated his glorious martyrdom. 3rd century. — At Pavia, St. Dalmatius, bishop, martyred during the persecution of Maximian. 304. — At Pentima, in the Abruzzi, St. Pelinus, bishop of Brindisi, who, having by his prayers made a temple of Mars fall down under Julian the Apostate, was cruelly beaten by the idolatrous priests and, pierced with eighty-five wounds, attained the crown of martyrdom. About 362. — Also St. Anastasius, martyr, who, from the desire he had to suffer for Jesus Christ, presented himself of his own accord to the persecutors. — At Trier, St. Nicetius, bishop, a man of admirable holiness.[1] About 566. — At Polybotus, in Asia, St. John, bishop, surnamed the

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Martyrology of the Cistercian Order. — The same as above.

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Martyrology of the Order of Discalced Brothers of the Most Holy Trinity. — The same as with the Cistercians.

Martyrology of the Three Orders of St. Francis. — At Waldsee, in the diocese of Constance, Blessed Elisabeth, virgin, of the Third Order of St. Francis, surnamed the Good, who, enriched with heavenly graces and favours, went forth to her Spouse on 25 November. Clement XIII approved the cult that had been paid her from time immemorial. 1420.

Martyrology of the Order of Friars Minor. — The same as above.

Martyrology of the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. — The same as with the Cistercians.

Martyrology of the Order of the Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary. — The same as with the Cistercians.

Martyrology of the Capuchin Minors of St. Francis. — The same as with the Cistercians.

Martyrology of the Order of Discalced Carmelites. — The same as with the Cistercians.

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Among the Friars Preachers, Blessed Moneta of Cremona, confessor, of the Order of St. Dominic. He was a celebrated professor of the University of Bologna who did not like the Friars Preachers and kept his pupils from going to hear their sermons. He had a particular aversion to Blessed Reginald, who was making excellent recruits among the students of the University, and if by chance he saw him from afar in the streets, he avoided meeting him. One day, however, yielding to the pressing entreaties of his friends, he went to hear the fervent Dominican. O wonder! He was subdued by that heavenly word, and that very day he asked for the habit of the Order from St. Dominic, then present at Bologna. From then on his humility and simplicity became admirable, and St. Dominic was so fond of him that he chose to die in his cell and in his arms. Our Blessed rejoined him fourteen years later, rich in virtues and merits. By weeping for the sins of his youth he had lost his sight. He left us a book against the errors of the Albigensians, which was printed in the last century. His tomb has become famous through the many miracles worked there. 1235. — In the former abbey of Aulne, near Thuin, in Belgium (Hainaut), Blessed Werric and Walter, priors of that monastery. 1217.

ST. SABAS OF MUTALASCA, ABBOT IN PALESTINE (531)

Pope: Boniface II. — Emperor of the East: Justinian I.

Discite a me quia mitis sum et humilis corde. Learn of me, because I am meek and humble of heart. — Matt. xi, 29.

St. Sabas came into the world in 439, in the township of Mutalasca, dependent on the metropolitan city of Caesarea in Cappadocia. John, his father, and Sophia, his mother, were no less commendable for their piety than for their nobility. The cross and suffering were his portion from his tenderest years; for his parents, having been obliged to go to Alexandria in Egypt for a long stay, left him in the care of Hermias, his maternal uncle, whose wife, who was choleric and ill-tempered, treated him very badly. The child, no longer able to bear the unbearable harshness of this aunt, left her house and withdrew to Gregory, his father’s brother, where he hoped for more gentleness. And indeed Gregory received him very kindly and showed him nothing but goodwill and tenderness.

This withdrawal, however, caused a great quarrel between his two uncles; and so Sabas, weary of so much trouble, resolved to abandon the world entirely, with all its pleasures and riches, and to seek peace at last in a monastery. He chose that of Flaviana, only a league from Mutalasca, where, though he was still only eight years old, he was admitted with extreme joy. His uncles, having afterwards been reconciled, did all they could to take him out of it; but knowing that he who, having put his hand to the plough, looks back, is not fit for the kingdom of God, he remained firm, constant and unshakable in the choice he had made of the religious state.

He applied himself first to overcoming his passions and acquiring the virtues proper to solitaries. One day when he was working in the garden, he was tempted to pick some apples that were perfectly beautiful, and he did in fact pick one; but, reflecting at once that this was a snare the devil had laid to make him fall into intemperance, he reproached himself for this lack of mortification, threw the apple to the ground, trampled it underfoot, and resolved never to eat fruit for the whole of his life — which he carried out with inviolable fidelity. From that time he lived in extreme austerity. He slept only as much as was necessary to sustain his body, worn out with work, and he was always in prayer, because he prayed while working and, apart from

the times set for bodily tasks, always had his hands raised towards heaven. In short, he made such progress in virtue that none of the religious, who numbered seventy, equalled him in humility, patience, obedience, devotion and all the other duties of the evangelical life. It is said that God, wishing one day to make his merit shine forth, allowed him to go into a blazing oven to take out the baker's clothes without his feeling any harm.

After spending ten years in that house of holiness, he felt a great desire to visit the holy places and then to go on into the deserts, to enjoy the sweet conversation of the anchorites who led an angelic life there. Permission having been granted him, he went to Palestine; and, after kissing that land watered with the Saviour's blood, he withdrew to St. Euthymius, whose reputation had spread throughout the East. The holy abbot, finding him still too young to stay in his laura, where he received only religious practised in all the exercises of the monastic life, sent him to the lower monastery, which was governed by Blessed Theoctistus. There he gave excellent proofs of his virtue, which made him the equal of the most accomplished of the Brothers; but he gave a singular one when his parents, having met him in Alexandria and pressed him with every imaginable entreaty to stay with them, he gave them this fine answer: "Do you want me to be a deserter and to leave God after having devoted myself to his service? If those who abandon the service of the kings of the earth are punished so severely, what chastisement should I not deserve if I abandoned that of the King of heaven?" They did not cease to importune him, but he silenced them completely by telling them that, if they went on pressing him further, he would no longer regard them as his parents but as his adversaries. They then yielded to his constancy and offered him twenty pieces of gold for the expenses of his return; he wanted none at all, but at last, to rid himself of their importunity, he took three, which he put into the hands of Theoctistus, his superior, as soon as he reached the monastery, being persuaded that a religious must own nothing of his own.

St. Sabas lived in that house until the age of thirty, after which he felt so moved by the desire of solitude that he begged Longinus, who had succeeded Theoctistus after Martin, to allow him to withdraw into it. The venerable abbot gave him leave, with the consent of St. Euthymius; and then Sabas, thinking he had as yet done nothing, undertook a life so austere and so far above nature that he seemed no longer to have a body but to have become wholly spiritual. A cave was his usual dwelling; he spent five days of the week in it without eating, always applied to prayer, the chanting of the Psalms or the work of his hands; he came out on Saturday to hand over to the officers fifty baskets he had made during the week; and on Sunday, after assisting at the holy Mysteries and the spiritual conference, he went back with as many palm branches as he needed to continue his work on the other days.

When he had led this kind of life for five years, St. Euthymius, who used to call him the young old man because of his extraordinary wisdom, no longer doubting that he was capable of bearing the hardest labours, brought him near to himself and made him live in his laura. Sabas tried to make himself a perfect copy of that great man; but, as Euthymius died shortly afterwards and the monastery fell into laxity, he left it and withdrew near the Jordan, to St. Gerasimus. There he was furiously attacked by the demons, who tried to frighten him with horrible spectres; but he always put them to flight by the sign of the cross, prayer, the recitation of the Psalms and the contempt he showed for their efforts. From there the Spirit of God led him as it were by the hand to the mountain where St. Theodosius the Cenobiarch had lived, and into a cave at the very top. It was very difficult to carry water up to it, the spring being at the bottom and six or seven miles away; but he did it with joy, helping himself with a rope that hung from the top of the cave. For food, too, he had only the herbs that grew round about; but, by the disposition of divine Providence, some barbarians, charmed by his remarkable piety, voluntarily undertook to bring him on certain days bread, cheese and dates, with as much water as he needed.

He was forty-five years old when he began to devote himself to the spiritual direction of the Brothers. Many came to him, and he taught them all the duties of the religious life. He received at first as many as a hundred and fifty, and gave each of them a place to build his cell; so that in a short time he made the largest laura in

Palestine. He also built there a chapel with an altar, which he had blessed; and when a priest visited him, he asked him to celebrate the divine mysteries there; for, as for himself, his humility, his modesty and his profound respect for the infinite greatness of God's majesty long kept him from letting himself be ordained priest. Nor did he want those under his direction to aspire to that dignity, for fear it might become in his monastery a subject of ambition and partiality. Besides, he provided what was necessary for their upkeep, so as to remove every pretext for going into the world to the detriment of silence and retirement, which are so necessary to the maintenance of regular observance.

But as the cockle usually grows among the good grain, some of his disciples were wicked enough to complain to Sallustius, patriarch of Jerusalem, that he was too simple and too rough to govern a community as large and considerable as theirs; above all because, through this simplicity, he would not be a priest and would not allow any of the brothers to be raised to the priesthood. The patriarch, having heard them, put off the matter to the next day and at once sent for the holy abbot, who knew nothing of what was going on; the complainants thought it was to deprive him of his office; but the event showed that it was, on the contrary, to stop their mouths. For as soon as he had come, the patriarch, having assembled all these malcontents, ordained him priest in their presence; then, taking him by the hand, he said to them: "Here is your father and the true superior of your laura. It is God himself who has chosen him, and not I; I have only lent my ministry to the Holy Ghost, and in raising him to the priesthood I have considered your advantage rather than his own." He then took him back to his laura and consecrated its church, enriching it with several very precious relics.

The reputation of this excellent Father of a congregation having spread as far as Armenia, several Armenians came to his desert and begged him to receive them among his disciples. He lodged them in his laura and gave them a little oratory in which to sing the praises of God in their own language on Saturday and Sunday. Every year he went to spend Lent in the depth of the solitude, until Palm Sunday, without seeing or speaking with anyone and even without any food but the adorable Eucharist, which he received twice a week. On one of these journeys, on which he had himself accompanied by one of his disciples named Apapet, he discovered in a cave a holy old man who for thirty-eight years had spoken to no one but had always led an angelic life in sweet converse with God. They talked together of heavenly things; and the old man, who had called Sabas by his name without ever having known him, also gave him his blessing. A few days later he died; and our Saint, on his return, having entered his cave, found him on his knees in the state and posture of a man praying. He went up to him to commend himself to his prayers; but, recognising that he was dead, he buried him with his disciple Agapetus and chanted psalms, according to the custom of the Church, for the repose of his soul.

While he was advancing with such great strides on the road of holiness, his father died at Alexandria; and his mother, moved by the report of his virtues, came to him and brought him a large sum of money from the sale of her goods; then, renouncing all the things of the earth, she placed herself under his direction. She lived some time longer in great holiness and died in the arms of her dear son, in the hope of eternal life. He could not have used better than he did the money she had brought him; for he employed it in building two houses to serve as hospitals: one near his laura, for foreign religious, and the other at Jericho, for travellers. He also had two new monasteries built: one on a hill called Castellion, of which St. Theodosius the Cenobiarch was superior; the other north of his laura, where he set directors of consummate prudence and virtue. In the first he placed only religious of mature age and very exact observers of the Rule. As for beginners, who were still full of the ideas of the world, he put them in the second until they knew the psalter and had passed through all the exercises of the religious life: "For a religious," he said, "must be studious, prudent, sober, moderate, temperate, able to teach others instead of needing to be taught, and such that he knows no less how to rule his mind than how to tame his flesh." When he saw them in this state and wholly detached from earthly things, he brought them into his laura or into that of St. Theodosius; and there, if they were weak in body, he gave

them a cell already built; but if they were strong and robust, he obliged them to build one. As for young boys who wished to leave the world, he lodged them in a separate house situated to the west, of which St. Theodosius also had the care, saying that he had learnt this practice from the ancient Fathers and that it was absolutely necessary to forestall the temptations of the devil.

There was such a union of spirit between these two excellent abbots, Sabas and Theodosius, that they had but one will and the same sentiments; which was why the inhabitants of Jerusalem commonly called them the two apostles, and why the patriarch Sallustius at last gave them the direction of all the monasteries depending on his authority, after being earnestly begged to do so by the abbots and religious of each house. Sabas was made superior general of all the anchorites and all the solitaries, and Theodosius of all the cenobites.

Meanwhile those libertine and jealous religious of whom we have already spoken, growing the more embittered as they saw their blessed Father rise in esteem and increase the number of his cells and disciples, conspired together again and resolved to try every means to discredit him and drive him out of his laura. He was warned of it; but, as he had learnt from Jesus Christ to be meek and humble of heart, far from opposing their design, he preferred to satisfy them by going away and banishing himself: “For,” he said, “one must fight the demons, but give way to men.” So he left his monastery and withdrew towards Scythopolis, into a desert on the banks of the river Gadarar.

There, having entered a cave that served as the lair of a lion of prodigious size, he said his prayer in it and then fell asleep. While he slept, the lion, which had gone out, came back in, and, finding this guest it did not expect, took him gently by his habit, as if to order him to go away and leave the place free. The Saint woke up and, not in the least astonished at the sight of this terrible animal, began to say Matins. The lion, by a strange marvel, withdrew at once and waited until he had finished them, after which it came back and pulled him as before. Then Sabas said to it gently: “This cave is big enough for you and for me, and we can both lodge in it. But if you want to be alone, look for another dwelling; for since I am created in the image of God, it is more just that you give way to me than I to you.” At these words the lion went away and left the whole cave to the holy abbot. He led a hidden life there for some time; but the reputation of his holiness having spread round about, several persons came to him and obliged him to receive them as his disciples.

Some robbers, imagining that he had much money, went one night to rob him; but, having found that poverty was his whole treasure, they went back without doing him any harm, charmed by the greatness of his virtue. On the way they met some lions of terrible aspect, which filled them with fright. All their hope was in the man they had just spared. So they said to the lions: “We command you, in the name of St. Sabas, to leave us a free passage”; and at once the animals took flight — which brought about the robbers’ conversion. Afterwards, St. Sabas being visited by an infinite number of people who came to receive instruction and consolation, this great concourse, which took from him the freedom of converse with his God, made him resolve to leave that cave.

For several years he often changed his dwelling, to flee the honour that seemed to pursue him on every side; but, after having by this means carried the light of the evangelical counsels to various places, he at last returned to his laura, thinking that so long an absence would have softened the spirit of his rebellious children. He found them, on the contrary, still more intractable and obstinate than before; their cabal had even been strengthened by the union of twenty others who would bear no yoke. He opposed his meekness to their anger, his charity to their aversion and his kindness to their malice; but, seeing in them no hope of amendment, he left them once more and went towards Nicopolis, where a cell was built for him under a tree whose shade covered him and whose fruits served him as food. This cell too was changed into a monastery.

While he was there, his rebellious religious spread the rumour in his laura that he had been devoured by a lion near the Dead Sea, and on that ground went to beg the patriarch Elias, successor of Sallustius, to give them a superior. That prelate, who was extremely prudent, giving no credit to this report but suspecting some

imposture, told them they would do much better to look for Sabas, or to wait some time longer for his return, than to believe so strange a piece of news. This answer filled them with confusion and dashed all their hopes. A few days later the Saint came, according to his custom, to the feast of the dedication of the cathedral church of Jerusalem. The patriarch begged him to go back to his children, who had for so many years been deprived of his presence. The Saint resisted for some time, excusing himself not on the indocility of his disciples but on his own incapacity; but the patriarch pressed him so hard on this point that he was obliged to defer to his wishes. He warned him nevertheless of the evil designs of some of the Brothers, and then wrote to the whole community in these terms: “I inform you, my Brothers in Jesus Christ, that your Father has not been devoured by wild beasts, as you had been told, but that he is alive and has come here for the feast. I have kept him and I send him back to you, not judging it reasonable that the laura he built with so much toil should be under any direction but his own. Receive him, then, and render him the obedience you owe him; and if any one of you will not submit to his authority, we command him to leave the laura that very instant.”

This letter, which the Saint had read publicly in the church on his arrival, filled the rebels with fury. They committed much violence, and, having seized the poor furniture of the laura, they went out of it in a rage and passed to another place near the torrent of Theon. There they repaired some old cells and built new ones, and in this way made a monastery which they called the New Laura. Sabas, in spite of their outrages, did not forget them; but, filled with that charity which loves its enemies and forgives injuries, he helped them in body and soul in everything he could. As they lacked the most necessary things and no one would assist them, he procured considerable alms for them and himself brought them money, provisions and clothing; and because they were in a frightful state of division for want of superiors, he gave them some, who little by little brought them back to the religious sentiments from which they had so unhappily strayed. Thus his laura was purged of that bad seed, and he had the joy of seeing those libertines again on the road of salvation. There are in his life various other examples of disobedient or heretical solitaries whom he converted by his extreme meekness and even by his miracles; but so as not to lengthen this abridgment too much, we leave the reader to look for them in his complete history.

The opposition of the Church of Alexandria to the holy Council of Chalcedon, and the obstinacy of that of Constantinople in refusing to strike from the sacred diptychs the name of Acacius, its former bishop, excommunicated by the Sovereign Pontiffs, had filled the whole East with confusion in the third year of the reign of the Emperor Anastasius, who favoured the heresy of those two sees. The patriarch Elias, to remedy so great an evil and to try to bring that prince back to Catholic sentiments, sent St. Sabas to him at Constantinople, then seventy years old, with several other of the most considerable solitaries of Palestine; he charged them with a letter couched in these terms: “I send to Your Majesty, in the name of the Churches, a company of solitaries led by Sabas, head of all those who dwell in the desert, in the hope that the respect you will have for their virtue and their labours will lead you to put an end to the war by which these Churches are troubled. Do not allow, I beseech you, so great an evil to go further, since you desire to please God, who has placed the crown on your head.”

When these blessed envoys reached the imperial palace, the guards, seeing Sabas poorly dressed and without any outward appearance, pushed him back and would not let him in; the others went on to the prince’s chamber and had an audience. He asked them which of them was Sabas, who was mentioned in their letter of credence. Everyone looked about for him, and as he was not to be found, bodyguards were sent at once to fetch him. He was outside the door, in a little place apart, where he was quietly reciting psalms. They told him the emperor was asking for him, and quickly brought him before His Majesty. When he was near the throne, God, to teach the emperor how dear the Saint was to him, showed him an angel all shining with light who walked before Sabas and surrounded him with his rays. The emperor recognised by this that he was a man of God; and, having risen, he welcomed him with great respect and paid him great honours; then he ordered them all to sit down and gave them freedom to put forward what they desired. Thereupon each one,

leaving aside the common good, thought only of his private interests or those of his community; Sabas alone spoke vigorously in defence of the patriarch Elias, whom the emperor was persecuting, and for the peace of the troubled Churches. Anastasius, far from conceiving indignation and hatred against him for it, loved him the more; he had a thousand gold crowns given him for the relief of his monasteries. He also wished him to stay some time at Constantinople, so as to converse with him now and then; and in one of these conversations Sabas removed the bad impression that had been given him of the patriarch Elias, and made him revoke the sentence of exile he had had published against him.

He also worked for the relief of several townships of Palestine and the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, on which, by imperial edict, the taxes of other townships depopulated by plague and famine were being laid. He showed the injustice of this edict and how harmful it was to the empire, because little by little it was ruining the good townships that remained and making them unable to pay anything to the treasury afterwards. The emperor was quite disposed to follow his advice; but a treasurer of finances named Marinus overturned all these good dispositions, alleging that the inhabitants of Jerusalem and its neighbourhood were not worthy of this favour because they were Nestorians. That was what the new heretics called all who held for the Council of Chalcedon. St. Sabas severely rebuked Marinus for such bad counsel and told him that, if he did not retract, he would soon feel the hand of God weigh heavily on his head. And he did feel it: for in a riot his goods were plundered and his house burned, and only the resolution he took to do penance made God save his life. The emperor, however, having deferred more to Marinus's opinion than to that of the blessed abbot, left the taxes he had imposed, and it was only in the following reigns that they were abolished.

Winter preventing St. Sabas from taking ship again and returning to his monastery as soon as he would have wished, he withdrew to the suburb of Rufinus, to avoid the trouble and tumult of the city, and there he was visited by the greatest princesses, whom he spurred on to work at their spiritual advancement.

As soon as the season was favourable, he went to his laura, where he found new occasions of combat. It was for the defence of the same Council of Chalcedon, which the emperor, in spite of the remonstrances this admirable man had made to him and the hopes he had given of leaving the Church in peace, did not cease to oppress by persecuting those who upheld its purity and decrees. So he assembled the most enlightened and most virtuous of the solitaries, and, surrounded by this great number of defenders of the faith, he opposed so cruel a tyranny with incredible generosity. He first delivered the patriarch Elias from a crowd of Eutychians and Severians who surrounded him and wanted to insult him. Then, that blessed prelate having been deposed from his see and sent into exile by Olympius, the emperor's envoy, and John, son of Marcian, having been put in his place, Sabas had so much influence over the latter's mind that he obliged him to pronounce anathema against Eutyches, Severus and their partisans, and to embrace once more the orthodox faith, which his weakness or ambition had made him abandon.

Finally, as he saw that the emperor would not fail after this to unleash himself against the Church of Jerusalem and the monasteries, he wrote him a letter full of the spirit of God and of apostolic vigour. In this letter he sets out the incredible violence his officers were doing to the priests, deacons and religious of the Church of Jerusalem, which could be called the mother of all the others, since it had received the heavenly doctrine from the very mouth of the Saviour and had then communicated it to the whole world; and he most humbly begs him to put an end to these scandals, to check the insolence of his ministers, to restore liberty and peace to her to whom Our Lord in his goodness had given them, and not to leave any longer under persecution those who had no other aim than to maintain the faith confirmed and established in the four general Councils. The emperor did not answer this letter at once, because he was then occupied with a war against the barbarians.

Meanwhile all Palestine was afflicted for five years with famine, drought, the plague of locusts and many other scourges, which reduced it to extreme misery. The seven monasteries of St. Sabas shared in this great need, because they had no revenues and those who gave them alms had themselves fallen into incredible

poverty; but the blessed abbot, without losing courage, assembled the superiors of these houses and exhorted them to expect everything from the mercy of God, who knew their needs and could remedy them by his almighty power. And indeed, his laura having been reduced to such an extremity that there was not even bread to offer God the holy sacrifice, he had recourse to his goodness, and there were brought to him, without his knowing from where, thirty horses laden with wheat, wine, oil and other provisions suitable for religious, so that he had the means of restoring the exhausted strength of his disciples.

The friendship he bore the patriarch Elias led him to visit him in his exile and to stay several days with him. It was at that time that they both had a revelation of the dreadful death of the Emperor Anastasius, the very night it happened, which was 19 July 518. Sabas, for his part, saw in a dream thunderbolts hurled from on high against that prince, and how, fleeing into the most secret places of his palace to try to escape them, he gave up the ghost in a frightful manner; as for St. Elias, he learnt of this death by a heavenly light, and at the same time had a revelation that he himself was to die in ten days, to go and plead his cause at the judgment of God against that persecutor of the orthodox. Justin succeeded him, and, as soon as he was in possession of the empire, he had an edict published throughout his States ordering that the holy Council of Chalcedon be received by all; he recalled the banished, restored the prelates to their sees and gave back calm to the whole Church.

Our blessed abbot was then eighty years old, and his strength was exhausted; but, his zeal giving him new vigour, he went to Caesarea, to Scythopolis and to several other places to publish this edict and have the four general councils entered in the diptychs [tables] of those Churches. He also worked with much success at the conversion of all whom the heretics had seduced and drawn into their party. Moreover, by his prayers and tears he remedied the ills with which Palestine was afflicted; for it was by them that he obtained rain for one of the lauras where they were dying of thirst, and then for the whole country, which for want of water was reduced to extreme misery.

At the age of ninety-one he still had the courage to undertake the long journey to Constantinople, to appease the anger of the Emperor Justinian, Justin’s successor, against the Christians of Palestine, on whom the Samaritans had maliciously laid the blame for their revolt in that province. The welcome he received at court was marvellous. As soon as Justinian knew he was arriving, he sent the patriarch of that imperial city to meet him, with lords and bodyguards, to bring him to him. When he was in his chamber, the emperor saw on his head a crown all shining, which showed plainly that he was a child of light. He rose from his seat, came to meet him, embraced him tenderly and made him give him his blessing. The empress also came to receive him; but when she begged him to obtain fruitfulness for her from heaven and that she might have a son, the Saint made no answer to her request, although she repeated it three times; he merely told her that he would pray God to preserve her, adding that, if she had children, it was to be feared they would be even greater abettors of the heresy of Severus than Anastasius had been. He then obtained from Justinian everything he asked of him; and that prince, at his prayer, drove all the Samaritans out of Jerusalem, abolished their synagogues and took from them the power of inheriting from one another, to prevent their becoming too rich. He also condemned to death the authors of the sedition that had caused so many murders; which so astonished a lord of that sect named Arsenius that, the fear of God mingling with the fear of men, he was converted and asked for baptism, which was administered to him by St. Sabas.

The emperor wished to give him still greater marks of his affection, for he offered a fixed annual revenue for each of the monasteries under his direction. But this generous abbot, who wanted no riches but the funds of divine Providence, in which he placed, and wished his religious to place, all their trust, answered him with marvellous disinterestedness: “As for us, lord, we shall always have goods enough if we are faithful in fulfilling our duties; but since Your Majesty is willing to open your treasures in our favour, we beseech you to exercise your magnificence towards this poor people of Palestine. The Samaritans have ruined their houses, burned their churches, laid waste their fields, carried off their cattle, and they are now reduced to the

last extremity; relieve them for a time of all taxes, so that they may put themselves in a position to pay them in the future. The pilgrims who come to Jerusalem to worship at the holy sepulchre find no lodgings there where they can rest. Have a hospital built there to receive them. The church of the Holy Virgin, begun by the patriarch Elias, lacks all the things necessary for divine service; give it vestments for the holy sacrifice and for the other ecclesiastical ministries. There is no stronghold near the monasteries where the solitaries can take refuge in the sudden incursions of the barbarians; have one built. Lastly, the errors of Arius, Nestorius, Eutyches, Severus and Origen are publicly taught, to the great scandal of the Church; remedy this evil by your edicts and make doctrine one, as Jesus Christ is one. If you do this, I hope you will soon see Italy, Africa and other great countries that have been withdrawn from your rule return to it." Justinian granted all these requests and held several councils to have them carried out. In one of these councils, at which he wished Sabas always to be present, this great servant of God showed his exactness in what concerned the service of his divine Master; for, the hour of Terce having come, he went out to say it. When one of his disciples remonstrated with him that it was unseemly thus to leave the emperor while he was working with so much zeal to oblige him, he answered: "There is nothing in this but what is good; for the emperor, in working for the relief of his people and the conversion of the faith, does what he ought, and I, in saying my prayers at the prescribed hours, fulfil what I owe."

God had poured out his graces so abundantly into the soul of this heavenly man that he not only foretold future things but also healed all kinds of diseases and worked an infinite number of miracles. He was modest, gentle, easy of access, pleasant in his words, simple in his actions, prudent in his conduct, full of charity towards everyone and extremely zealous for religious mortification. It is related that, walking one day along the Jordan with a young brother, a company of worldly people, among whom was a very good-looking girl, passed in front of them. The Saint, to find out whether his disciple had kept his eyes mortified, told him it seemed to him that this girl was unattractive and had only one eye. "Excuse me, father," answered the novice, "I assure you she has two fine eyes; I looked at her well." The holy abbot took occasion from this to give him a severe reprimand, and, to punish him for his levity, he sent him away from his cell to a place of penance, where he had leisure to learn to mortify his senses.

When the business at Constantinople was concluded, St. Sabas returned to Jerusalem, gave an account to Peter, patriarch of that city, who had sent him, of what he had obtained from the emperor, and visited the holy places for the last time. Then he went back to his first laura to end his days there in solitude; a short time afterwards he fell ill and had a revelation of his death. The Patriarch visited him and, seeing him destitute of everything in his cell, had him carried to a house belonging to him, to care for him better; but the Saint, who had allowed himself to be moved only out of obedience, seeing his hour near, had himself carried back to his poor hut, where, having given the kiss of peace to his children and appointed as superior in his place a holy man named Melitas, he gave up his soul into the hands of God on 5 December 531, at the age of ninety-two, as Cardinal Baronius proves.

His body was solemnly buried in the middle of his laura, between the two churches, by the bishops, religious and inhabitants of Palestine; his soul was led to heaven by the angels and the holy martyrs, as St. Theodore revealed to Romulus, deacon of Gethsemane. The miracles worked at his tomb have made his memory famous and venerable in East and West. There is at Rome a church and monastery of his name, which Gregory III gave to the German College he had founded for the restoration of the Catholic faith in the northern provinces. It is believed that his body was taken to Venice and is religiously preserved there.

St. Sabas is represented: 1° holding the Rule of his monastery, which he presents to the monks of his Order; 2° seated on the edge of a precipice that serves as his retreat: he is discovered by two travellers; 3° seated in a cave, praying, with a lion beside him. — He may also be represented conferring with the Emperors Anastasius and Justinian, to whom he had been sent by the Patriarch of Jerusalem on various difficult questions, for the good of the Church.

This account is by Father Giry.

ST. CYRAN, PATRON OF THE BRENNE, FOUNDER AND FIRST ABBOT OF THE ABBEYS OF MÉOBECQ AND LONREY (about 657)

Pope: Vitalian. — King of France: Clotaire III.

Nothing is lacking to the poor man for whom Christ suffices. — Peter of Blois.

Born of a noble family of Berry, Cyran or Sigiran had for father Sigelaïc, who was, it is said, count of Bourges and then bishop of Tours in the time of Dagobert, whose kinsman he was. After making his studies in the latter city, he was entrusted, in spite of the secret aspirations that drew him towards God, to Flaocat, one of the most powerful and influential leudes of the Frankish king. Flaocat having taken him with him to court, Sigiran soon drew by his rare qualities the attention and good graces of the monarch, who admitted him among the young men attached to his person and conferred on him the high dignity of cup-bearer.

Far from priding himself on these successes and attributing them to his personal merit, the boy never ceased to thank the Lord for them, whom he had always regarded as the end and cause of all his actions. However, so as not to look out of place amid the royal pomp, he wore fine clothes, under which he wore a hair shirt, and which he hastened to exchange for humbler garments when he left the palace to go home. Later, his father, wishing to secure his future, betrothed him to the daughter of one of his rich friends named Adroald; but, wholly given to God, Sigiran turned away from this union, and soon, in spite of solemn promises, he resolved to break at one stroke both this marriage project and the ties that bound him to the court. In this frame of mind he respectfully set out to his master the grave reasons for his decision; then he left the palace and returned to Tours, where, after a long prayer at the tomb of St. Martin, he cut off his hair and vowed himself to the service of the Most High.

Whatever his regret at failing in the word he had given, Bishop Sigelaïc could not resist this last proof of his son’s ardent vocation, and he inscribed him in the book of clerics. Shortly afterwards Sigiran was named archdeacon; but the higher he rose, the more he wished to humble himself, and the more passionately he gave himself to works of love and charity, without troubling whether he went beyond the limits of his fortune and of reason. So much so that, after his father’s death, these excessive liberalities suggested to a certain Stephen, quaestor of the city, the idea of passing him off as mad and shutting him up as such. Sigiran did not suffer long from this cruel oppression, for, by a just reprisal of divine wrath, the quaestor Stephen himself went mad and, outdone in his madness by another madman, fell miserably under an assassin’s blade. Restored to liberty, Sigiran gave up the rest of his goods to the poor and resigned his office of archdeacon “to follow naked the naked Christ.”

There was then in the province of Tours an Irish bishop named Flavius, famous for his holiness and the strictness of his doctrine. Sigiran sought his company, received his teaching and undertook to imitate him in all his acts. Flavius having announced his intention of going to Rome, Sigiran asked leave to accompany him, and, taking up the pilgrim’s staff, did in fact set out with him. On the way they met and joined several groups of pilgrims, with whom they continued their journey, visiting the churches and places of devotion.

The time of the grape harvest had come; the countryside was astir and redoubling its activity. The pious travellers were then in a small village where by common consent they had resolved to stay for some time. There, seized with compassion at the sight of the peasants covered with sweat and dust, Sigiran left his companions at the lodging and mingled with the grape-pickers to help the poorest, thus fulfilling the vow he had made to earn his living henceforth by work, according to the Psalmist’s verse: “Thou shalt eat the labours of thy hands.” In the evening he gathered the people of the place, preached to them and read them the acts of the Saints, thus providing their minds and hearts with food at once solid and agreeable. On hearing these sweet sermons, several inhabitants of the neighbouring towns and castles abandoned the profane and

perishable goods of which they had formerly been so jealous and submitted to the humble precepts of the holy man, who never ceased to be the joy and admiration of the district until the moment of his departure for Rome.

After accomplishing his pilgrimage and visiting the eternal city, Sigiran returned to Gaul, where he found again his first protector Flaocat, who conceived a new friendship for him and at once fell under the charm of his gentle and fervent words. In the frequent conversations they had together, as Sigiran constantly expressed the wish to find a solitude favourable to prayer where he could lead the life of the monks, Flaocat undertook to further his plans and even conceived for a moment the thought of renouncing human greatness to devote himself with him to the service of God. Accordingly, with the king's consent, he put at his disposal a fine spot called Méobecq, advantageously situated in Berry, in the midst of the forests of the Brenne. Sigiran first built there a wooden cell, then a church and a monastery of Benedictines, of which he was proclaimed abbot by the many disciples who had come to join him, and with whom, in deep calm, far from the eyes of the world, he never ceased from then on to sing the praises of the Lord night and day. This monastery grew in a short time to such a size and fame that, being unable to accept the requests of all who wished to place themselves under his rule, the venerable abbot had, at an order from on high, to think of founding a second house.

At Flaocat's prayer, the king hastened to grant Sigiran a rich estate called Lonrey, which he owned on the banks of the Claise in a pleasant position and of which his favourite leude had the use. Under the successors of Clovis the greater part of the Brenne belonged to the crown domain, and its vast forests, full of wild beasts, more than once witnessed the sports of good King Dagobert, whose name has remained popular in the district.

Dagobert had a particular affection for Lonrey, already renowned for the cult paid there to the Virgin, and he intended to make it one of his usual residences when he gave it to Sigiran with the rights, honours, prerogatives, churches, tithes, men, tolls, pastures, lands cultivated or uncultivated, and in general everything he owned in his own right between the Indre and the Creuse. He kept his palace there, however, in which he had an altar set up while awaiting the building of the church, and he enriched it, among other relics, with a fragment of the true cross, a piece of the Virgin's robe enclosed in a golden casket, and part of the chin of St. John the Baptist.

The king was not the only one to show himself liberal on this occasion; for hardly was Sigiran's project known in the country than gifts of every kind arrived from all sides in such abundance that several had to be refused. It is related that a rich lord of the neighbourhood called Magnobodus, having sent on a cart a vessel containing a thousand pounds of oil, the Saint begged him to postpone his present until the monastery was entirely finished.

When a permanent establishment had replaced the wooden huts provisionally put up at Lonrey, a pious swarm left the walls of Méobecq, which had become too narrow, and settled in the new hive, whose reputation, soon equal to that of the mother-house, brought from Guyenne a noble and devout personage named Didier, who took the monastic habit and himself became, in that great school, a saint of Berry.

But Sigiran's quiet and contentment were soon disturbed by a painful event announced in a dream. After his friend's departure Flaocat, having quickly forgotten his counsels and devout inspirations, had given himself up more than ever to the torrent of worldly passions. Among the courtiers was one of his former pupils named Willibald, a man full of honour and piety, whose merits and growing influence had inspired in him an abominable jealousy and the resolve to destroy him. To this end he picked a quarrel with him on imaginary grievances, obtained the king's leave to challenge him to single combat, and in this encounter defeated and killed him. But punishment followed close on the crime; for eleven days later he who had oppressed virtue, of which by his position he should have been the firmest support, suffered the death of body and soul and

appeared before the supreme tribunal covered with innocent blood.

While these terrible things were happening at court, grace continued to come down on the abbeys of Méobecq and Lonrey, and showed itself in two miracles that we cannot omit.

One evening when Sigiran and a few brothers had gone to Méobecq to conclude some business, thieves followed them stealthily and stole their mounts. But God having thrown confusion into the minds of these wretches, they lost their way in the woods and, after wandering all night, found themselves at daybreak in front of the wicket-gate of Méobecq, at the sight of which they abandoned the horses and fled.

The business concluded, the pious abbot and his companions set out for Lonrey. At dusk they arrived near a farm and dismounted to read the evening prayers together by the light of a candle held by a child. During this reading the wind blew out the light, and the child, red with shame, was getting ready to go and fetch fire, when the Saint gently held him back and said to him: “Do not trouble yourself, my son, for I carry the divine flame with me.” Then he made the sign of the cross over the candle, which at once lit again. After the prayer the travellers mounted again and did not stop until they reached the abbey, where they resumed their devout and studious life.

History is silent on the rest of the life and on the death of the first abbot of Lonrey and Méobecq. We know only that, at an already advanced age, he was seized with a violent attack of fever and departed for a better world amid the choir of angels, on the eve of the nones of December, about the year 657.

VENERATION AND RELICS.

St. Cyran was buried behind the altar of a little church at Le Blanc founded by him and placed under his patronage, which can still be seen in the upper town, near the old castle of the Naillac.

In 1629, on the Sunday of the octave of Easter, the archbishop of Bourges, Jean de Sully, came to Le Blanc to verify these remains, and had the stone sarcophagus that contained them opened. Having identified them, he placed them in a wooden casket, which was itself enclosed in the stone tomb, covered with a silk cloth on which was painted the coat of arms of Albert Turpin, man-at-arms, in the presence of the latter, of Dame Marthe de Crelay, his wife, of the archpriest of Le Blanc, of Master Guillaume de Saga, canon of Vatan, and of several other members of the clergy.

The following year, on the Sunday after the Assumption, the same prelate came back to Le Blanc and again translated the relics into a shrine of gilded copper, in the presence of the religious of Saint-Sulpice of Bourges, of Saint-Gildas, of Méobecq, of Saint-Cyran, of Fontgombault, of La Celle-Saint-Eusice, of Jean de Belmont, of Albert Turpin, men-at-arms, and of several others.

It was doubtless on the occasion of these translations that the abbey of Saint-Cyran was able to obtain various fragments of the body of its glorious patron, which it kept until the Revolution of ’93, with other precious relics, in a fine shrine enhanced with gold. This shrine, carried every year in the procession on the Sunday before the feast of St. John the Baptist, naturally excited the greed of the revolutionaries, who in March 1794 broke it up to take its ornaments and scattered its relics.

These were providentially gathered up by the abbé Bouley and enclosed in a sealed bag, with a writing signed by him indicating the nature and importance of the objects saved, among which were: the piece of the Virgin’s garments mentioned in Dagobert’s charter; bones of St. Paul, St. Anthony, St. Lawrence, St. Génitour of Le Blanc, St. Fiacre, St. Silvanus of Levroux and St. Radegund; and lastly part of the arm of St. Cyran.

After the restoration of worship these treasures came to the church of Saint-Michel-en-Brenne, near the abbey, which was now suppressed, and were placed in a more than modest wooden shrine, advantageously replaced in 1860 by a magnificent reliquary of gilded bronze, a present of the Empress Eugénie.

Extracted from the Pieuses légendes du Berri, *by M. Just Veillat.*

BLESSED ELISABETH OF WALDSEE, OF THE THIRD ORDER OF ST. FRANCIS (1420)

Our Blessed, whom the holiness of her life had caused to be surnamed the good Elisabeth, came into the world in the year 1386 at Waldsee, in the land of Swabia, diocese of Constance. Favoured from the cradle with heavenly blessings and brought up in the fear of the Lord by her pious mother, she grew from day to day in wisdom. She was early placed as a boarder with the Religious of the Third Order, and the young child in a short time made admirable progress in the science of the Saints. She was still only fourteen when by dint of entreaty she obtained leave to put on the

Franciscan livery, which her mother also took later, after her husband's death. From then on her fervour astonished the oldest sisters of the monastery. She was always to be seen first at all the exercises of the community; neither the weakness of her age nor the delicacy of her constitution could ever serve her as a pretext for dispensing herself from the austerities of the Rule. Never was a Religious seen more humble and more mortified; she had no ambition except for the lowliest tasks of the house. It was, moreover, a very poor convent; each sister lived by the work of her hands, and the superior concerned herself only with the direction of the work. The Religious had in common only the spiritual exercises and the dwelling. Elisabeth worked, prayed, fasted and had to sustain rude assaults from the devil. Unjustly accused of theft, she was a prey to the contempt of her companions; and when her innocence, once recognised, had restored to her the esteem she enjoyed, she was struck by a foul leprosy that covered her whole body and made her unbearable to everyone. Yet her patience never failed in all her trials.

The Most High, wishing to bear witness to the virtue of his faithful servant, favoured her with special graces. Endowed with the gift of prophecy, Elisabeth foretold the end of the schism that was then desolating the Church and the coming election of Pope Martin V. Her frequent communications with the heavenly Spouse made her taste here below the purest delights. Her prayer was like an ecstasy; she came out of it all aflame with divine love. Her words, all of fire, were accompanied by a sweet suavity that won hearts. She was called nothing but the guardian angel of the house.

Elisabeth was constantly occupied with the Passion of Our Lord; meditation on this great mystery made her shed torrents of tears, like her blessed patriarch. Every Friday she honoured the stations of the sorrowful way with voluntary mortifications and sufferings. The love she felt for the divine Saviour in the Holy Eucharist was boundless. This bread of angels was sometimes her only food of the day; communion, which she made every day, so rejoiced and strengthened her that, in spite of her penances, she seemed the healthiest of the sisters.

Her tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin matched the ardent love she had for her divine Son. This worthy child of St. Francis celebrated with lively ardour the feasts consecrated to the divine Mother. All the objects that belonged to her bore the name of Mary, for she had dedicated them all to her. At her urging, the religious and the boarders of the house joined the good Elisabeth in singing hymns and canticles in honour of the spotless Virgin. The rosary, which she never put down, was her favourite prayer. But of all the mysteries of the most holy Virgin, that of her Immaculate Conception was the particular object of her devotion. She was inexhaustible on this subject, and when people wanted to hear her speak with more zeal, they had only to set her on this path. The historian of her life assures us that this Queen of angels appeared to her frequently, especially in the midst of the hard combats she long had to sustain against the spirit of evil.

When God wished at last to reward the virtues of this seraphic soul, he made known to her that the hour of her death was approaching. The rumour having spread in the monastery that they were on the eve of losing the good Elisabeth, one cannot say what desolation this sad news caused among the sisters; each hastened to

forestall this loss by an increase of veneration and respect. A slight fever soon proved that their fears were only too well founded. Our Blessed, feeling herself more and more pressed to go to God, spent the little time remaining to her in the continual exercise of the purest love. At last, having received the last sacraments with new fervour, never ceasing to pronounce the sweet names of Jesus and Mary, she had the Gospel of the Passion read to her, and at the words "Jesus gave up the ghost" she expired, thus ending her holy life by a precious death on 25 November 1420, at the age of thirty-four. Her body was solemnly buried in her monastery. Pope Clement XIII approved the immemorial cult paid her; her feast is fixed on 5 December.

Extracted from the Annales du Tiers Ordre de Saint-François d'Assise.

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[1] The extraordinary fruits produced by his preaching, the holiness of his life, to which the gift of miracles added new lustre, and his assiduity in the practice of all good works made him universally admired and respected. He attended the Council of Clermont (535), the fifth of Orléans (549), and the second of Paris (551). Four years later he himself assembled a Council at Toul. Although protected by King Sigebert, he met with many contradictions; he did not lessen in the least his zeal in upholding the cause of God and procuring the salvation of souls. The abolition of incestuous marriages cost him infinite pains, which were at last crowned with success. He also defended the Church's doctrine against the errors of the Arians and the Eutychians. We still have two letters he wrote on this subject. Two other works of our Saint have been discovered: the first is a *Treatise on Vigils in Prayer*. The author praises vigils from Isaiah, the Psalms, the example of Jesus Christ, those of St. Peter and St. Paul, etc. The second work is entitled *On the Usefulness of Psalmody*. It treats of the advantages of public prayer made in common. — Godescard, Dom Rivet, St. Gregory of Tours, Fortunatus, d'Achéry.

[2] An old manuscript of the Church of Bayeux gives the village of Livry (Calvados, arrondissement of Bayeux, canton of Caumont) as the birthplace of this pontiff. His legend relates that, having refused to yield to the adulterous desires of a powerful woman, he was accused by her of having tried to assault her honour, and condemned to be thrown into the sea with a large stone tied to his neck. God having miraculously saved him from this punishment and made him prove his innocence by numerous wonders, Gerbold was by unanimous consent raised to the episcopal dignity. St. Gerbold was buried in the church of Saint-Exupère, against the north wall, between the altar and the sacristy. The many miracles that have made his tomb illustrious have brought his memory into great veneration in the diocese of Bayeux. His office is kept as a double minor on 4 December, and several churches have been raised under his invocation. He founded a priory in the village of Livry, where the martyrology of Usuard claims he was buried, and reformed the monastery of Deux-Jumeaux, founded in the diocese by St. Martin of Vertou. — *Gallia Christiana nova.* The chapel of Saint-Gerbold at Ver (Calvados) stood on the very spot where the holy bishop came ashore after being miraculously saved from the waves; the Protestants ravaged it in 1562; later it was ruined by a fire. There was also at Englesqueville a pilgrimage in honour of St. Gerbold. — *Histoire du diocèse de Bayeux*, by the abbé Laffetay.

[3] We gave the life of St. Didacus on 13 November.

[4] See the life of St. Peter Chrysologus on 2 December.

6 December

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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Martyrologies

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY.

At Myra, metropolis of Lycia, the birthday of St. Nicholas, bishop and confessor, who, among other miracles he worked, appeared to the Emperor Constantine, although he was very far from the place where the emperor was, and by his remonstrances and threats turned him from putting to death some persons who had claimed his protection, and led him to pardon them. 324. — In Africa, the holy women Dionysia, Dativa and Leontia, and a very pious man named Tertius; St. Aemilianus, a physician, St. Boniface and three others, who were all tried by a great number of very cruel torments during the persecution of the Vandals under Huneric, an Arian king, and by these pains deserved to be numbered among the confessors of Jesus Christ. 484. — In the same place, St. Majoricus, son of St. Dionysia, who, being still very young and dreading the torments, was so strengthened by his mother's looks and words that he became the most courageous of all and died in the violence of the tortures. His mother embraced him after his death and, having buried him in her house, used to make long prayers at his tomb. 5th century. — The same day, St. Polychronius, priest, who in the time of

the Emperor Constantius was surprised while celebrating Mass and slaughtered by the Arians. 4th century. — At Granada, in Spain, St. Peter Paschal, martyr, of the Order of Our Lady of Mercy for the Redemption of Captives, and bishop of Jaén, whose feast is celebrated on 23 October by decree of Pope Clement X.[1] 1300. — At Rome, St. Asella, virgin, who, as St. Jerome testifies, was blessed from her mother's womb and spent her whole life, to an extreme old age, in fasting and prayer. About 410.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED.

In the dioceses of Nancy, Paris and Saint-Dié, St. Nicholas, bishop of Myra and confessor, named in the Roman Martyrology of this day. 324. — At Cologne, St. Florentina, virgin and martyr. Date uncertain. — At Marchiennes (Nord), in the diocese of Cambrai, St. Gertrude or Gérétrude, widow, abbess of the Benedictine monastery of Hamage (*Hamaticum Sancti Petri*). 649. — In several regions of France, St. Sintran (*Sintramnus*), confessor. Date uncertain. — At Langres and at Mataillana, near Valladolid (Old Castile), in the diocese of Valencia, Blessed Robert, native of Langres, first abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Mataillana. His relics are kept under the high altar of the church of that place. 1185. — In the Nivernais, St. Gérard or Girard, first prior of the monastery of La Charité-sur-Loire (*Charitas ad Ligerim*, Order of St. Benedict), in the diocese of Nevers. In spite of the efforts of the wicked, God blessed his administration; the holiness he had been able to inspire in his religious showed itself far and wide, and on all sides lords and princes called for the monks of La Charité to found new monasteries. Through his care the dioceses of Auxerre, Nevers, Bourges, Meaux, Rouen, Autun, Paris, Troyes, Orléans, Beauvais, Sens, Châlons and Tours were endowed with new communities; in his time also various colonies of religious of La Charité went out to found the monasteries of Saint-André d'Arenthon, of Vennelot and of Bermondsey in England; of Civitot at Constantinople; of São Pedro de Rates in Portugal; of Santa Croce at Venice. After governing the monastery of La Charité for twenty-eight years, Gérard was entrusted with the direction of that of Joigny. He established perfect regularity there; then, feeling his end approaching, he obtained to be completely relieved of all superiorship and returned as a simple religious to La Charité, where he fell asleep in the Lord.[2] 1102.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS.

Among the Friars Preachers, Blessed Pons de Planella, martyr, of the Order of St. Dominic. Born at Moià, in the diocese of Vich, in Catalonia, he entered the Order of St. Dominic immediately after its foundation. He was soon given charge of the convent of Lérida (Catalonia), which had just been founded. He showed such great zeal for the salvation of souls that Gregory IX, learning of the conversions he was making by his holiness and preaching, entrusted him with the mission of working for the extinction of heresy in the north of Spain, then infected with the Albigensian errors. The sectaries, furious at his successes, first poisoned him and then finished him off with blows of sticks and stones. This was near Urgel, at the castle of Castelbó. A great marvel honoured his burial: the bishop of Urgel having come with all his clergy to fetch the Martyr's body to bury it in the cathedral church, the ceremony did not begin until sunset; yet during the six hours that the journey there and back lasted, the sun, to the admiration of all, stood motionless in its place; but hardly were the obsequies over, at the hour of midnight, when it suddenly disappeared, leaving no twilight. This miracle is represented on the Blessed's tomb, raised on an altar in the cathedral of Urgel. His relics are enclosed in a magnificent medieval shrine. At Moià, his life-size statue, set up on the altar of the Blessed Sacrament in the parish church, represents him holding in one hand a vessel from which a serpent emerges, symbol of the poison that caused his death, and in the other a sun, recalling the miracle worked at his burial. 1242.

ST. NICHOLAS OF PATARA, ARCHBISHOP OF MYRA IN LYCIA, PATRON OF SCHOOLBOYS (324)

Pope: St. Silvester. — Emperor of the West: Constantine the Great.

Si pulsamur incommodis, Nicolaus ingeminatur. In the moment of danger, let us invoke with confidence the great St. Nicholas. — St. Bernard, *Sermons*.

The Eastern Church has had no bishop more zealous for religion, more brilliant in virtue or more glorious in miracles than this illustrious metropolitan of Lycia. St. John Chrysostom esteemed him so highly and bore him such respect that he inserted his name in his liturgy, at the third oblation; and in the Mass of Thursday, after calling him the Rule of faith, the example of meekness and the master of continence, raised up by his humility and enriched by his poverty, it begs him to be the people's ambassador to Jesus Christ, to obtain eternal salvation for them. St. Peter Damian gives him this praise: that he was God's chosen one from his mother's womb, the nursling of holiness from his childhood, the glory of young men, the honour of the old, the splendour of priests and the light of Pontiffs. He adds that the whole universe is filled with his praises and that the sea, as well as the land, proclaims his wonders on every side. Chancellor Gerson also says marvellous things of him in an academic discourse. Finally, the universal Church does not hesitate to say, in the prayer of his office, that God has ennobled him with an infinite number of miracles.

He was born at Patara, a city of Lycia, which is a province of Asia Minor. Euphemius, a rich man but extremely pious and charitable, was his father, and Anne, sister of Nicholas the elder, archbishop of Myra, was his mother. He came into the world only some years after their marriage, when they no longer hoped to have children. Their charity to the poor obtained what nature refused them. A heavenly messenger announced this happy news to them and, in promising them a son for the comfort of their old age, told them to give him the name of Nicholas, which means victory of the people, and which was also that of his uncle. When at his birth he was put in the basin to be washed, he rose of himself to his feet and stayed so for two hours, his hands joined and his eyes raised to heaven; which makes Denis the Carthusian believe that he then received the use of reason, and St. Michael the Archimandrite that he had been sanctified before birth. He began to fast from the cradle; for whereas he usually took the breast several times a day, on Wednesday and Friday, which were the days of abstinence and fasting in the Eastern Church in honour of Our Lord's Passion, he took it only once, towards evening.

These extraordinary acts were presages of the great holiness he was one day to attain; but the archbishop of Myra, his uncle, had an express revelation of it; for, having gone to the church to thank God for having given his family and his country a child of such great promise, he was at once rapt in spirit and knew that this child was a sun by which the whole earth would be enlightened, that God would pour very great graces into his soul and that an infinite number of miracles would come from his hands; which he afterwards declared to those present. St. Nicholas's good disposition was very well seconded by the excellent education he was given. His father, his mother and his masters took particular care to cultivate it, both by the study of divine and human sciences and by the practice of all the virtues; and their cultivation was not in vain, since, as soon as he went to school, he had already reached so high a degree of holiness that he was judged worthy, in the council of the most holy Trinity, to make a lame woman walk straight.

The plague took his parents from him in his earliest youth; but this loss brought no disorder into his conduct; on the contrary, he became more austere, more reserved, more given to prayer and more assiduous in divine service. Meanwhile, God having made known to him that he wished him in the ecclesiastical state, and regarding this passage of Scripture as if it had been spoken for him: "If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell all that thou hast and give the price to the poor," he began to dispose of the great wealth his father and mother had left him. It was at this time that he did that act of mercy so renowned throughout the earth, whose merit will be published until the end of the ages. One day, being informed that one of the noblest inhabitants of his city, who had not the means of providing for, or even of feeding, three marriageable daughters God had given him, intended to prostitute them, he resolved to prevent this infamous traffic by giving him enough wealth to marry them. He wished, however, to do it secretly and without being discovered, whether to avoid the glory of so great an act or to spare the unhappy father's shame. So, taking by night a purse filled with gold pieces,

he went and threw it into this man's room through a window he happily found open; and, this sum having served to marry the eldest daughter honourably, he did the same for the second and then for the third. One cannot imagine the father's astonishment when, the first and second time, he saw the care divine Providence had of his family; but he wanted to know who his benefactor was; he kept watch to discover him and, having recognised him when he came back the third time, he threw himself at his feet, confessed that he was extremely guilty for having mistrusted Providence and for having had such criminal thoughts against the honour of his own daughters, and protested that he would do penance for it and would never cease to proclaim the praises and mercies of his Lord. St. Nicholas begged him earnestly to keep his deed secret; but his prayers were in vain: the whole city learnt of it, and in a short time the report spread through the whole province and even through the whole world.

The archbishop of Myra, admiring more and more the virtue and holiness of his nephew, ordained him priest and made him superior of a monastery called Holy Sion, which he had built near the metropolitan city; and, having noticed how wisely he discharged this office, he entrusted him with the care of his whole diocese during a pilgrimage he made to the Holy Land. His death having occurred shortly after his return, our Saint thought of withdrawing into the deserts, to live there apart from the commerce of the world and in perfect forgetfulness of the things here below. But God took this thought from him and made known to him that his will was only that he should make a journey to the Holy Land, after the example of his uncle, who had completed his sanctification there.

He took leave of his religious and embarked to follow the movement of the Holy Ghost. On the way he foretold to the pilot a horrible storm that the devil was to raise; and it was indeed so furious that all the passengers believed beyond doubt that they were lost; but Nicholas prayed for them, drove away the devil who wanted to make them perish, and restored calm to the sea. He did so again several times, both during his life and after his death, and that is why sailors take him as their patron and protector and invoke him particularly on all their voyages. He also raised to life on the ship a young boy who had killed himself falling from the top of the mast. It is said that at Alexandria he healed a great number of sick people whom the inhabitants brought to him, on the assurances given them by those of his ship that he was a wholly miraculous man whose word was all-powerful. Being in Egypt, he paid a visit to the great St. Anthony, who filled that whole province with the marvellous fragrance of his virtues; and the sight of the excellent solitaries who led a life more angelic than human under that holy abbot would have kept him in the desert, had not God made known to him, before his departure, that he destined him for the guidance of souls.

So he returned to Alexandria and passed from there to Palestine and Jerusalem, where he visited Mount Calvary, the Garden of Olives and the other places watered with the blood of Jesus Christ. He always went there barefoot, bareheaded and sometimes dragging himself on his knees out of respect.

He shut himself up for some time in a cave where the Blessed Virgin is said to have hidden for a night with her divine Son and St. Joseph at the beginning of the flight into Egypt; and for this reason a little church under the name of St. Nicholas has been built there. He also visited the grotto of St. John the Baptist, prayed there and watered it with his tears.

Our Lord having made known to him in that place that he was to return to his own country as soon as possible, he took ship again for Lycia. His pilot tried to deceive him and take him back to Alexandria; but a violent storm that struck him having made him realise his fault, he asked the Saint's pardon, and, having obtained it together with the calm he desired, he brought him to a port near Myra. St. Nicholas's arrival in his monastery caused great joy to his religious. Their fervour was renewed by his instructions, and his example gave them new courage to work at their perfection. In their presence he worked a remarkable miracle: he so multiplied a piece of bread that it was enough to feed eighty-three workmen whom he was employing on the building of a church. Methodius assures us that he worked this same miracle several times.

Meanwhile God, who wished to raise him on the candlestick of the Church, to spread with more brilliance the rays of his doctrine and holiness over all the faithful, inspired him to take a house in the city of Myra. And as John, who was its archbishop and had succeeded Nicholas, our Saint's uncle, died at that time, the bishops of the province assembled to elect a pastor in his place. Their views on this choice were at first divided; but, having had recourse to prayer, the eldest of them learnt by revelation that the Holy Ghost had chosen a holy priest who would come first to the church the next day, and who was called Nicholas. Our blessed abbot was that man designated by heaven. He came very early in the morning, before all the others, to the doors of the cathedral, without knowing what was going on there. He was found there by the prelate who had had the revelation to wait for him, and taken at once to the other bishops. All accepted him and blessed the goodness of God for having prepared for his flock a pastor of such great merit; and at last, with the consent of the clergy and people, he was solemnly consecrated archbishop of Myra. After the pontifical Mass, a woman brought him her child, who had fallen into the fire and died in it. He made the sign of the cross over him and, by the power of this sign, raised him to life in the presence of the whole assembly, which was made up of a great number of prelates, clerics and laymen. He has shown his power over flames since then too, and this is the origin of the particular devotion of invoking St. Nicholas in accidents by fire.

This great man, seeing himself raised to this dignity, forgot, like St. Paul, all he had done before, and applied himself with quite new fervour to piety towards God, to the service of the faithful and to the mortification of his mind and senses. Prayer and the chanting of the psalms were his most agreeable occupations. He attended divine service as much as the affairs of his office allowed. As he hardly slept at all, he spent the greater part of the night humbled and seized with a holy fear at the feet of the divine Majesty. He himself took care to wake his household before daybreak for the spiritual exercises. The fire of charity burned so in his heart that his face was often seen all aflame and shining with light, especially when he celebrated the holy Mysteries. His pastoral solicitude extended generally to all the needs of his people. He took care of the poor, the sick, prisoners, widows and orphans. When he could not visit and help them himself, he had them visited and helped by pious persons whom he charged with this care. His chief concern was to know the spiritual needs of his faithful and to bring effective remedies to them, and for this he made use of learned and virtuous men, among others those two great lights of the Greek Church, Paul of Rhodes and Theodore of Ascalon. He often preached against vices, and he did so with a divine eloquence that made him victorious over all hearts. He had fasted twice a week from the beginning of his life, and at the threshold of his youth he had added a third fast to the other two, with abstinence from meat and wine; but after he became bishop he made it a law to fast every day, to eat only in the evening and usually to have only one dish on his table. Holy Scripture or some other spiritual book was always read during the meal. His clothes were rough and without ornament, and his bed was only a mat, a plank or the bare ground.

This incomparable man had great combats to sustain against pagans and heretics. The Emperor Licinius, having renewed in the East the persecution of Diocletian and Maximian, sent officers to Myra to re-establish idolatry there and to force the Christians by every kind of torment to embrace it. Some were put to death, others thrown into dungeons, these sent into exile and those stripped of all their goods and reduced to the last misery. St. Nicholas, seeing his faithful in the hands of the wolves, took care neither to flee nor to hide; he stood firm in the midst of his fold, to strengthen the weak, support the wavering and raise up those whom fear had made fall. This courage caused the governor to have him arrested and put in prison, and he would not have failed to put him to death had he not feared a rising of the people and setting the whole city ablaze; he contented himself with banishing him to a very distant place, where it is said he was shut up and loaded with chains and his limbs were torn every day with blows of the whip. It is for this reason that Nicephorus Callistus places him among those illustrious confessors of the Council of Nicaea who bore on their bodies the scars of the wounds they had received in upholding the faith.

He afterwards returned to his Church when, Constantine the Great having defeated Licinius and put an end throughout the earth to the persecution of the idolaters, the Christians had full liberty to practise their religion. His journey was not without fruit. He preached Jesus Christ on all sides, worked countless miracles in witness of his divinity, and converted an infinite number of people to the truth of the Gospel. The Emperor Leo VI, in an oration he composed in his praise, writes that he travelled hardly less land than the apostle St. Paul to spread the light of faith and dispel the darkness of idolatry — which must be understood of the time before and after his return from exile. When he had come back to Myra he worked harder than ever to exterminate the worship of the false gods; he had the idols thrown down, the temples demolished, and the trees and groves dedicated to them cut down and destroyed; he himself took the axe in hand and in seven strokes cut down a tree of prodigious size where Diana was honoured with shameful and abominable superstitions. On the other hand, helped by Constantine's liberality, he repaired the Christian churches that were falling into ruin and built new ones, such as those of St. Dioscorus, St. Crescens and St. Leo, martyr.

If he showed so much zeal against the pagans, who gave creatures the honour due only to the divinity, he showed no less against the Arians, who wanted to take that honour away from Jesus Christ. When Arius, their leader, wrote on all sides to the bishops of the Greek Church to draw them into his errors, Nicholas recognised his malice and opposed it with all his strength, together with St. Alexander, patriarch of Alexandria, and the other Catholic prelates. He was one of the three hundred and eighteen bishops who condemned that impious man at the first General Council of the Church, held at Nicaea in the presence of Constantine the Great. After the Council St. Nicholas upheld its decisions with apostolic vigour; he prevented the Arians from spreading their venom in his diocese, kept his flock inviolably in the faith of the first centuries, and his miracles were authentic and perpetual proofs of the consubstantiality of the divine Word.

St. Bonaventure, in the sermon he preached on this admirable prelate, says that at Myra he raised to life two young schoolboys of good family whom a greedy and cruel innkeeper had slaughtered and packed in a salting-tub, to profit from their money and their bodies. Others say that he raised three on the road to Nicaea whom a wicked man had treated with the same barbarity and whose chopped flesh he was selling as ordinary meat. These two wonders, however, have no witness in antiquity; we have only the tradition of the peoples to assure us of them. Perhaps too it was only one miracle reported differently by various authors.

The province of Lycia and the city of Myra being afflicted with a very great dearth of wheat, which reduced them to extreme famine, this good pastor, who regarded all his people's ills as his own, learnt by revelation that a rich merchant had several ships laden with it in a port of Sicily. So he appeared to him in a dream and told him to set sail for Myra, assuring him that the need there was excessive and that he would sell his grain there for whatever he wished; and, lest he think it an illusion, he put into his hand three gold pieces as earnest-money. The merchant, finding them on him when he woke and seeing clearly that no one had entered his room, believed this vision. And so he embarked, brought his wheat to the port of Myra, sold it at a very high price and, while gaining much, greatly relieved the city. Other merchants passing through the same port to carry wheat to Constantinople, the Saint begged them to unload part of it for his people. They answered that this was impossible for them, because they had to deliver everything at Constantinople exactly and by measure. But he assured them that, whatever quantity they left him, they would always find their full count where they were going. On this assurance they sold part of their wheat at Myra; and when they arrived at Constantinople they found, without any diminution, the whole quantity they had loaded on embarking. Moreover, the Saint so prodigiously multiplied the wheat he had had brought and bought that what would have sufficed his people for only a few days proved enough for more than two years.

He had a particular gift for delivering the innocent from the hands of the judges who had condemned them and from the power of princes by whom they were on the point of being oppressed. All who have written his history relate that, being one day at the gates of Myra with three camp-masters sent by the Emperor

Constantine, he learnt that three honourable inhabitants were about to be put to death against all justice, whom the governor Eustathius, corrupted by money, had condemned to death. He at once ran to the place of execution and, having found them on their knees, their eyes bandaged, their hands tied behind their backs and ready to receive the blow, he stopped the executioner, took his sword from him, summoned the judge, rebuked him for the iniquity of his sentence and, using the authority his episcopal power gave him by virtue of the emperor's orders, quashed it entirely and sent these unfortunate men back to their homes in full liberty.

These camp-masters were present at this whole action, admired the strength and generosity of the holy prelate and loaded him with praise. When they were back at Constantinople, although they had served the emperor very well in Phrygia, they were nevertheless accused of having done their duty badly there and of having entered into a conspiracy against the State. They were tried and, on false testimony, judged criminals and condemned to lose their heads. In so pressing a danger, remembering what they had seen at Myra, and not doubting that St. Nicholas could help the absent as well as the present, they addressed their groans and tears to him, begging him to come quickly to their aid in the plight they were in. Their request was granted; for on the eve of their execution, while they were praying in the night, this admirable bishop of Myra appeared in a dream to Constantine and threatened him with great chastisements if he did not revoke the sentence he had given against these innocent officers. He also appeared to Ablabius, his chief minister, who had most supported their condemnation, and made him similar threats. And so, in the morning, the prince, having had them brought back before his tribunal, sent them away acquitted. He even charged them with very rich presents for

St. Nicholas, so that they might show him by this their gratitude for having delivered them from death. These presents were a book of the Gospels written in letters of gold, a censer of solid gold set with precious stones, two golden candlesticks and gloves embroidered with gold for the pontifical Mass. This story has led those who are falsely accused to have recourse to the protection of St. Nicholas.

There would be many other marvels to relate to show that he was wholly devoted to the help of the afflicted; but we shall content ourselves with describing the following, which none of the historians has omitted. Some sailors who were within a hair's breadth of perishing in the violence of a storm, having implored his powerful intercession with all their hearts, he was at that very hour in their ship and said to them: "Here I am; I come to your help." At once he took the helm and began to steer the ship. He commanded the sea and calmed its waves, and in this way brought them to the port of Myra, where he disappeared. As soon as they had landed, they went to the church to thank him for so great a favour, and saw him in the midst of his clerics. They threw themselves at his feet, told him what had happened and showed him their gratitude. The Saint, confused by this honour, said to them: "Give to God, my children, the glory of this deliverance; as for me, I am only a sinner and an unprofitable servant. It is he alone who does great wonders." Then, taking them aside, he made known to them that this peril had befallen them for some secret sins of which they must amend and do penance.

For among the gifts this heavenly man had received from God, that of knowing distant things, the most hidden thoughts of the heart and what was to happen only in the course of time was one of the most ordinary. Besides, he had so gentle and charming a look, and his face was covered with so pure a light and so admirable an air of holiness, that no one approached him and had the honour of his conversation without being won to God by it. Even heretics were touched and often converted by the sight of some indefinable brightness that came from his eyes.

But the earth did not deserve to possess so great a Saint any longer. God at last declared to him that the end of his pilgrimage and the time of his reward were approaching. He received this news with joy, and, to make himself more worthy of his master's blessings, after bidding farewell to his people in a pontifical Mass, he withdrew into the monastery of Holy Sion, of which he had been made abbot. It was there that, a slight fever having seized him, he had the sacraments administered to him; then, amid the archangels, angels and holy

patriarchs who became visible in his room, according to the testimony of St. Michael the Archimandrite, abbot of the same place, saying these words of Psalm xxx: “Into thy hands, Lord, I commend my spirit,” he died full of years and good works.

St. Nicholas of Myra has been represented: 1° standing, holding a closed book; 2° holding his crosier and an open book: at his feet three purses, recalling those he gave to marry three poor girls; 3° appearing to a lord; 4° with three children at his side, in a tub; 5° clothed in a curious Greek costume and holding a book on which are placed three golden balls, after a painting in Santa Maria della Pace at Rome; 6° Callot treated the subject of the translation of the Saint’s relics, in which a boat is seen carrying a coffin, accompanied by six candles; 7° a medieval album shows us St. Nicholas in half-length, holding a magnificently bound book and blessing with his right hand. Near the Saint, Jesus Christ and his mother on clouds. Around the principal figure, sixteen medallions representing as many subjects from the Saint’s life, from his birth to the translation of his relics. One notices his baptism, his education, his entry into orders, the subject of the three girls saved from the debauchery into which poverty was about to make them fall; walking on the water; his funeral, etc. Various curious monuments are seen there, churches, a ship, the whole painted on a gold ground, executed in the 17th century in Russia; 8° invoking the Blessed Virgin for the plague-stricken; 9° appearing to an emperor who is ill; 10° delivering the possessed; 11° throwing the three purses into the house of the father of the three girls to marry them: in a room one sees the father sleeping in an armchair and his three daughters lying on the floor; 12° lying dead beneath an altar.

St. Nicholas is the patron of schoolboys and little boys, of boatmen, fishermen, seamen and rivermen, boat-breakers and dockers, travellers and pilgrims, brewers, coopers, chandlers, and the wrongly condemned (in memory of three men unjustly condemned whom he had delivered, it is said, through Constantine). Reading his life explains some of these various patronages; the others are not all so easily interpreted.

VENERATION AND RELICS.

All the people of Myra and the whole province of Lycia keenly regretted the loss of so lovable a pastor and so powerful a protector. His body was buried in the church of his monastery, in a marble sepulchre; and there at once began to flow from it a miraculous liquid that seemed to be oil at the place of the head and water at the place of the feet. One was still flowing in 1719, but it appeared only of one kind; and this is what was called the manna of St. Nicholas. This liquid was from then on an inexhaustible source of miracles, and it drew to his tomb an infinite number of pilgrims, some coming to implore his help and others to thank him for the graces they had received through his merits.

Shortly afterwards churches were built in his honour; among others one at Rome, on the site of the Temple of Piety, which was a monument to the virtue of a pagan girl who had fed with the milk of her breasts her father or mother, arrested in prison and condemned to die there of hunger. It was also the place where children exposed by their poor parents were received and fed. This church is now parochial and collegiate; it has the title of a cardinal-deacon. The solemnity of St. Nicholas from then on began to be very famous in the province of Lycia on 6 December; and this solemnity gradually abolished the superstitious and abominable feast held at Patara under the name of Apollo Patareus.

We have in the history of our Saint several wonders done after his death through his intercession. The following story is one of the most memorable we find in the Acts of the Church. A young man of Myra or of Essorande, in Lycia, whose parents were very rich and very devout to the Saint, having been taken prisoner by the Saracens on the very day of his feast, fell into the hands of the king of Babylon. After a year of slavery, as he was serving at that prince’s table, he heaved a deep sigh (it was one of those sudden movements that misery forces out without reflecting before whom one speaks). The king asked him why he was sighing. He answered that this day was the feast of St. Nicholas, and that he was imploring his help, that he might assist him in his trouble as he had assisted an infinite number of others who had had recourse to his

protection. “What are you thinking of, wretch,” answered the barbarian, “and is there anyone who could ever deliver you from my hands?” Hardly had he uttered this blasphemy when the man was carried off by the hair in the sight of all and transported to Essorande, where he was restored to his parents, who were then giving a dinner to the clergy and the poor in honour of the holy bishop, to obtain from him their son’s deliverance. Something still more marvellous happened to a Lorraine lord named Richecourt, who had gone, about the year 1240, to fight the infidels in the Holy Land. This lord, having been taken prisoner and shut up for several years in a tower, loaded with heavy chains, commended himself to St. Nicholas; and, one night preceding his feast, he was carried off from his tower during his sleep and, chained as he was, brought to his own country before the door of the famous church of Saint-Nicolas, near Nancy.

This glorious confessor is invoked with success against accidents by fire, and we could produce very memorable examples of this; but it is enough to add that he is implored with no less success for losses one has suffered and thefts of which one has been the victim — witness a Vandal who, having been robbed, recovered all he had lost by taking him as his mediator, which made him embrace the Catholic faith with his whole family.

The body of St. Nicholas remained at Myra until the year 1087. At that time, as the city had fallen into the power of the Turks, some merchants of Bari, a port of the kingdom of Naples situated on the Adriatic, formed the project of carrying off the Saint’s body. They went to Myra and, having entered the church of Sion, discovered this precious treasure there. They took it from its marble sepulchre, enclosed it with great respect in a shrine they had prepared for the purpose and, having put it on their ship, carried it to their city. The Venetians were on their way to take it for themselves; but those of Bari had the good fortune to forestall them. As soon as the inhabitants of Bari saw themselves in possession of this inestimable relic, they had a magnificent church built for it, into which, two years later, it was translated by Pope Urban II, who at the same time consecrated the church.

The miraculous liquid that continues to flow from the bones of the servant of God is distributed throughout the earth for the relief of the sick. The pilgrimage is very famous and extremely frequented. Before this translation the city of Bari was already very devoted to him, and it holds by tradition that St. Nicholas came there after the Council of Nicaea and foretold that his body would be honoured there in the course of the ages. He is also one of the patrons and protectors of Lorraine, which counts itself infinitely rich in possessing fragments of his holy relics in the superb basilica built in his honour, around which has grown up the town that from his name is called Saint-Nicolas-de-Port. According to the inventory of 8 May 1856, these relics consist of: 1° two small fragments of bone indicating by their texture that they come from long bones of the limbs; 2° a fragment of bone apparently from a portion of rib; 3° a somewhat spongy fragment probably from a long, thick bone; 4° a fragment almost as long as an adult’s little finger, apparently from a portion of bone of the forearm or arm.

It is not known what has become of the phalanx of St. Nicholas brought by the knight Albert to Varangéville. A small fragment of bone of the same Saint, from the treasury of Saint-Nicolas-de-Port, is venerated in the church of Charmes-sur-Moselle, in the diocese of Saint-Dié.

A great number of churches have been built or consecrated in his honour. In the diocese of Nevers he is patron of the parish of Courcelles, near Varzy. The cult of this holy bishop was spread early in the Nivernais. We find in the city of Nevers a priory of Saint-Nicolas; another priory under the same patronage had been raised at La Charité-sur-Loire, beyond the bridges. The priory of Saint-Nicolas de Réveillon, near Entrains, depended on the Order of the Val-des-Choux. The cathedral of Nevers had an altar dedicated to St. Nicholas; Prémery also had a chapel under the same patronage at the entrance of the town. A chapel of Saint-Nicolas, with the title of a vicarage, existed in the church of Gimouille; another, with the same title, in the church of Decize; the collegiate church of Varzy had a chaplaincy under the name of this Saint.

We have completed Father Giry's account with the Hagiologie nivernaise *by Mgr Crosnier and with notes kindly supplied by the abbé J.-B. de Blaye and the abbé Guillaume, canon of Nancy. — Cf. the* Life of the Saint *by the Reverend Father Dom Joseph de l'Isle, titular prior of Hareville, Order of St. Benedict.*

ST. ASELLA, ROMAN VIRGIN (410)

St. Jerome, by himself writing the life of this illustrious Roman virgin, immortalised her memory; let us leave the word to him:

"I will say nothing," he says, "of her having been blessed by God from her mother's womb; of her father having seen her, in a heavenly vision he had during his sleep, in the form of a globe of glass more brilliant and purer than all the mirrors of worldly people; and of her having been, while still so to speak in swaddling clothes, consecrated to heaven before the age of ten and destined to enjoy eternal beatitude. Let us leave to grace the favours that this Saint could not merit by her labour. God, who disposes all things by his infinite wisdom, dispenses them as he pleases. He sanctifies Jeremiah before his birth, he makes John the Baptist leap in Elisabeth's womb, and he chooses Paul in his eternal decrees to carry the Gospel of his Son to the Gentiles, because such is his good pleasure. But let us come to what she undertook, what she did and what she accomplished after twelve years with the help of this same grace.

"She shut herself up, at the prompting of the Holy Ghost, in a cell, where she persevered with great constancy to the end of her life. However narrow this place was, she enjoyed in it the whole breadth of paradise. The same spot served her for prayer and for her rest. Her delight was fasting; abstinence was her usual refreshment; and when she saw herself obliged, rather by a necessity common to all men than to satisfy her appetite, to take some food, bread with salt and cold water were her whole nourishment, and she took so little of it that her hunger was excited rather than appeased. As soon as she had resolved to embrace this kind of life and to consecrate herself wholly to God, she sold, without waiting for her parents' consent, her jewels and her gold chains to buy a simple and modest dress, which she could not obtain from her mother; and by this pious bargain she showed her parents that they must not expect a worldly life from one who thus condemned the world by her dress. She lived so solitary and so far from the conversation of creatures that she never appeared in public. She always avoided speaking to men; and, what is admirable, she even deprived herself of seeing a sister whom she loved tenderly.

"She employed her hands at some work so as not to remain idle; but during her work she conversed with her heavenly Spouse in prayer, or she proclaimed his praises by reciting psalms with fervour. When the solemnity of feasts or some particular devotion led her to visit the churches of the holy Martyrs, she went there without being known, and her greatest joy was to be seen by no one. Although she fasted a great part of the year, and even sometimes spent two or three days without eating, she nevertheless kept such abstinence during Lent that one would have said it was all only a single fast. In spite of these austerities she lived to fifty without any stomach trouble, without pain in the bowels, without feeling any weakening of her limbs, although she always slept on the hard ground, and without the roughness of the hair shirt causing her the least deformity; on the contrary, she enjoyed perfect health and a holiness more abundant still. She was in solitude as in a paradise, and found amid the turmoil of the city the rest that solitaries go to seek in hermitages. Nothing was more pleasing than her severity, nor more severe than her joy. Her gaiety was grave and her gravity charming. The pallor that appeared on her face was a sign of her penance, but nothing in it savoured of ostentation. Her words were so well measured that one could say that in speaking she kept silence, and her silence was so judicious that in a manner she spoke while keeping silent. Her walk was accompanied by angelic modesty. She was always dressed in the same way, with a certain carelessness that had nothing of affectation, and this very carelessness was a Christian neatness that condemned the luxury and pomp of worldly people. In short, by the evenness of her life she alone deserved to be admired by the whole of Rome, which was then a city of pleasures, luxury and magnificence, where humility passed for baseness of soul; so

that good people praised her virtue and libertines dared not attack her with their calumnies; widows took her as the model of their perfection, virgins tried to imitate her, married women honoured her, the debauched feared her, and priests regarded her as a marvel of holiness."

This account is by Father Giry. — Cf. St. Jerome, Epistles xv, cxv, cxl.

ST. GERTRUDE OR GÉRÉTRUDE, FOUNDRESS OF THE MONASTERY OF HAMAGE, IN THE DIOCESE OF CAMBRAI (649)

Providence had destined Blessed Gertrude to see several generations of Saints formed around her, whom the Church today proposes to the veneration and admiration of the faithful. She is known almost only through the children who owe her their birth; but, as Holy Scripture says, "the virtue of the children is the praise of those from whom they are born."

St. Gertrude was the daughter of Theobald, lord of Douai and a kinsman of the first Merovingian kings. She married a lord called Rigomer, whom she seems to have lost early; of this marriage were born several children, among whom the historians mention Erchinoald, Sigebert and Adalbaud. The first long distinguished himself at court by the brilliant offices he filled there, and particularly by that of mayor of the palace, which he exercised under the pious Queen Bathilde. Sigebert married St. Bertha and had by her several daughters who faithfully imitated her virtues. After his death his wife withdrew to the monastery of Blangy in Artois, in imitation of her sister-in-law St. Rictrude, widow of Adalbaud, who likewise withdrew to the monastery of Marchiennes after the tragic death of her husband.

St. Gertrude, when she saw her children settled, went, on the advice of St. Amand, to end her days in an oratory built at Hamage; later Eusebia, the eldest of the daughters of St. Adalbaud and St. Rictrude, came to live with her. There she gave herself to all the works of piety and charity, using her influence and riches to relieve the poor, the unfortunate and the afflicted and to lead men to the practice of the Christian virtues. The venerable widow lived thus to a very advanced age and had to bear, as a last trial of her so holy life, the painful loss of her youngest son Adalbaud, cruelly murdered in Gascony. She generously made to God the sacrifice of this so dear son, whom she soon went to rejoin in heaven, at the age of more than eighty. St. Gertrude left the direction of the infant community of Hamage to her granddaughter Eusebia, whom she had herself formed to the religious life.

Her body rested in the priory of Hamage until 686; at that time St. Vindician, bishop of Cambrai and Arras, accompanied by Blessed Hatta, first abbot of Saint-Vaast, raised it from the ground and transferred it to the new church built in honour of Our Lady by Gertrude II, who had succeeded St. Eusebia.

Vies des Saints de Cambrai et d'Arras, by the abbé Destombes.

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[1] We gave the life of St. Peter Paschal on 23 October (vol. XII, p. 659).

[2] His body was buried in the monastery church, behind the high altar. This church having been burned when Cardinal de Lenoncourt was prior of La Charité, the cardinal was content to have the choir repaired, and on this occasion he had the altar moved back. While digging to lay the foundations of this altar, a stone tomb was found. Dom Jacques Maugier, claustral prior, had it opened in the presence of all the religious and the principal inhabitants of La Charité; in it was found a lead coffer on which were inscribed these words: "Here rest the bones of Blessed Gérard, first prior of this monastery." And indeed a certain number of bones were found in this coffer. It is supposed that these relics were profaned in the 16th century by the Huguenots. — Mgr Crosnier, *Hagiologie nivernaise*.

7 December

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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Martyrologies

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY.

At Milan, the Ordination of St. Ambrose, bishop and doctor of the Church, whose holiness and learning are the ornament of the universal Church. 397. — At Alexandria, the birthday of St. Agathon, a soldier, who, during the persecution of Decius, wishing to prevent the pagans from insulting the bodies of the martyrs, at once roused the outcry of the multitude against himself; he was brought before the judge and, persisting in the confession of Jesus Christ, was beheaded for his piety. About 250. — At Antioch, the holy martyrs Polycarp and Theodore. — At Tuburbo, in Africa, St. Servus, martyr, who, during the persecution of the Vandals under the Arian king Huneric, after being long beaten with clubs, was then several times hoisted into the air with pulleys and suddenly let fall with the whole weight of his body on a bed of stones; finally, having been torn all over his body with very sharp stones, he won the palm of martyrdom. 384. — At Chieti, in the kingdom of Naples, St. Urban, bishop and confessor. 9th century. — At Saintes, St. Martin, abbot, at whose tomb miracles are very often worked by the almighty power of God.[1] 400. — In the diocese of Meaux, St. Fare, virgin. 7th century.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED.

In the diocese of Paris, St. Fare, virgin, abbess of Faremoutiers, named in the Roman Martyrology of this day. 655. — In the diocese of Chartres, the translation (1136) of the relics of St. Aignan or Agnan, bishop of that see and confessor, already named in the Martyrology of France of 10 June. He contributed powerfully to the final extinction of the idolatry which still afflicted his diocese. Rich in patrimony, he bequeathed the whole of it to the church of Notre-Dame of Chartres and, full of days and of virtues, fell asleep in the Lord, carrying into the tomb the regrets of all who had known him.[2] Date uncertain. — In the diocese of La Rochelle, St. Martin, abbot, named in the Roman Martyrology of this day. 400. — In the country of Autun, St. Adhegrin or Aldegrin of Touraine, confessor, monk at Baume-les-Moines, then hermit, of whom we have already spoken on 5 June. About 960. — At Laon, St. Gennebaud or Génebaud, first bishop of that see and confessor, whose life we have given on 5 September. 550. — At Bayeux, St. Geretrand, bishop of that see and confessor, whose Acts are lost. He was buried in the church of Saint-Exupère, under the arch of the choir. About 615. — At Saintes, St. Eutropius, priest, disciple of St. Martin, abbot, named in the Roman Martyrology of this day. 5th century. — At Autun, the anniversary of the dedication of the abbey of Saint-Martin. Destroyed by the Saracens, the noble abbey had slept for a hundred years in a shroud of dust. Count Badilon, one of the chief officers of Charles the Bald, passing one day through these ruins, sat down weeping on the sad remains; but, not content with the part of Jeremiah, he took that of Esdras and rebuilt the royal abbey. The Church, which forgets neither great days nor great benefits, celebrated through all the following centuries the solemn anniversary of this rebuilding.[3] 870. — In the diocese of Séez, St. Simeon, solitary in the Passais. 850.

MARTYROLOGIES OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

Martyrology of the Friars Preachers. — At Milan, the Ordination of St. Ambrose, bishop and doctor of the Church, whose holiness and learning are the ornament of the universal Church. 397. — Also the Octave of St. Andrew, apostle.[4] 62.

Martyrology of the Order of Friars Minor. — The Vigil of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, patroness of the whole Seraphic Order.

Martyrology of the Order of Hermits of St. Augustine. — The same as with the Friars Preachers.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS.

Among the Friars Preachers, Blessed Nicholas Fortiguerra, bishop and confessor, of the Order of St. Dominic. This holy religious was born at Siena of illustrious parents. While he was studying at Bologna, at the time when St. Dominic was there, touched by grace he sold his great possessions, distributed them to the shamefaced poor, like his patron, and came to ask the habit of the founder of the Order of Friars Preachers, who willingly granted it. He applied himself with all his strength to the conversion of sinners and had the happiness of bringing back a great number to God, even among heretics and Jews. Honoured with the confidence of his superiors, he founded several convents of the Order in Italy, in Greece and in the Holy Land. He was in Corsica when he learned that the Sovereign Pontiff wished to give him a bishopric in that island. At this news he went and hid in a cave, and he would not have come out of it had not St. Nicholas, in an apparition, rebuked him for so excessive a fear and assured him that the will of God laid the episcopal charge upon him. He was a man of prayer, vowed to the harshest austerities, and extremely kind to the poor. God granted him the grace of miracles during his life and after his death. He foretold his death while preaching: at the end of his sermon he had the grave dug that was to receive him; then, having received the sacraments, he expired after the Mass that was said in his presence. 1270.

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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ST. AMBROSE, ARCHBISHOP OF MILAN, DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH (397)

Pope: St. Siricius. — Emperor of the East: Arcadius.

Ecce examen apum in ore leonis erat, ac favus mellis. One would have said a lion, fearsome but generous, whose eloquent mouth distilled the most exquisite honey, while confounding with a voice of thunder the impiety of the wicked. — Judges xiv, 8.

Ambrose, whom all the Fathers and Doctors of his own time, or who came after him, have admired or praised, had for his father a Roman nobleman of the same name, whose birth, virtue and prudence had raised him to the dignity of prefect of the praetorium of the Gauls. He was not the eldest of his children: Marcellina, whom the profession of virginity made on earth and in heaven a well-beloved Spouse of Jesus Christ, was the first. Satyrus, who in a lay and secular life imitated the detachment and piety of the solitaries, was the second. He himself was only the third and last. All his family was Roman; his ancestors had held great offices in that city, and St. Soteris, one of his kinswomen, had suffered martyrdom there under Diocletian. His brother and sister had also been born there; but, as he came into the world at the time of his father's prefecture, which obliged him to be in the Gauls, it was there, in the city of Arles, of Lyons or of Trier, that he was born. The year is not certain: Baronius thinks it was 333, while Constantine the Great was still living; but Hermant says it was about 340, which he proves in his *Éclaircissements*.

While he was in the cradle, one day when he was sleeping with his mouth open in the courtyard of the palace, a swarm of bees came fluttering round him and surrounded his face. They went into his mouth and came out one after another, as if they wished to work their honey there. A servant charged with feeding him wanted to drive them away, for fear they might harm him; but his father, who regarded this event as a mysterious sign, prevented her. At last the bees flew off and rose so high that they were lost to sight; which made his father say that this child would one day be something great, if God preserved his life. The magistrate died a short time afterwards, and his wife, having nothing more to keep her in the Gauls, returned to Rome with her children. The house to which she withdrew, and which was the place of our Saint's education, still exists. It is likely that it was her husband's. It has been made into a church and a monastery of virgins under the name of Sant'Ambrogio. It is not far from the Capitol.

God gave this great doctor, from his tenderest years, presentiments of what he would one day be. For, seeing that his mother, his sister and another virgin who lived with them kissed the bishop's hand, he would give them his hand to kiss too, saying that they ought to do so, because he would be a bishop. The youth of Rome was then very corrupt and plunged into every sort of dissoluteness; but he did not imitate this bad example, and, by the care he took to avoid bad company and every other occasion of disorder, he kept himself in the modesty and restraint that befitted the good inclinations God had given him. Baronius even holds that he always remained a virgin, and he grounds this opinion on what he says in the prayer of preparation for Mass which bears his name and which many believe to be his. And so we do not doubt that St. Marcellina, his sister, who had received the veil of virginity when he was only a child, and who had preferred this virtue to the greatest advantages of fortune, inspired him with the love of it as he grew in age. And the books *On Virgins*, which he composed a few years after his promotion to the episcopate, show clearly enough that he had always had a particular esteem and affection for this virtue.

He joined the study of languages, of rhetoric and of philosophy to the exercises of piety, and became so skilled in them that he soon appeared with an extraordinary reputation at the bar and in the profession of advocate, which was the step to the highest offices. In this way he won the friendship of the first men of Rome, such as Symmachus, who, though a pagan, was regarded as the leader of the Senate, and Anicius Probus, to whom the Emperor Valentinian had given, in 369, the prefecture of Italy and of several other provinces of the empire. This prefect, recognising Ambrose's merits and the rare qualities of body and mind he had received from heaven, chose him first to serve him as counsellor and a kind of assessor; then, munificence towards his friends being natural to him, he named him governor of Liguria and Aemilia, which then comprised the provinces of the archbishoprics of Milan, Turin, Genoa, Ravenna and Bologna. When Ambrose took leave of Probus to go to his government, the prefect, who did not like the inexorable severity of the Emperor Valentinian and most of his officers, which often went as far as cruelty, showed him how he ought to conduct himself in these memorable words: "Go," he said, "and act, not as a judge, but as a bishop"; and the event showed that this exhortation was a kind of prophecy.

He arrived at Milan, the chief city of his jurisdiction, at the moment when the bishop Auxentius, a great abettor of Arianism, who had governed that Church for twenty years rather as a tyrant than as a pastor, had died, and the Catholics and the Arians were in great contention over the election of a successor. The Emperor Valentinian, who was then at Trier, had not wished to claim the right for himself, and the bishops of the province were not its sole masters; the people then took part in elections, and it was very hard for them to agree amid so great a difference of opinions and affections. It was even to be feared that the two parties would come to blows in the church: the Catholics could not bear that a wolf should be put in the Shepherd's place, and the Arians, who had grown strong during the prelacy of Auxentius and the reign of Constantius, did not want to lose the credit they had had under a bishop of their sect.

St. Ambrose, being informed of what was going on, thought it his duty, as governor of the province, to come into the assembly to prevent this disorder. He came, in fact; he harangued the people publicly and exhorted them with all the force and charm of his eloquence to make the election without tumult. He was still speaking when a child, by an extraordinary impulse of the Spirit of God, cried out in the midst of the gathering: "Ambrose, bishop!" And, this voice having come like a heavenly inspiration, everyone of both parties began to cry out with the child: "Ambrose, bishop!" The governor, who not only was no cleric but had not even yet received baptism, was much surprised at so general a desire. He did what he could to change the people's mind. He told them that what they proposed was altogether against reason; that he had neither the vocation nor the will to be an ecclesiastic; that, even if he had some inclination to it, he was infinitely far from the episcopate; that St. Paul himself excluded him from it by the condition he requires in a bishop, that he must not be a neophyte, and that, being as yet only a catechumen, he was much less than a neophyte; that, besides, he had neither the knowledge of the mysteries of faith and of the ecclesiastical canons nor the experience

needed by a shepherd of the flock of Jesus Christ. These remonstrances, however, had no effect. The people, who were acting by a divine impulse, remained firm in their resolution, and, whatever excuse Ambrose might bring forward, they did not cease to demand him absolutely for bishop.

This made him leave the assembly, and, to make the Milanese change their minds, he took very extraordinary means. He mounted his tribunal and, against the inclinations of his gentleness, had criminals brought before him and put to the question in his presence, so that, passing for cruel, he might be judged unfit for the priesthood. This means not succeeding, he withdrew to his palace and, chaste as he was, had women of bad life brought there publicly, hoping that this spectacle would give the people such an aversion that they would no longer think of him for a dignity that requires an angelic purity. It was plainly seen that these were only artifices he was using to exempt himself from the burden that divine Providence wished to lay on his shoulders. They therefore insisted more and more, and night alone could disperse the multitude that was pressing him to accept the charge.

At midnight he fled from the city and took the road to Pavia, which was also within his jurisdiction; but in vain: for, after walking the whole rest of the night, he found himself at daybreak still at one of the gates of Milan, called the Roman Gate. The Milanese, having recognised him, surrounded him, brought him back to his palace and gave him guards. At the same time they wrote to Valentinian to beg him to approve the election, and even to oblige him by his sovereign authority to submit to it. The prince was all the more pleased with it because it was a great honour to him that the man he had chosen as magistrate had been taken for bishop; so he instructed the vicar or governor of Italy to use all diligence that the thing might be carried out without hindrance. As for the prefect Anicius Probus, he was extremely gratified, seeing that he had foretold without thinking what was to happen when he said to Ambrose: “Go, act rather as a bishop than as a judge.” Meanwhile our Saint found means to escape and withdrew secretly to the house of one of his friends, named Leontius, who had a house in the country; but, the governor of Italy having ordered, under very severe penalties, all who knew where he was to denounce him, Leontius denounced him himself by an innocent treachery.

Thus Ambrose was discovered, and, having at last yielded to what God asked of him, he was baptised and promoted successively to the orders by a Catholic bishop, and eight days after his baptism, on 14 December 374, he received episcopal consecration, being about thirty-four years old, or, according to Baronius, forty-one. One cannot believe how much joy all Italy and the other provinces of the empire had at his election, in the hope that by his zeal and virtue he would repair the great evils the Church of Milan had suffered through the artifice and perfidy of the heretic Auxentius. St. Basil, archbishop of Caesarea, wrote him a letter of congratulation in which he gives him very fine praise; and the other prelates, both of the East and of the West, also approved and praised the choice that had been made of him, because, although the ecclesiastical canons had not been followed to the letter, their spirit had nevertheless been followed; and because, besides, God had shown clearly enough that He wished the ordinary rules to be passed over on this occasion.

St. Ambrose, having been raised in this way to the episcopal throne, soon showed that he was worthy of that rank. He gave to the poor all the gold and silver he had. He made his church owner of all his property, leaving only the usufruct to St. Marcellina, his sister; he would not take the management of his temporal goods, but, to be more free and have nothing to prevent him from giving himself wholly to his flock, he entrusted the whole care of them to his brother, St. Satyrus, who apparently came then to live with him at Milan. As he had scarcely studied theological matters, he applied himself seriously to acquiring a knowledge of them, both by reading the holy Scriptures and the Fathers of the Church who had gone before him — whose thoughts he often gives in his works, even transcribing their very words — and by conferences with learned men, above all with Simplician, a priest of Rome, whom Baronius believes St. Damasus sent him to instruct him in the doctrine of the faith and the rules of ecclesiastical discipline. He said Mass every day

when he had no unavoidable hindrance, and one can see from the prayers he composed to prepare himself to celebrate this august mystery with what devotion he did so. He preached to his people every Sunday, and his sermons were filled with so much doctrine, eloquence and unction that the more he was heard the more men wished to hear him, and the more marvellous fruit he drew from them, making incredible conversions in Milan. That of St. Augustine alone was so important and so advantageous a conquest for the Church that one may say that, had Ambrose converted only Augustine, he would have converted whole provinces and kingdoms.

He devoted himself with so constant an assiduity to the other functions of his charge that he did alone, for the instruction of catechumens, what five bishops together had great difficulty in doing after his death. He was easy of access, and received into his palace and even into his room the poorest persons with as much kindness as the richest; that is why he would not have guards at his door, nor anyone refused entry. He was always ready to exercise charity towards his faithful; and he took no less care of the poor, the captives, the widows, the orphans, the wards and every kind of unfortunate than if they had been his own children. He had not much to reform in his conduct when he became bishop, for it had always been very well ordered; but he worked perpetually at his perfection in temperance, sobriety, fasting, the cutting off of the most innocent pleasures and the mortification of the senses. Although he was one of the most learned doctors of the Church, he nonetheless submitted his writings to the criticism not only of illustrious persons, such as were then St. Simplician and St. Sabinus, bishop of Piacenza, but also of several others of less account. This is how he writes of it to St. Sabinus: “Everyone deceives himself in his writings. Many things escape one on rereading, and, just as fathers always find their children pleasing, however ugly they may be, so the worst-made discourses do not fail to please their authors. Besides, my mind is wrapped in darkness and I acknowledge myself guilty of imprudence; so I beg you to examine severely the treatises I send you; weigh their sentences and words, and freely correct in them whatever you find worthy of correction.” He was no less deferential in everything else. The great prudence with which God had endowed him, and that strength of mind which was his proper character, did not prevent him from consulting in almost all his affairs the same St. Simplician, whom he always regarded as his father. He also asked advice of his sister, St. Marcellina, in the difficulties that arose for him, and ordinarily did nothing important without first taking her counsel.

He applied himself especially to leading his hearers to purity, a virtue so pleasing to Jesus Christ that it may be called the honour of

Christianity, and he often exhorted young girls to remain virgins. It is true that these exhortations bore little fruit in Milan, because the mothers stifled in their daughters’ hearts all the good sentiments the holy prelate had awakened there by his word; but, as they spread, these exhortations succeeded elsewhere and in places very far away, so that very chaste girls were brought to Ambrose from Bologna, from Piacenza and even from the ends of Africa and the land of the Moors, wishing to receive the veil of virginity from his hands. This made him say very pleasantly that, since the discourses he delivered at Milan did so much good in distant provinces while his own people remained unmoved, he was minded to go and preach in those provinces in order to touch the people of Milan. Excellent communities of virgins were formed under his direction, above all at Bologna; besides serving the Saviour with a pure heart, they applied themselves with marvellous zeal to winning Him ever new spouses. It was for them that he composed his three books *On Virgins*, which we may call his masterpiece, and in which he surpassed himself as much as he surpasses most other doctors in the rest of his writings. As he took extraordinary care to encourage virgins to preserve their chastity, so he also very often spoke to widows from the pulpit, to make known to them the excellence and the obligations of their state. But, in order to be no less useful to those who were absent than to those who were present, he also gave to the public a *Treatise on Widows*, which is full of that light and divine unction with which his soul was filled.

He had a singular compassion for sinners, and when they came to him to accuse themselves of their crimes he received and heard them with a goodness and tenderness that are scarcely conceivable. He would then shed tears in such abundance that he broke their hearts and obliged them too to shed tears on their side; he used such great condescension towards them that one would have said he himself had been the guilty one; and he was so discreet in what concerned him that he never spoke of their sin except to God alone, to intercede for them with His goodness. He kept this discretion not only regarding the faults he had heard in sacramental confession, which must remain under the seal of an inviolable secret, but also regarding those that had been disclosed to him as to a charitable and sovereign physician and a shepherd full of wisdom and mercy.

As the reign of Christianity was still recent, many superstitious observances of paganism remained on all sides; but he applied himself with apostolic vigour to cutting them off, among others those performed on the first day of the year in honour of Janus. For this he ordained a fast which lasted until the entire destruction of idolatry and the establishment of the solemn feast of the Circumcision. He also abolished the feasts held in church on the tombs of the martyrs under pretext of honouring them, because, although at the beginning this was done piously and in order to exercise charity and feed the poor, great disorders had afterwards crept in, and the churches had in this way become places of tumult, laughter, drunkenness and other like dissoluteness. St. Augustine, on returning to Africa, imitated this zeal and saw to it that the same abuse was banished from the churches of Carthage, of Hippo and of some others that chose to follow their example. It was on this subject that he said in one of his sermons, the 101st *De Diversis*: “The martyrs hate your cups and your flasks. They hate your gridirons and your frying-pans. They hate your excesses and your drunkenness. In short, they hate this custom and do not love those who observe it.”

If St. Ambrose devoted himself with such solicitude to the right ordering of the laity, he applied himself with still more care to the good discipline of his clergy. He knew that a good priest is a treasure that can never be esteemed enough; that the greatest evils of the Church come from the corruption of those who govern her, as the greatest goods arise from their wise conduct and good example; and that, to reform the people, one must necessarily begin by reforming the ministers of the holy altar. So he would not tolerate libertine and vicious men among his clerics; he wished all of them to be assiduous at the divine offices and to be modest, restrained and perfectly composed in their bearing, their looks and their dress; he even refused to admit one of his friends because he had altogether worldly manners. When one of tried virtue died, he bitterly lamented the loss, because on the one hand he would have wished to die before him, and on the other he knew it would be hard to fill his place with someone of equal merit. And so God granted him the grace of having in his clergy men eminent in learning and piety. St. Paulinus, bishop of Nola, was his priest. St. Felix and St. Venerius, bishops of Bologna and of Milan, were his deacons. Paulinus, who wrote his life and was afterwards one of the most vigorous adversaries of the heretic Pelagius, and Theodulus, who was raised to the episcopal throne of the Church of Modena, also held the same rank.

As he greatly desired that the dioceses be provided with good pastors, he contributed and helped to this with all his power. It was he who, after the death of St. Philaster, bishop of Brescia, worked to put that bishopric under the direction of St. Gaudentius. He also consecrated St. Honoratus, bishop of Vercelli, and St. Felix, first bishop of Como; and he sent to St. Vigilius, bishop of Trent, newly ordained, holy rules for governing himself well in the administration of that charge.

The struggles that our incomparable doctor had with the Arians after his promotion to the episcopate were continual, because, as soon as he had openly declared that he could not tolerate them in his diocese, they never ceased to persecute him. It is true that during the reign of Valentinian I and of Gratian, his son, their attacks were very slight and of no consequence, because these great princes had made themselves the inflexible protectors of the Catholic religion. But after Valentinian had died, Gratian had been killed by the men of the tyrant Maximus, and Valentinian the Younger had mounted the imperial throne under the regency

of Justina, his mother, an Arian princess, Ambrose had furious shocks to withstand, and he needed a more than human strength to come out of them victorious.

Under the reign of Gratian he wrote five books *On the Faith*, in which he established with invincible force and solidity the divinity of Jesus Christ. He went boldly to Sirmium, the capital of Illyricum, where there was then a dispute over the election of a bishop, and, in spite of the intrigue of the Empress Justina, he had a Catholic elected. It was on this occasion that, as he had gone up to the episcopal chair to speak to the people, an Arian girl had the effrontery to go up after him in order to make him fall towards the women of her sect and so expose him to their insults and blows; but the Saint, turning to her, said to her firmly, as he often related himself: “I know that I am unworthy of the priesthood and of the rank it gives me in the Church; but it befits neither your sex nor your profession to lay hands on a bishop, however contemptible he may be; and you ought to fear that God, who is the just avenger of His ministers, may punish you severely.” This remonstrance was a prophecy; for this shameless woman died suddenly a few moments later, and the very next day she was carried to the tomb. St. Ambrose attended her funeral, showing thereby that he bore no resentment for the injury she had done him. This terrible chastisement stopped the tumult of the Arians and brought about the peaceful and quiet election of Anemius, an ecclesiastic of acknowledged faith and piety.

Our Saint was present at the Council of Aquileia; there he disputed against Palladius, an Arian heretic, confounded him by the force of his reasonings drawn from the holy Scriptures, and concurred in the condemnation of this impostor, as well as of Secundianus and Attalus, who professed the same impiety.

It was about this time that the blessed prelate, having been obliged to go to Macedonius, master of the offices of the emperor’s palace, to beg pardon for a criminal, this uncivil minister, whom the prince’s favour filled with pride and presumption, refused him his door and would not let him come in to speak to him. “You too will come to the church,” St. Ambrose said to him then, “but you will not enter it, though you find its doors open.” The event showed the truth of this prediction; for, Gratian having been killed the following year by Andragathius, general of Maximus’s army, Macedonius tried to take refuge in the church to escape death, and, although the doors were not shut, he could never find the way in.

Two other noblemen, who passed for Catholics though at heart they were Arians, wishing to make sport of this great man, put to him a difficult question on the mystery of the Incarnation and begged him to give its solution publicly. He consented and promised to do so the very next day in the basilica called the Portian. He was there at the hour he had fixed, and with him a crowd of hearers delighted to hear him discourse on this matter. But the two chamberlains, instead of keeping the appointment, got into a chariot and went for a drive outside the city without telling anyone. God did not suffer the contempt they so insolently showed for His servant and for the truths of our religion: they fell from their chariot, broke their heads, and were carried to the tomb at the very time when they had meant to mock the assembly of Catholics. St. Ambrose, who knew nothing of this accident, after waiting a long time, went up into the pulpit notwithstanding their absence, and the sermon he preached there has given us that excellent treatise entitled *On the Mystery of the Incarnation of Our Lord*.

Towards the end of Gratian’s life he went to Rome, where he had not yet been in the eight years he had been bishop, to attend a council that Pope St. Damasus had convoked on the complaints of Maximus the Cynic, the false archbishop of Constantinople. It was on this journey that there happened to him what Cardinal Baronius reports as a thing known by tradition. Having lodged at an inn, he asked his host how his affairs were going and whether he had anything that troubled or afflicted him. The man, who was vain and presumptuous, began to boast of his good fortune and, without giving any thanks to God, the author of all good things, told the blessed bishop that he had never had any adversity; that everything had until then succeeded according to his wish; that he did not even remember having been ill; that his goods were abundant and that everything smiled on him in this world. Then the Saint remembered these words of Job: “They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment they go down to hell.” He knew, by a divine impulse, that

they were about to be fulfilled in this wretched man; and so, turning to those who accompanied him, he said to them: “Let us leave this place quickly, for fear of being caught up in the ruin of this family.” Scarcely had they gone out when the earth opened and swallowed up the inn with all who were in it; and that fatal place was changed into a lake, which serves as an everlasting witness and proof of so strange an event, and teaches us too that the happiness of the wicked is a secret scourge of God, and that we must not envy but rather deplore the prosperity of those who seem the happiest in the world.

When St. Ambrose arrived in Rome his mother had already died; but he found there his sister, St. Marcellina, and the virgin of whom we spoke at the beginning, who was her companion; and when they came to kiss his hand he reminded them, smiling, that he had made them kiss it when he was a child, assuring them that he would be a bishop. His stay in that city was marked by the miraculous healing of a paralysed woman, which he worked by laying his hands on her after his prayer. As soon as he had rendered the Church the services he was bound to render, he returned to Milan to watch over the conduct of his flock. It was there too that he drove out the deputies of Priscillian and his adherents, who, having been condemned in Spain and in the Gauls, had come to seek protection and support in Italy. It was there too that, to prevent the effect of the petition that some Roman senators who were still pagans had sent to the emperor to obtain the re-establishment of the altar of Victory, whose demolition he had ordered, with permission to offer sacrifices to the ancient divinities of the empire and to draw the costs of this superstition from the treasury, our Saint presented to the same emperor, by order of Pope St. Damasus, the petition of the Catholic senators, who protested against such abominable demands and assured His Majesty that they did not come from the body of the Senate but from a few sacrilegious men who persisted obstinately in the impiety of idolatry. And he conducted this affair so wisely that the pagans’ petition was rejected and that of the Christians received and ratified.

The death of Gratian soon followed this happy event, and it was, as we have already said, the beginning of the persecutions, and at the same time of the most illustrious victories, of St. Ambrose. Valentinian II, son of the first and half-brother of Gratian by a second marriage, became master of the empire of the West; but, as he was still young, Justina, his mother, an Arian princess, took the conduct of affairs in hand and seized the sovereign power. She could not, however, at first let her fury break out against the Catholic faith. The tyrant Maximus, who had put the emperor to death, was master of Britain, Germany and the Gauls; he had two great armies ready to fall upon Italy, and the little Valentinian was too weak to stop his conquests by force. In so great a peril Justina took good care not to attack St. Ambrose or the orthodox who were united with him; on the contrary, she had recourse to him and begged him to go as ambassador to the tyrant, to try to soften his mind, to prevent him from crossing the Alps and to bring him to an accommodation.

Nothing was more difficult than this project, and it seemed no less an undertaking than trying to stop a torrent at the height of its rush. Ambrose nevertheless, who loved his country and knew that the tyrant’s irruption into Italy would fill it with murder and blood, accepted this mission. He set out from Milan, crossed the Alps and arrived at Maximus’s camp; he asked for an audience and acted so skilfully with him that the tyrant complained afterwards that it was he who had prevented him from crossing the mountains when it was time, and who had halted the course of his victories. He was a long time on this journey, because Maximus kept him where he was until the return of Victor, whom he himself had sent to Valentinian. But God at last brought him back to Milan to uphold the interests of His glory, against which the pagans and the Arians had conspired under cover of the prince’s minority.

Symmachus, prefect of Rome, with some pagan senators, arrived at court to renew the demands they had made the year before to Gratian: namely, that they might be allowed to restore the altar of Victory and the sacrifices of the idols, and to recover the ancient privileges of paganism. It was much to be feared that Valentinian would give way to these solicitations, both because of the weakness of his age and of his empire, and because most of those who sat in his council greatly favoured Symmachus and were themselves still

attached to idolatry. Besides, the pagans did not lack money to corrupt those who had access to His Majesty; and they had done things so secretly that neither the Pope, nor the bishops, nor any of the Christian senators had been informed of it. St. Ambrose was the first to whom it was made known when the affair had already been put before the council; but he lost no time. He at once took up his pen and wrote strongly to Valentinian, pointing out to him that he could not grant the idolaters what they asked without making himself guilty of sacrilege, declaring himself the enemy of Jesus Christ, forbidding himself approach to the holy altars, shutting against himself the door of the church, opposing the wise constitutions of Gratian, his brother, and falling away from his virtue and piety. The prince, young and childlike as he was, rejected the advice of his bad counsellors and answered vigorously that he would never grant the pagans what Gratian had taken from them. Our Saint was not content with this victory: he also composed an excellent treatise against the arguments of Symmachus, in which he refuted them so perfectly that the prefect never had anything to reply, and which has passed for one of the finest apologies ever made on behalf of Christianity. It is the eleventh Letter, to Valentinian.

It was not so easy for him to defeat the undertakings of the Arians. The ungrateful Justina, who owed him the preservation of her son's crown and her own, soon forgot so considerable a benefit; and, because she knew that he alone was capable of opposing her design of reviving Arianism in Milan, she set every spring in motion to ruin him. She had already set up against him a false bishop of her sect, a Scythian by origin, who, to hide the great crimes he had committed in his own country, had had himself called Mercurinus instead of Auxentius, which was his name. It is true that his diocese stretched no further than the empress's chariot; that he had neither temple, nor oratory, nor altar, nor place of assembly, and that his parishioners were no more than a few officers of the court and a few ladies, with a troop of Goths who followed the prince. But Justina undertook at all costs to have a church given to him. She spoke of it in council, and it was resolved there that our Saint should be obliged to give up to him the Portian basilica. He was summoned to the palace and the proposal was made to him; but this great man, who burned with zeal for his Master's honour, took good care not to deliver a single one of his temples to his enemies. He answered courageously that Christian churches were for honouring God there with a holy and religious worship, and not for holding sacrilegious assemblies in them, which could only be most odious to His divine Majesty; that those of the Arians were of this kind; and consequently that he could give them no church, either inside or outside the city, in which to hold them. Meanwhile the people, fearing that some violence might be done him in the palace, ran there in such numbers and with such impetuosity that the whole court was frightened; the empress herself was forced, to calm this tumult, to have recourse to the man she was persecuting, to assure him that nothing would be attempted against the Portian basilica, and to beg him to calm and dismiss the people. He did so all the more willingly because he would rather have died than be the cause of any movement of sedition and disturbance in the city.

The very next day Justina, forgetting what she had promised, carried her design further still; for, no longer thinking of the Portian basilica, which was outside the city, she wanted to have a new church that was within, and she sent word to the Saint, on the emperor's behalf, that he was to deliver it up that very hour, without suffering the people to interfere. He answered nobly that neither could he deliver it nor could the emperor seize it, because it was the house of God, of which bishops were the guardians and not the masters, and over which kings had no lawful right. Many other demands were made on him on this point, but he remained constant and unshakeable in his resolution; all the people applauded his answers and protested that they were ready to give their blood for the defence of their bishop and the upholding of the Catholic faith. This happened on the Friday before Palm Sunday.

On that same Sunday and on the following Wednesday the emperor and the princess his mother were not content with requests and commands: they sent soldiers and had the hangings of the palace carried now to the Portian basilica, now to the new church, of which they wished to make themselves masters. They had citizens who had seized an Arian priest arrested and loaded with chains. They committed various acts of violence to

keep the Catholics away while they took possession of one of these temples; but none of this succeeded. On the one hand our Saint, by his signal prudence, prevented the people from making any sedition and any blood from being shed; but on the other hand he did so much — by his unshakeable firmness, by his prayers and tears before God, by his assiduity in the church and by his perseverance in entertaining his people there with holy discourses drawn from the histories of the Old and New Testament — that he made all these efforts vain. At last, on Good Friday, calm was restored to the Church of Milan, and the emperor showed that he no longer thought of giving a basilica to the Arians in that great city where he resided.

Calligonus, the chief of the palace eunuchs, angered against the holy prelate for the resistance he had offered to his prince's will, threatened to have his head cut off; but Ambrose made him this admirable reply, which covered him with confusion: "I wish that God may allow you to do it; I shall then suffer what bishops are accustomed to suffer, and you will do what eunuchs ordinarily do." Two years later this insolent man himself had his head cut off for an immoral act. Euthymius, another of the prince's officers, wishing to please the empress, had during all this great trouble had a chariot made ready in a house next to the church, in order to throw the holy prelate into it as he came out from the service and so carry him out of the city into some other province; but he did not dare carry out his plan because of the zeal the Milanese showed for the preservation of their holy pastor; and he himself, the following year, was driven from Milan and taken into exile in the very chariot he had prepared for so criminal an attempt.

Never did a victor use his victory more soberly and with more moderation than Ambrose. He knew that he owed it neither to his strength nor to his industry, but to the infinite goodness of God, who is the source of all good things and without whom all men's efforts and skill are vain; and so he did nothing but exhort his people to give Him thanks for it and to acknowledge this favour by acts of religion and of mercy.

At the end of the year the war began again with more violence than before. The emperor issued an ordinance by which he permitted all who followed the decrees of the Council of Rimini — which had established Arianism by proscribing the doctrine of the consubstantiality of the Word — to have churches, to hold assemblies and to perform the functions of their religion publicly, with a prohibition to the bishops, under pain of death, to oppose it. It is true that one of the secretaries of state, named Benevolus, a man of signal piety, refused to subscribe to a law so impious and so contrary to the public good, preferring to lose his office and be banished from the council rather than contribute to the condemnation of the truth; but others were found who made no such difficulty and willingly signed this law to win the prince's good graces. Upon this edict, Valentinian and Justina again demanded of St. Ambrose, for the Arians, the Portian basilica, with the sacred vessels that were in it, to serve them for the celebration of the holy mysteries. The Saint refused them with the same vigour as the year before and told them with an intrepid voice that, if Naboth had not been willing to deliver to Ahab and Jezebel a vineyard that was the inheritance of his fathers, it would be strange if he, a bishop, should abandon to the discretion of the Arians a church that was the inheritance of Jesus Christ; that, if it were a question of his own goods, he would willingly give them to whomever Their Majesties pointed out to him; but he begged them to consider that it was a question of a good that was not his, of which he was only the trustee and for which he would have to give account at the judgment of God.

Upon this answer it was first resolved to arrest him; but, by a miracle of divine Providence, although he did not hide, went out every day either to make visits or to go with his people to the tombs of the martyrs, and even often passed in front of the palace going or coming without being guarded by anyone, no one ever dared lay a hand on him or offer him any insult. Next an order was served on him to withdraw wherever he wished and to take with him all who might wish to follow him: this was so that the Arians might have fewer adversaries in the city and might more easily make themselves masters not only of a church in the suburb but also of the cathedral. This sentence of exile was very welcome to him, and he asked nothing better than to carry it out; but, seeing clearly that in his absence his dear flock would be the prey of the wolves who wished to devour it, he held firm and told the man who had come to him that, if he were torn from his fold against his

will, he would let himself be carried off without resistance, but that he could not in any way leave of himself the flock that Providence had entrusted to him.

This noble reply made the Empress Justina send soldiers to seize him. They came to the church where he was; but the people guarded him within with such assiduity and constancy that they could never get in. God Himself willed to be his protection, for, when the leaves of the doors were sometimes left open, the soldiers did not notice it, and when they wanted to make themselves masters of them they had not the power; they even conceived such esteem for the blessed prelate that, when they heard the faithful singing the divine offices or protesting by their acclamations their inviolable attachment to the Catholic faith, they joined their voices outside to those that resounded within. It was at that time that St. Ambrose, to prevent weariness and lukewarmness in the people, who remained shut up with him for several days in his basilica, composed sacred hymns and ordered them to be sung, together with the psalms, canticles, antiphons and versicles, according to the usage of the Church of the East; which inspired the faithful with such devotion that they almost forgot to drink, to eat and the other relief necessary to life. Not that they lived without any bodily food: for beside the basilica there was an enclosure of houses intended for lodging the clergy, surrounded by a good wall, to which they went one after another to take their meals by back doors without the soldiers being able to prevent it; but God gave them such courage that they were content with very little, and their whole consolation was to watch and pray with their blessed pastor.

The court grew more weary of his perseverance, and of that of the faithful who were with him, than he himself did of being shut up with his sheep in the mystical sheepfold of his church. That is why the emperor took it into his head to send and summon him to come to the palace to dispute, in his presence, against the false bishop Mercurinus on the contested matters of religion. The Saint scorned this summons and sent word to the emperor that, if it were a question of disputing against his bishop in full council, he would do it very willingly; but that to go and dispute against him in the palace, before laymen, catechumens and pagans, such as were the arbiters he wished to have, would be contrary to the holy Canons and would tend to the dishonour of the Church. He then preached divinely against this impostor and gave the faithful such horror of him that they would rather have endured a thousand deaths than submit to his sacrilegious authority. Thus the constancy of a single man filled with the spirit of God made vain all the efforts of a great monarch and a proud empress, and the Church suffered no harm, because Ambrose could never bring himself to yield anything to those who persecuted him. The finding of the bodies of St. Gervase and St. Protase, which happened at this same time, the evident and incontestable miracles they worked in the sight of all, and the bright red and almost warm blood that flowed from their veins after they had been buried for more than a century, completed his victory and confounded the Arians. Justina, who had sent a murderer to assassinate him, and had even won over a magician so that by his spells he might sow division between him and his people, without any of these stratagems succeeding, saw clearly that heaven and earth were against her. And so she calmed down a little and in some sort left the Church of Milan in peace under the guidance of so holy a prelate.

One of the leading Arians saw an angel speaking in St. Ambrose’s ear while he was preaching the Catholic truths, which brought about his conversion and humbled the pride of the princess Justina; and the tyrant Maximus, according to Theodoret, wrote to Valentinian that, unless he stopped the persecution against the Church, he would very soon bring his victorious arms into Italy to avenge the injury he was doing to God and His ministers. This threat dismayed the emperor and his mother all the more because they learned that the tyrant was preparing for war almost before he had threatened it. They were hardly in a state to withstand his irruption: their armies were weak, their strongholds badly fortified, their treasury exhausted, and they had so embittered all the orders of the empire by the bad steps of their government that there was no great inclination to sacrifice oneself for the interest of their crown. What they could do in so troublesome a juncture was to have recourse to the great Ambrose, whom they had so outrageously persecuted. They

remembered that it was he who the first time had prevented the tyrant from coming to surprise them, at a time when he would have found them destitute of all help. They knew that he was too generous to resent the injuries he had received, and that they could still hope he would make it a point of virtue to return them good for evil and to procure them liberty and life, although they had made such extraordinary efforts to seize his person, to load him with chains and to put him to death.

Their hope was not vain. Ambrose, whom Justina had regarded as her greatest enemy; Ambrose, whom she had torn with the most atrocious insults and calumnies; Ambrose, who had everything to fear from the fury of Maximus, who complained that he had deceived him in his first embassy and was the reason he had not made himself at one stroke emperor of the whole world — Ambrose, we say, nonetheless undertook a second embassy to him. He went therefore with all speed to Trier for the service of his prince and his country; he presented himself at the tyrant's palace; he entered his council; not having been able to obtain a private audience, as he asked and as he believed was due to his character and to the eminence of his mission, he openly reproached him with his injustice in having rebelled against Gratian, his sovereign; in having robbed him of sceptre and life; in keeping his bones deprived of the honour of burial; and in renewing war against the young Valentinian, who had never done him any harm and to whom the empire lawfully belonged. Finally he insisted vigorously on two things: the continuation of peace and the restitution of the body of the late emperor.

Maximus tried to clear himself of the just reproaches made to him; but, to keep him amused at his court while he pushed on his preparations for war, he answered that he would deliberate on his demands in his council. The Saint saw through his artifice and did not let himself be deceived by it, as other ambassadors who came after him were. He wrote of it to the emperor and warned him to be on his guard. As for himself, during his stay at Trier he carried his episcopal freedom further still. For not only did he absolutely refuse to communicate with the Ithacian bishops — a fault St. Martin had committed — but he also separated himself from the communion of the tyrant; and Paulinus himself, his first historian, says that he cut him off from the union of the faithful and warned him to do penance, that is to say that he excommunicated him.

He therefore obtained nothing from this deceiver, whom his pride and ambition made inexorable; but he had the skill to discover his secrets so as to inform Valentinian and all Italy of them. On his return to Milan he gave good advice to the young prince and his mother; and, had they believed him, they would not have been caught unprepared by Maximus, nor forced to flee shamefully to the East to the Emperor Theodosius, as they did. But God permitted this great blindness to punish them for the persecution they had stirred up against His servant and against the Church.

This is not the place to relate what happened in that so memorable war. Maximus entered Italy and, no longer finding Valentinian there, made himself entirely its master. Theodosius came to fight him; and, having defeated his generals, he defeated him too and besieged him in Aquileia, where he seized him and could not prevent his soldiers from putting him to death to avenge his murder of Gratian. He then restored Valentinian to all his own states and to those of Gratian, his brother, warning him to renounce the impiety of the Arians, which had brought such great scourges upon him, and to remain firm in the profession of the Catholic faith; and in this way he procured a general peace for the Church, for the empire and for the whole world. During these great events Justina, who was not worthy to see their end, was taken from this world; and St. Ambrose, being at Milan, kept back his diocesans and prevented them from taking flight, assuring them by a prophetic spirit that their city would not be attacked and that they would suffer no harm — as in fact happened.

One cannot believe the esteem Theodosius had for this incomparable prelate: he regarded him as the protector of the faith, the shield of the Church, the bulwark of the State and the most generous bishop in the world. The Saint did not grow proud of this esteem, but used it to good purpose to correct that prince when he failed, and to prevent or reform many disorders that he recognised or foresaw were to arise in his empire. With what force did he not write to him when, by a decree of his council, he had obliged the bishop of

Callinicum to rebuild at his own expense the Jewish synagogue he had burnt, and had condemned to heavy penalties some monks who had set fire to a church belonging to the Valentinian heretics! He pointed out to him the injustice of his ordinance, the harm it was going to do to religion, the advantage it was going to give the enemies of Jesus Christ over His servants, and the liberty they would then take to insult the Catholics — as in fact the Jews and heretics had first insulted the bishop and the monks before these two burnings. This letter, pressing as it was, having not yet been able to change Theodosius's resolution, with what vigour did he not urge him in the church itself, before everyone, when about to go up to the altar, to quash his sentence, revoke his rescript and stop all proceedings — even protesting to him that he would not begin Mass until he had obtained from his clemency what he asked! He succeeded by this means; and Theodosius, who could not sufficiently admire the invincible courage of the holy prelate, was delighted to have been forced to do what of himself he would never have done.

How great again was his generosity in upholding the interests of religion before that monarch when Symmachus, former prefect of Rome, had the boldness to ask him once more for what had been refused so many times: to leave the pagans the liberty of their sacrifices and to furnish them with money from the treasury to perform those abominable ceremonies! Ambrose then had the last blow of the club dealt to idolatry. Symmachus was banished, the sacrifices to idols were entirely forbidden, and a decree was made to pull down many very celebrated temples of the false divinities that still remained.

But, finally, who could worthily depict the episcopal, or rather apostolic, vigour that our glorious prelate showed towards this same prince when he had made himself guilty of the slaughter of the inhabitants of Thessalonica? These inhabitants were criminals: they had raised a sedition to get out of prison a charioteer convicted of a detestable crime; and in this sedition they had killed Butheric, who commanded the emperor's troops, with several other officers of his army; so for this crime they deserved severe punishment. But Theodosius went too far in their chastisement. The soldiers sent into the city for the purpose had orders to cut down for three hours all whom they met. The innocent were massacred with the guilty, women with men, children with old men; and a father, offering to have his throat cut for his two sons, could obtain the life of only one, and even then both were killed while he was deliberating which of the two he should ask for. When Ambrose, who believed he had obtained from Theodosius the pardon of that city, learned of this execution, he was overwhelmed with grief; he wept for those who had been massacred, but he wept still more over Theodosius, the author of so great an evil. He wrote to him of it and spoke to him of it; but he did so with such force and unction that he brought him to one of the most exemplary penances ever seen in Christendom.

He was not yet quite resolved to submit to the remedies that this wise and excellent physician wished to give him when, notwithstanding his crime, he came one Sunday to the church to attend the divine offices. Ambrose went to meet him and addressed him with a powerful discourse to make him enter into himself and to prevent him from entering the assembly of the faithful before he had expiated by his tears the fault he had committed. Theodosius humbled himself before him; but, so as not to be shut out from the house of God, he told him that he was not the first prince to have committed great crimes; that David had been an adulterer and a murderer, and yet had not ceased to approach the tabernacle and to be admitted to offer sacrifices to the Lord. "Yes," said Ambrose, "but since you have imitated his fault, imitate also his penance." And this word struck such a blow in the monarch's heart that he resolved not only to weep in secret over the haste of his ordinance, which had been the cause of so many killings, but also to do public penance for it. He did it for eight months, deprived of communion and forbidden entry to the church.

At the end of that time, the feast of Christmas having come, Rufinus, his favourite, who saw him bathed in tears and overwhelmed with grief because he was not allowed to enter the church, where the poor, the slaves and the lowest servants entered freely, urged him to go there, assuring him that he would obtain from Ambrose a relaxation of the penance he had imposed on him. The favourite went there a little before him, in the hope that the holy bishop would not refuse him a favour that seemed so reasonable; but Ambrose

repulsed him with indignation, reproaching him with having been the one who had led his master to order the slaughter that had made him guilty before God and before men. Theodosius came after Rufinus, and the Saint spoke to him too with surprising severity; nevertheless, after he had asked pardon, shown the excess of his sorrow and promised to make a law that sentences of death should not be carried out until thirty days after being pronounced, he at last admitted him to the ranks of the faithful. There this great prince prostrated himself on the ground, bathed the pavement with his tears and, pierced with sorrow and contrition, said, tearing his hair: “My soul cleaveth to the dust; quicken Thou me, O Lord, according to Thy word.” St. Augustine, reflecting on this event, says that God willed that this emperor should do public penance and humble himself in the presence of the whole people so that we might learn to do so when our crimes require it, and so that neither poor nor rich, neither artisan nor great lord, might blush to submit to this sovereign remedy which a prince as powerful as Theodosius had not refused.

Theodoret, who has written this so edifying story at greater length, adds a very remarkable circumstance: that, the hour having come to offer the gifts on the holy Table, the emperor, still bathed in tears, approached the altar to make his offering, according to custom; but that, after making it, he remained within the enclosure of the sanctuary, as the other bishops had always allowed him, so as to prepare himself there more quietly for the communion of the holy mysteries. Then the generous Ambrose sent a deacon to tell him that this was not the place for laymen; that neither purple, nor gold, nor diadem gave him the right to remain there; that only clerics could be suffered there. Anyone but Theodosius would have taken offence at so extraordinary and apparently so ill-timed a message; but this perfect penitent, whom our Saint wished to purify entirely by this last humiliation, received it with admirable modesty and submission. He said only that it was not through pride or usurpation that he had remained with the priests, but that he had followed in this the usage of the Churches of the East, where no difficulty had ever been made about it; that for the rest he was much obliged to the blessed bishop for the advice he had given him, and that he would carry it out in its full extent. In fact he went out of the enclosure of the sanctuary and withdrew among the people. Afterwards, having returned to Constantinople, when the archbishop Nectarius invited him, according to custom, to remain in the choir of priests after presenting his offering, he said that he had so far found only Ambrose who deserved the name of bishop, and that he alone had made him know the difference between a bishop and an emperor. Following his example, the Emperor Valentinian, who during the regency of his mother Justina had so persecuted our Saint, afterwards had much veneration and deference for him; so that one may say that Ambrose, by his virtue and his courage, had become the master of kings and the father of those who held absolute command over the whole world.

When peace had been restored to the world by the defeat of Maximus, a new war arose in his own Church which continued to exercise his zeal. Jovinian, who had formerly professed in a monastery a very austere life, eating no bread, drinking only water and wearing only a wretched, filthy robe, afterwards abandoned himself to good living; he made a show of having a fresh, ruddy complexion and of being always very well dressed. He also made himself the head of a heresy, teaching that marriage was equal to virginity; that there was no difference between abstaining from meats by fasting and using them with thanksgiving; that those who had been regenerated by baptism with full faith could no longer be overcome by the devil; and that merits were not unequal on earth nor differently rewarded in heaven. He added that the holy Mother of God had not remained a virgin in bringing her Son into the world, although she had been one in conceiving Him in her womb. This monster, having been condemned at Rome by Pope Siricius, took refuge in Milan, thinking to find some support at court there. But the great St. Ambrose, who watched continually over his flock, being informed of it, assembled a synod with all speed and pronounced anathema against him anew.

He could not, however, prevent this heresiarch, in secret conferences he had with some very holy religious who had their monastery near Milan, from corrupting some of them. Sarmatio and Barbatianus were of this number. They began to love pleasure as he did and, not being able to enjoy it in a place where only penance

was professed, they left to seek it in the midst of the world. Our Saint, who was the founder of that house, felt extreme sorrow over it; he would not, however, receive them when they asked to return, because God made known to him that they were not truly penitent and would only serve to sow disorder in the community. In fact they soon began to teach the execrable opinions of Jovinian and to preach against fasting, mortification and continence. But our admirable doctor refuted them so powerfully that they did not do much harm, and it does not appear that they had any following. We have an excellent Letter that he wrote about them to the Church of Vercelli, whose bishop had died and which for that reason needed his care and vigilance.

These particular troubles of the Church of Milan were followed by strange catastrophes and revolutions in the empire. In the year 392 the Emperor Valentinian, who was impatiently awaiting St. Ambrose at Vienne in Dauphiné to receive baptism from his hands, was strangled there by order of Arbogast, his general. Eugenius, by this general's favour, usurped the empire and made himself master of the whole West. Theodosius, the just avenger of his colleague, fought this tyrant, defeated him and had his head cut off; and by this glorious victory he became sovereign of the whole world. Finally he divided the empire between Arcadius and Honorius, his two sons, and himself died at Milan, full of glory and trophies. During these great revolutions St. Ambrose performed several very memorable actions. He received the body of the Emperor Valentinian in his episcopal city and pronounced his funeral oration, which is a very eloquent piece, worthy of the pen of so great a doctor. He was present at Bologna at the discovery of the bodies of the blessed martyrs Vitalis and Agricola. At Florence he delivered a child possessed by the devil; and, as the child died a short time afterwards, he raised him to life by lying upon his body, in imitation of the prophet Elisha. He made urgent prayers to obtain for Theodosius the entire defeat of Eugenius and Arbogast, and one may say it was the fruit of his tears and sacrifices. Having learned of this defeat by a letter from Theodosius himself, he carried the letter to the church, laid it on the altar during Mass and held it in his hand while offering to God the holy and life-giving Victim. He urged the prince to use his victory well, to pardon those he had conquered and to win their affection by heroic acts of clemency and gentleness. He assisted him with his counsel until his death; and after his death he also delivered his funeral eulogy in the presence of the Emperor Honorius, his son. In the end this great man became so celebrated that even the pagans looked on him only with respect, and the Franks, who were beginning to appear at that time, said one day to Arbogast, who was then his friend (for it was before his revolt), that his victories were not to be wondered at, since he had the friendship of Ambrose, who commanded the sun and forced it to stop in the middle of its course.

There would still be an infinity of very considerable things to note in the life of so extraordinary a prelate. He lost his brother, St. Satyrus, a few years after his promotion to the episcopate; but, although he was extremely necessary to him, he bore this loss with marvellous patience and resignation. He made no difficulty about selling the sacred vessels of the church to ransom captives; and he has left us on this point the excellent instruction that, to feed the poor who are dying of hunger, to deliver prisoners, to build or repair churches and to enlarge the cemeteries destined for the burial of Christians, it is lawful to break, melt down and sell the vessels consecrated to God. He worked with great care, both in the Council of Capua and by his letters, for the peace of the Church of Antioch, which had for so long been divided between two or three different bishops. Besides having found the bodies of Sts. Gervase and Protase, Vitalis and Agricola, he also found, after the death of Theodosius, those of St. Nazarius and St. Celsus, and procured them an honourable burial. He upheld the right of asylum against Count Stilicho with such success that the soldiers who dared to violate it by seizing Cresconius at the foot of the altars were shortly afterwards devoured by the leopards that came out on purpose from the amphitheatre.

The mere reputation of his virtue had the power to convert and draw to Christianity Fritigil, queen of the Marcomanni, and a letter he wrote her made her a perfect servant of Jesus Christ. His prudence and generosity delivered Indicia, a virgin of Verona, from a false accusation and from a rash and hasty judgment pronounced against her, and preserved for her the honour that envy and calumny wished to rob her of.

Having learned that one of Stilicho's servants was forging letters of his master to distribute offices without his knowledge, he delivered him to the devil, and at that very hour he was possessed. One day he trod on the foot of a gouty man named Nicetius, which made him cry out loudly; but this touch was so salutary to him that from then on he was no longer afflicted with gout at all.

St. Gregory of Tours relates that on the day of St. Martin's burial, this glorious bishop of Milan, saying Mass and being between the lesson and the epistle, leaned on the altar and fell asleep. No one dared wake him, and he remained in that state two or three hours; at last his ministers roused him and pointed out to him that the hour was passing and that those present were tired of waiting so long. "Do not be troubled, my children," he answered them; "know that my brother Martin is dead, and that I have just celebrated his obsequies, except that I did not finish the collect, because you interrupted me." The day and the hour were carefully noted, and it was found that St. Martin had in fact died at that time, and that St. Ambrose had been seen at Tours performing the ceremony of his burial. Baronius rejects this narrative as fabulous, because he holds that St. Ambrose died before St. Martin. But, besides the fact that the testimony of St. Gregory must carry great weight in this matter — since he lived at Tours fairly close to the time of these two great lights of Christianity, was its archbishop, knew its tradition, and is unlikely to have put forward so important and extraordinary a thing had he not seen it commonly received and approved by his Church — it is moreover certain that the Church of Milan has always recognised it as true; that the most ancient paintings of the Ambrosian basilica represent it; and that Cardinal Federico Borromeo, successor of St. Charles in that archbishopric, having found it inserted in the oldest breviaries of the diocese, would not allow it to be removed, notwithstanding the opinion of Baronius. As for the reason given by that learned annalist, the Reverend Father Papebroch, in a dissertation he wrote on the subject and placed at the beginning of the *Acta Sanctorum* for April, shows clearly enough that it is void, because, according to the best opinion, St. Martin's death must be put in November 397 and St. Ambrose's on the eve of Easter 398, which, by the old reckoning of the Gauls, still belonged to the year 397. Besides, it is not without example that a Saint, while remaining in one place, appears and is seen in another, since the same prodigy is related of St. Nicholas, St. Severus, St. Francis, St. Anthony of Padua and many others.

This was no doubt a warning that heaven gave St. Ambrose that the end of his labours and of his pilgrimage was approaching. Before he fell ill, one day when he was dictating to Paulinus, his deacon, a commentary on the 43rd Psalm, a fire covered his head in the form of a small shield and from there entered his mouth as into its own dwelling. Then his face became white as snow and remained some time in this beauty until it took on its former colour again. So he could not finish the work he was dictating, and soon afterwards he fell ill. Count Stilicho, who was the most powerful man in the empire, fearing that his death would do notable harm to the whole West, sent him several persons of rank to persuade him to ask God for the prolongation of his life; but he gave them this excellent answer, which St. Augustine esteemed so highly that he said it ought to be written in letters of gold: "I have not so lived among you that I should be ashamed to live longer; but neither do I fear to die, because we have a good Master." Four of his deacons, conversing in a corner of his room about whom they might elect bishop in his place, came to name St. Simplician. They were so far off and spoke so low that he could not hear them; yet God revealed to him what they were saying, and he exclaimed: "He is old, but he is good." It was that excellent priest who had been his counsellor and as it were his master throughout his episcopate, and he was in fact put in his place after his death. St. Bastien, bishop of Todi, visited him sometimes in his illness, and one day while praying beside him he saw Our Lord come down from heaven, approach his bed and show him great tenderness. Then, on the night of Holy Saturday, as he was praying in secret with his arms stretched out in the form of a cross, St. Honoratus, bishop of Vercelli, who was lodged in a room above his, heard three times a voice saying to him: "Rise quickly; he will soon depart." He rose and brought him the adorable Body of Jesus Christ, which he received with deep reverence; and immediately afterwards his soul, fortified with so excellent a viaticum, broke free from the prison of its body to go and enjoy blessed eternity.

His body was carried into his cathedral to be buried there with the honour due to the greatness of his merits. Several persons had visions that showed the glory he already possessed in heaven. Above all, there were some who saw a radiant star raised above his coffin. The demons dared not approach it, and the possessed, who were dragged there by force, were at once delivered from those evil guests. So many people came to his funeral that the church could not hold them; Jews and pagans wept bitterly at the loss of so rare a man, so full of goodness. Shirts and other linen were laid on him to be carried to the sick to procure their healing.

The virtues of St. Ambrose appear with such great brilliance throughout this life that the reader will be able to notice them well enough for himself. One may say that none was lacking to him and that he had them all in a very eminent degree. His almost incredible occupations in the government of his flock did not prevent him from composing very fine works.

St. Ambrose is represented: 1° writing, inspired by an angel; 2° with a hive and its bees beside him, as an attribute of the sweetness of his writings; 3° refusing the Emperor Theodosius entry into the church; 4° standing, mitred and nimbed, holding his crozier in one hand and in the other a kind of sceptre topped by a pine-cone; 5° at the moment of the *Lavabo* of the Mass: a possessed woman is cured by drinking water that came from this liturgical ablution.

WRITINGS OF ST. AMBROSE.

1° The *Hexaemeron*, or Treatise on the six days of creation, written about the year 389. It is divided into nine discourses, now contained in six books, which correspond to each of the days of creation. St. Ambrose partly followed St. Basil, who wrote on the same subject.

2° The book *On Paradise*, written about the year 375, aims to put the simple on their guard against the artifices of heretics who abused Scripture. The Saint examines who is the author of Paradise, what Paradise is, how Eve was seduced by the serpent, etc.; but in treating these questions he attends less to the letter than to the allegorical sense.

3° The two books *On Cain and Abel* were composed immediately after that *On Paradise* and are a continuation of it. They treat of the birth, life, conduct and sacrifices of Cain and Abel.

4° The book *On Noah and the Ark*, written about the year 379, comprises the history of the flood and of Noah’s ark. It is a pity that we do not have this work entire; it is one of the most carefully wrought of St. Ambrose’s. Noah is presented in it as a model of virtue for all men.

5° The two books *On Abraham*, written about the year 387, seem to be made up of the discourses St. Ambrose had given to the catechumens during Lent. In the first is found a fine eulogy of Abraham, his actions and his virtues; the second book is less interesting. It seems to have been corrupted in some places by heretics.

6° The book *On Isaac and the Soul*, also written about the year 387. It is one of St. Ambrose’s most estimable works. On the occasion of Isaac’s marriage with Rebecca it treats of the union of the Word with the soul, which leads to a paraphrase of the Song of Songs. One must judge from this that the holy doctor attends principally to the mystical sense.

7° The book *On the Good of Death*, written at the same time. The author shows in it that death is not terrible in itself; that it frees the soul from its bonds; that it puts us in the happy necessity of sinning no more; that it can serve us as a passage to eternal beatitude. He ends with a description of that beatitude and exhorts the faithful to desire it.

8° The book *On Flight from the World* is of the same time. It is full of solid instructions on the vanity of the goods of the world, on the danger of its charms, on the frailty of human nature, on the need we have of God’s help, etc.

9° The two books *On Jacob and the Happy Life* are of the same time. It is a collection of instructions addressed to the neophytes, to teach them the means of acquiring the holiness of life to which they had engaged themselves by the vows of baptism. These instructions are confirmed by examples, and above all by that of the patriarch Jacob, whom afflictions and crosses did not prevent from being happy with the happiness that fidelity to the Lord produces.

10° The book *On the Patriarch Joseph*, written about the same time, as is the following. It contains the praise of Joseph's virtues and above all of his chastity. The Saint instructs fathers and mothers in it on how they should share their affection among their children.

11° The book *On the Blessings of the Patriarchs*. It treats of the obedience and gratitude that children owe their fathers and mothers. The blessings that Jacob, when near death, gives his children are explained in it in a mystical sense.

12° The book *On Elijah and Fasting*, written about the year 390. St. Ambrose treats in it of fasting, its virtue and its effects. He shows that it was by fasting that Elijah worked all the wonders sacred history relates of him. He cites several other examples of the efficacy of fasting. According to him, fasting is the food of the soul, the death of sin, the foundation of chastity, etc.; he inveighs strongly against luxurious banquets and the disorders intemperance brings in its train.

13° The book *On Naboth*, written about the year 395, against avarice, the cruelty of the rich and the abuse of riches.

14° The book *On Tobias*, written in the year 376. The Saint praises Tobias and his virtues and gives excellent lessons against usury. It is without foundation that this work has been disputed to St. Ambrose.

15° The four books *On the Interpellation, or Complaint, of Job and David*, written about the year 383, are also certainly by St. Ambrose. In the first two are found the complaints Job and David make to God on the weakness and misery of man. In the other two books he answers the unjust complaints of those who find fault that the wicked are happy in this life and the just in adversity.

16° The *Apology of David*, written about the year 384. The author justifies David and shows that he expiated by penance the crimes he had committed, which is rare among persons of his rank. There is another apology of David which also bears the name of St. Ambrose; but it does not seem certain that it is by this Father.

17° The *Commentaries on the Psalms*. The whole work comes down to twelve homilies or discourses which are thought to have been collected by one of the Saint's disciples. Only a small number of psalms are explained.

18° The *Commentary on St. Luke*, written in 386, is a series of discourses on that evangelist. The holy doctor attends at once to the literal, historical and mystical sense, and seizes every occasion to combat the heresies that prevailed in his time.

19° The *Treatise on the Duties of Ministers.* Ambrose took particular care to choose only worthy ministers of religion. He would not have the members of his clergy meddle in temporal affairs, and he ordered them to be content with their patrimony or, if they had none, with the stipend they were given. It was to teach all his clerics to be truly the light of the world that he composed, about the year 386, these three books *On the Duties of Ministers*. The work also contains details on the general principles of Gospel morality which in this respect suit all Christians.[1]

20° The three books *On Virgins*, or *On Virginity*, to Marcellina. St. Ambrose had been bishop only two years when Marcellina, his sister, begged him to put in writing what he had said in the pulpit on the excellence of virginity; for he often treated this subject on Sundays. He yielded to her request and composed his three books *On Virgins* in 377. The elegance with which this work is written has made it justly admired by

St. Jerome and St. Augustine. But it is above all commendable for the unction and spirit of piety that are to be noticed in it on every side. The first two books are taken up with showing the excellence of virginity and making felt the spiritual advantages it procures. The author dwells on the virtues of the Blessed Virgin, whom he proposes as a model to those who have embraced that state; he praises St. Agnes; he cites the example of St. Thecla; and the details into which he enters on these subjects are adorned with all the graces and figures of rhetoric. In the third book he treats of the chief duties of virgins: he recommends them not to drink wine, to avoid visits, to apply themselves to exercises of piety, to pray and reflect often during the day, to repeat the Lord's Prayer and the psalms in the evening on going to bed and in the morning on rising, and to begin each day with the recitation of the Creed, which is the summary and seal of our faith. He wishes virgins to live in that salutary sadness that works salvation; to avoid all immoderate joy, and especially dancing, whose danger he makes felt.

21° The book *On Widows*, written about the year 377. In it he exhorts women who had lost their husbands to keep perpetual chastity.

22° The book *On Virginity*, written the following year. The holy doctor gives in it, from Scripture, a high idea of this virtue; but he does not wish young girls to take the veil lightly when they are of an inconstant character. "Some," he says, "complain that the number of virgins will soon make the human race perish. I should like to know who has ever lacked a wife, and who has found himself unable to find one?" The holy doctor observes that it is not virgins, but war and the sea, that destroy the human species. Yet he does not wish the state of virginity to be embraced lightly: not only is marriage holy, but it is the general state of those who live in the world.

23° The book *On the Training of a Virgin*, written about the year 391. This book contains the refutation of Bonosus, who was renewing the error of Helvidius, which consisted in denying that the holy Mother of God lived in perpetual virginity. The author recalls the instructions he had given to Ambrosia, one of the virgins who served God at Bologna under his direction; and he shows that retirement, silence, humility and prayer are the chief duty of a Christian virgin. He describes the ceremonies used when a virgin solemnly embraced this state. She presented herself at the foot of the altar, where she made her profession before the people; the bishop, after instructions suited to the occasion, gave her the veil that distinguished her from other virgins; but her hair was not cut, as it was for clerics and monks. The holy doctor ends by praying Jesus Christ to be present at these spiritual nuptials and to receive His spouse, who consecrates herself to Him publicly after having consecrated herself to Him long before in spirit and in her heart.

24° The *Exhortation to Virginity*, written about the year 393. These are instructions addressed to the daughters of Juliana, widow of Florence.

25° The *Invective against a Virgin who had let herself be corrupted*. The Saint exhorts her to weep for her fault and to expiate it by penance.

26° The book *On the Mysteries*, or *On the Initiated*. In his book on the mysteries, composed in 387, he instructs the newly baptised and explains to them with great clarity the ceremonies of baptism and of confirmation, as well as the doctrine of the Church on the sacrament of the Eucharist. One cannot doubt that this work is by the holy doctor; it is attributed to him by all authors, and this is proved further by the first part of the work itself. The author, after explaining the ancient figures of the Eucharist, such as the sacrifice of Melchisedech, the manna and the water that came from the rock, adds: "You will say perhaps: But I see something else; how can I be sure that I receive the body of Jesus Christ? I shall prove that it is not what was formed by nature, but what the blessing has consecrated, and that the blessing is more powerful than nature, since it changes it." He cites on this point several miracles, among others that of Aaron's rod changed into a serpent, and finally the mystery of the Incarnation, which he compares to that of the Eucharist. "A virgin," he says, "has given birth, which is contrary to the order of nature; now, the body that we consecrate is born of a

virgin. Why do you look for the order of nature in the body of Jesus Christ, since Jesus Christ was born of a virgin against the order of nature? Jesus Christ had real flesh, which was fastened to the cross and laid in the tomb. So the Eucharist is the true sacrament of that flesh. Jesus Christ Himself assures us of it, saying: This is My body. Before the blessing of the heavenly words it is another nature; after the consecration it is His body… If the blessing of a man is capable of changing the nature of things, what shall we say of the divine consecration, in which the words of the Saviour Himself operate? Shall not the word of Jesus Christ, which could make out of nothing what was not, have the power to change what is into what it was not?" The Saint recommends the new faithful to keep the mysteries of their faith secret, because of the abuse the pagans might have made of them. St. Augustine, who was baptised by St. Ambrose in 387, no doubt attended the discourses the holy archbishop gave to the neophytes at that time.

27° The books *On the Sacraments* are not by St. Ambrose. The same doctrine and some of the same expressions as in the *Mysteries* are found in the six books *On the Sacraments*, which are attributed to St. Ambrose by writers of the 9th century and in manuscripts of the 8th. The author of this work was a bishop who lived in a place where there were many adult catechumens and where remnants of idolatry still existed. The books *On the Sacraments* are an imitation of St. Ambrose's book *On the Mysteries*, with this difference, that the former work is longer and its style low and creeping. If it were not by St. Ambrose — as the new editors of this Father doubt, as do Ceillier and Rivet — the cause of the Church would gain by it, since instead of one witness to her doctrine she would have two. See the new editors of St. Ambrose, vol. ii, p. 341.

28° The two books *On Penance*, written about the year 384. In this work he refutes some objections of the Novatians; then he shows that penance is false and fruitless when it is not accompanied by the change of heart in which its essence consists. The holy doctor exhorts the faithful to frequent communion, because the Eucharist is our spiritual bread and our daily food.

29° The five books *On the Faith*. Fritigern, king of the Goths, having made an irruption into the lands of the Romans in Thrace and Pannonia, Gratian wished to go to the East with an army to help Valens, his uncle; but at the same time he resolved to forearm himself against the snares of the Arians, of whom Valens was the protector. With this in view he begged St. Ambrose, for whom he had a singular veneration, to give him in writing some instructions against Arianism. The holy archbishop, to second his pious intentions, composed in 377 his *Treatise on the Faith, to Gratian*, or *On the Trinity*. This work is divided into five books, the last three of which were written only in 379. It is an excellent refutation of Arianism. The author establishes the dogma in it with as much wit as force and solidity, and gives the most satisfying answers to the objections.

30° The three books *On the Holy Spirit*, written in 381 at Gratian's request. The style of the books *On the Holy Spirit* is less concise and simpler. This is, says St. Augustine, because the subject does not need the ornaments of discourse to touch the heart, and it is enough to establish by solid proofs the consubstantiality of the third Person of the Holy Trinity. Several things are found in it copied from St. Athanasius, Didymus and St. Basil on the same subject.

31° The book *On the Incarnation*, written in 382. It is again a refutation of the Arians, addressed to two officers of Gratian's court.

32° The *Letters*, ninety-one in number. They are divided into two classes in the latest edition: the first class contains those whose date could be fixed, and the second those whose period is not certain.

33° The books *On the Death of Satyrus*. St. Ambrose delivered the funeral oration of his brother Satyrus on the day of the funeral. Seven days later they went to Satyrus's tomb to repeat the prayers of the Church, as was then the practice. St. Ambrose praised his brother a second time; and, as he dwelt at length on the happiness of a Christian death and on the resurrection of the dead, this eulogy is commonly called the *Discourse on the Resurrection*.

34° The *Discourses on the Death of Valentinian and of Theodosius*.

35° Several *Hymns*. The Latin Church still sings in her office hymns composed by Ambrose. St. Augustine, St. Isidore, Bede, the Council of Rome in 430, etc., attribute twelve to him, such as *Deus Creator omnium*; *Jam surgit hora tertia*; *Veni, Redemptor gentium*; *Illuminans Altissimus*; *Aeterna Christi munera*; *Somno refectis artubus*; *Consors paterni luminis*; *O lux beata Trinitas*; *Fit porta Christi pervia*, etc. Most of the ferial hymns of the Latin Church seem to be by the same Saint. He is said to have been the first to establish the custom of singing hymns in church. Those of which he is the author are composed in such a way that the sense ends at the fourth line, so that they can be sung by two choirs. St. Hilary also composed hymns at the same time. George Cassander, in the dedicatory epistle of his collection of hymns, makes an observation on those entitled *Hymns of St. Peter and St. Paul*, etc. Nothing else, he says, is to be understood by this than that they are hymns in praise of God in memory of St. Peter and St. Paul; and the expressions church, altar, Mass of St. Peter and St. Paul, etc., have the same meaning. This manner of speaking is found in St. Ambrose, in St. Augustine, etc.

The liturgy of Milan, called Ambrosian, received a new lustre from our holy doctor; but it is proved by his own writings that it was older than he, at least as regards certain points borrowed from the Roman liturgy. St. Barnabas, or rather St. Mirocles, is regarded as the first author of this ancient liturgy. See Father Lebrun, *Explication des cérémonies de la messe*, vol. ii, diss. iii, p. 175; *Origine Apostolica della Chiesa Milanese e del rito della stessa*, by Dr. Nicolò Sormani, oblate and prefect of the Ambrosian Library in Milan, 1753; Muratori, *Antichità*, etc., diss. lvii, *de' riti della Chiesa Ambrosiana*, p. 222.

In the appendix to the Benedictine edition we find two prayers to be recited before Mass. Some critics, however, have thought that the one of these prayers which begins with the words *Summe Sacerdos* might be by our Saint, and that it represents his style fairly well. On the hymn *Te Deum*, see Father Le Brun, the life of St. Augustine, etc.

St. Ambrose had composed still other works that have not come down to us. Others have been attributed to him which are not his, and of which we shall say nothing.

St. Ambrose, in the rules he prescribes for the orator, requires a simple, clear style, full of force and gravity, which excludes affectation and far-fetched ornaments. He nevertheless fell himself into the faults he blamed, because they were those of his age; but the conceits and plays of wit he sometimes uses do not prevent one from finding much force, pathos and unction in his works. Fénelon cites the letter to Theodosius as proof of the first of these qualities, and the discourses on the death of Satyrus as proof of the second. The books the holy doctor worked over carefully are polished, ingenious, adorned with flowers and figures; in general his style is noble, concise, sententious, sparkling with strokes of wit, and has always a certain sweetness that charms the reader. His letters, above all those he wrote to the emperors, are masterpieces; one sees in them that the Saint knew the world and affairs, and knew how to adapt himself to every rank.

The edition of the Works of St. Ambrose by Cardinal Montalto, afterwards Pope under the name of Sixtus V, is the most esteemed of all the old ones. It has been reprinted several times. Dom du Frische and Dom le Nourry, religious of the Congregation of Saint-Maur, gave a new one which eclipsed all the others and appeared in Paris in 1686–1690, 2 vols. folio. Richard Simon, however, reproached them with having left in the text several faults which Dom Lemerault, librarian of Saint-Germain-des-Prés, had undertaken to correct. See the *Lettres critiques* of Richard Simon, and Dom Ceillier.

The Benedictine edition of the Works of St. Ambrose was reprinted at Venice in 1752, 4 vols. folio.

The books *On Virginity* were translated into French by Father Duranti de Bonrecueil, Oratorian, who prefixed to them a curious dissertation on virgins. This translation, in one vol. 12mo, 1729, is esteemed, as is that of the letters of the holy doctor by the same, in 3 vols. 12mo, 1741.

The abbé de Bellegarde translated the *Treatise on the Duties of Ministers*, 1 vol. 12mo, 1691.

This account is by Father Giry; we have revised and completed it with the Histoire des auteurs sacrés et ecclésiastiques, *by Dom Ceillier, and the* Histoire littéraire de la France, *by Dom Rivet.*

ST. FARE OF CHAMPIGNY, VIRGIN, ABBESS OF FAREMOUTIERS, IN THE DIOCESE OF MEAUX (655)

Pope: St. Eugene I. — King of France: Clovis II.

Consecratus Deo sum de utero matris meae. I have been consecrated to God from my mother's womb. — Judges xvi, 17.

This virgin is one of those whom the heavenly Bridegroom prepared for Himself from the cradle and to whom He gave anticipating graces to make them perpetually pleasing in His eyes. Full sister of St. Faro, bishop of Meaux, she had the same father, namely Count Agneric, who descended from an ancient nobility of Burgundy and had great possessions in that province; her mother was Countess Leodegonde, only daughter and heiress of a count of Meaux. This family being very well ordered, Fare received in it nothing but an excellent education and saw nothing but examples that led her to virtue. But she was besides forestalled by an extraordinary grace of the Holy Spirit, which prepared her early to be one of the most precious dwellings of the most adorable Trinity.

St. Columban, abbot of Luxeuil, was the first to discover this mystery. Having come to her parents' house with St. Eustace, his disciple, at the castle of *Pipimisium* (Champigny) in the forest of Brie, two leagues from Meaux, he was surprised to see in her hands ears of corn already ripe, although it was not yet the season. Admiring this prodigy, and still more that of her precocious holiness, he often took her aside, spoke to her of the knowledge and love of Our Lord Jesus Christ, set before her His beauties and adorable perfections, and made known to her the secret obligations she had to give herself wholly to Him and to take perpetual care to avoid all that displeased Him and to do all that was pleasing to Him. The young countess, touched by these words, said to him one day in her childish simplicity: "Show me, I beg you, Father, where I shall find this divine Master, so that I may serve Him. Is it not He who has the goodness sometimes to show Himself to me at night, now in the form of a child of marvellous beauty who smiles at me most lovingly, now in that of a man full of majesty but torn with scourging, crowned with thorns, fastened to a cross and with His mother in His company, now all resplendent and surrounded with light?" St. Columban admired the familiarities of the Bridegroom of virgins with little Fare and, taking occasion from this to instruct her still more perfectly in the secrets of divine love, exhorted her to consecrate herself entirely and without reserve to Him who drew her by such extraordinary favours.

While he was speaking, God so touched our Saint's heart that she resolved to make a vow of virginity at his feet. So she said to him, with joined hands and eyes raised to heaven: "I offer myself to Jesus Christ, my most venerable Father; I give Him my body and my soul, and I wish to be all His, both for time and for eternity. Pray Him to receive me as His servant and to confirm by His blessing the gift I have just made Him." If these words were heard by her attendants, they no doubt took them only for a child's feelings of no consequence; but St. Eustace, who was accompanying St. Columban, judged quite otherwise and recognised that God had acted in the soul of this little girl in an extraordinary and wholly supernatural manner through the ministry of his blessed Father.

St. Fare, seeing herself placed among the virgins and spouses of Jesus Christ by this anticipated consecration, strove to do nothing that would make her unworthy of so great an honour. She grew every day in grace and virtue and omitted nothing to complete the work of her perfection. Her wise and discreet conduct gave consolation to her parents and admiration to those who came to the castle. She spent part of the day in prayer and exercises of piety, and the rest of the time she was busy with some work of the hands suited to her sex

and her rank. However, when she had reached the age of fourteen, her father wished to marry her, and actually betrothed her to a young lord of her own birth, who was regarded as a very advantageous match. The Saint, learning of this design, was overwhelmed with grief and wept so much over it that she lost her beauty and her sight and fell into an extreme languor. She remained in this state, without the physicians being able to remedy it, until, at the end of three years, St. Eustace, passing again through *Pipimisium*, visited her and cured her perfectly both of her languor and of her blindness, on the word that Lord Agneric, her father, gave him that he would press her no further to marry but would leave her free.

St. Fare, being cured, thought only of using her health to praise and bless the heavenly physician who had given it to her. But her father, forgetting his word and not wishing to break faith with the man to whom he had promised his daughter, took up the business of her marriage again and carried it so far that the wedding day was already fixed. What will our chaste virgin do in so great a danger of being torn against her will from the arms of her heavenly Bridegroom? She takes counsel with Him inwardly and, having found a favourable occasion, slips away from her father's house and goes to hide in a chapel dedicated to St. Peter near Meaux. There, dissolved in tears and with her face pressed to the ground, she made this humble prayer: "Apostle of Jesus Christ, who, by the power you have received from His hands, open the kingdom of heaven to the just and shut it to sinners, I throw myself into the arms of your charity and beg you to receive me among the virgins of the Church; and You, my admirable Jesus, who have such compassion on the afflicted when they approach You with a contrite and humbled heart, preserve, I beg You, the flower of my virginity which I vowed to You by Your inspiration from the time of my tenderest childhood." One cannot conceive Agneric's anger when he learned that his daughter had gone away. He sent his servants in search of her with orders to bring her back by force, or even to put her to death if she resisted too violently. They found her in the chapel, fully disposed to lose her life rather than the inestimable treasure of her chastity. They carried her off and brought her to the castle, and her father, having had her shut up, made her suffer for six whole months the harshest treatment that can be inflicted on a girl of her condition.

At the end of that time St. Eustace passed through *Pipimisium* for the third time. He was much surprised to learn of the violence and outrages that had been done and were still being done to St. Fare; and, unable to restrain his zeal, he severely rebuked this unreasonable father, threatening him with the chastisements of God's justice if he did not repent of his crime and repair it by restoring perfect freedom to the spouse of Jesus Christ. Agneric, frightened by his words, at last acknowledged his fault; and not only did he break off the marriage he had wished to make without his daughter's consent and agree that she should receive the veil of virgin and religious from the hands of Gondoald, bishop of Meaux (614), but he also resolved to build a monastery for her sake.[1] While waiting for it to be finished she withdrew with two girls, one from Paris and the other from Soissons, to a place called Champeaux, where she began to practise all the exercises of religious life.

She was then led into this new house by the same bishop of Meaux, in the company of several girls who wished, following her example, to abandon the world so as to live only in Jesus Christ. The prelate named her abbess and, having consecrated her church under the title of the Blessed Virgin and of the Prince of the Apostles, gave her the abbatial blessing. She was superior more by the pre-eminence of her good works than by the authority of her commands. She was seen first in choir, the most fervent at psalmody, the most constant in prayer and the most exact in all the regular observances. One cannot sufficiently praise her respect and modesty during the divine offices, her humility in all her actions, her charity towards her daughters, her gentleness and kindliness towards those who had the happiness of approaching her. Everything in her spoke, and her silence was no less eloquent than her words. To approach her inspired peace; her looks calmed the most agitated minds; the serenity and air of devotion that appeared on her face led to piety and recollection. In short, one perceived in her something divine which, while making her lovable, also made one love the divine goodness that was its source.

Many virgins, both of France and of foreign lands, drawn by the admirable fragrance of her virtues, came to place themselves under her direction; even princesses and countesses preferred the austerity of the cloister to the dangerous pleasures of the world. Jonas,[2] a monk of Luxeuil, has recorded some of them in his third book of the Acts of St. Columban and St. Eustace, and several of their number have deserved public cult in the Church, such as St. Sisetrude, St. Hercantrude and St. Gibitrude.

Among the counsels St. Fare gave them, she particularly recommended great purity of heart in all their actions; an ever-constant fidelity in corresponding to the movements of grace and the inspirations of the Holy Spirit; an extreme distrust of themselves, so as to put their confidence in God alone; a general withdrawal from everything capable of lessening and weakening in them the ardours of divine love; a perpetual adoration of God present and working in the depths of their souls; an invincible perseverance in doing all the good they knew to be pleasing to Him, without ever slackening even in the smallest things; and an assiduous contemplation of His adorable perfections, so as to stir themselves to love Him more and more and never to fail in the promises they had made Him. To make her exhortations more effective she often set before their eyes the example of the glorious St. Genevieve, who a century before had spread the fragrance of her virtues in Paris, in Meaux and the surrounding country.

Her religious rose by the practice of these teachings to so high a holiness that they were ordinarily favoured with heavenly visions, especially at the hour of death, as Jonas writes in the place we have already cited. Our Saint having fallen so ill that her recovery was entirely despaired of, St. Gibitrude, who was her near kinswoman, knowing how necessary her presence was to her daughters, earnestly begged Our Lord to leave her still on earth and to take herself out of this world in her place. As she was making this prayer she heard a voice from heaven assuring her that she was heard; and in fact St. Fare recovered, while she herself was seized with a fever of which she died. Her soul was carried at that very hour by the angels before the tribunal of Jesus Christ to receive its final judgment there; but it was suspended, and another voice came forth from the Judge’s throne ordering her to return to her body to expiate there by penance some faults of which she had not entirely rid herself in the world, such as certain resentments against sisters who had offended her and certain distastes and slacknesses in the service of God. So she came back to life and lived six months more with admirable innocence and purity, after which, having been warned of the hour of her death, she expired most holily. Her cell was then filled with so pleasant a fragrance that one would have said balm was distilling on every side; and at the end of thirty days, according to the testimony of the same Jonas, who was present, while a solemn Mass was being celebrated for her according to the custom of the Church, such sweet odours were smelt in the basilica that they surpassed all the perfumes of the earth. Similar wonders happened to others; and there was one who, being in ecstasy during the holy abbess’s exhortation, was called to heaven by Our Lord; but she came to herself for a moment to ask her blessed superior’s blessing and permission to die, and she did in fact die as soon as she had received it.

If God forestalled the good religious of this monastery with so many favours, He was on the other hand very severe in punishing those who strayed from their duty and transgressed the ordinances of their Rule. There were two who let themselves be so seduced by the devil’s artifices that, not being able to subject themselves to a holy practice prescribed by St. Columban — which was to disclose one’s bad thoughts three times a day to the spiritual Mother — they made this disclosure only in appearance and perfunctorily. So they fell little by little into such great hardness of heart that, growing weary of the rigour of religious life, they fled from the convent by night and withdrew to their parents. The Saint, noticing their absence, had them searched for. They were found, seized and brought back. The other sisters did what they could to bring them to penance, but in vain. At last they died miserably. For three years there was seen from time to time above their tomb a whirlwind of fire in the form of a shield, and two voices were heard amid the confusion of several others, each crying out with frightful howling: “Woe is me, woe is me!” This terrible chastisement did marvellous good to the monastery, and it should also teach all religious persons with what exactness and sincerity they

must fulfil what is ordained for them by their Rule and Constitutions or by the praiseworthy custom of their Congregation.

St. Faro owed to St. Fare the resolution he took to leave the world and the encumbrances of marriage to embrace the clerical state. She was the cause too of several other spiritual blessings with which it pleased God to fill her whole family, so that she was incomparably more useful to it than if she had brought many children into the world who would have upheld its glory by rising to the first offices of the State and distinguishing themselves in a military career. At last, aged more than eighty, foreseeing by a fever that seized her that the hour of her death was not far off, she prepared for it with admirable fervour. There is nothing more touching than the exhortations she gave her daughters. “Love God above all things,” she said to them, “and keep His holy law faithfully. Have a perfect cordiality for one another; help and bear with one another, so that peace and concord may reign for ever in this house. Commend our friends and benefactors often to God. Have compassion on the poor and on sinners, and pray Our Lord to supply by His mercy the help you cannot give them. Do to your neighbour all the good you would wish done to you. Never follow your own judgment. Despise no one but yourselves. Be always occupied with God and throw yourselves into His arms in all your troubles. Make vows and shed tears for those who persecute you. Bear the afflictions that come to you with submission of mind and gladness, and never think yourselves happier than when you are surrounded with crosses and tried by the greatest temptations.” She also addressed most loving colloquies to Jesus Christ and to Mary before their holy images; then, making the sign of the cross and placing her left hand on her heart, she gave up her spirit into the arms of her heavenly Bridegroom on 7 December 655. This great Saint is invoked for diseases of the eyes.

In her will she bequeathed part of her goods to her brothers and her sister; but the greater part was given to her monastery. In speaking of this second portion of her goods she mentions her lands of Champeaux; but nothing proves that she had founded another monastery, and it appears that the abbey of Faremoutiers afterwards had a conventual priory built at Champeaux, which at the end of the 11th century was replaced by a Chapter of secular canons, situated in the diocese of Paris.

St. Fare is represented: 1° standing, holding her crozier, ears of corn and a book; 2° blessed by St. Columban; 3° taking refuge in a church; 4° recovering her sight through St. Eustace; 5° receiving the religious habit from the hands of Gondoald, bishop of Meaux; 6° persuading her brother Faro, a young lord, to leave the world: she is seen in the parlour, her brother speaking to her in the presence of two religious; 7° ascending to heaven with her religious.

VENERATION AND RELICS.

In 695 the relics of St. Fare were enclosed in a shrine, and several miracles have been worked by her intercession. We shall relate one of the most celebrated. Charlotte Le Bret, daughter of the first president and treasurer-general of France at the finance office of the *généralité* of Paris, lost her left eye at the age of seven; this did not prevent her from withdrawing to Faremoutiers, where she took the habit in 1609. Her sight growing weaker from day to day, she lost her right eye too and became entirely blind in 1617. She came twice to Paris to consult the most skilful oculists, who declared unanimously that her eyes were dead and that she would never recover her sight. To deliver her from the pains she frequently felt, her pupils were deadened by force of remedies, so that she no longer felt any sensation, even from the application of vinegar, salt or any caustic whatever. If she happened to weep, she noticed her tears only when they ran down her cheeks. In 1622 the relics of St. Fare were taken out of the shrine that contained them so that all the religious might venerate them. Charlotte Le Bret was not content to kiss them; she had them applied to her eyes. She at once felt pain there, although for four years she had felt nothing. Scarcely had the relics been withdrawn when a humour flowed from her eyes. She begged that they be applied a second and a third time, and at the third time she cried out that she could see. Her sight was in fact restored to her that same instant, and she

distinguished all the objects around her. She prostrated herself to give thanks to the author of her cure, and the whole assembly joined her. The bishop of Meaux had the facts juridically established and declared in his ordinance, issued on 9 December 1622, that the cure was miraculous.

The relics of St. Fare, which escaped the profanations of the Revolution, are now kept in the parish church of Faremoutiers and in that of Champeaux. The latter church now belongs to the diocese of Meaux.

St. Fare is patroness of Aveluy. Her cult did not spread outside the diocese of Meaux until the 12th century, when her relics began to be distributed to various churches.

Taken from the Life of St. Fare by Jonas, monk of Luxeuil; from the Histoire de l'Église de Meaux *by Duplessis; and from the* Moines d'Occident *by the comte de Montalembert.*

ST. SIMEON, SOLITARY IN THE PASSAIS (850)

St. Simeon was born towards the end of the 8th century. Forestalled early by the graces of God, he was raised to the priesthood and withdrew to a solitude in the parish of Vaucé, three leagues from Domfront (Orne). All his delight was to converse with God by prayer and to tend continually towards Him by the practice of mortification. Our Lord, who never lets Himself be outdone in generosity, filled him with His consolations even in this world, although from time to time He tempered their sweetness with some spiritual trials, the more entirely to detach him from the things of earth. The good odour of Jesus Christ which our Saint spread by his virtues soon won him the respect of the neighbouring populations. St. Aldric, bishop of Le Mans (832– 856), foreseeing the fruits of salvation the pious solitary would produce by his instructions, charged him with preaching the word of God to the inhabitants of the Passais. St. Simeon received with joy the mission entrusted to him. He left his beloved solitude and went into the principal parishes of the Passais to call the people to the love of God. The sight of this humble solitary, worn out by fasting and clothed in a very poor habit, his ardent word, his tireless zeal in preaching the great truths of religion, his tender charity towards sinners — everything helped to make a happy impression in the parishes he evangelised. Touched with regret for their faults, many sinners returned to God, and the just worked with new ardour at their sanctification. Having fought the good fight, our dear Saint, laden with years and merits, went to receive the crown of life that God has promised to those who love Him. His death took place on 7 December, about the year 850.

St. Simeon, like all the Saints of the Passais, was buried in the chapel of his hermitage. His tomb soon became the object of popular devotion. The faithful flocked there from all sides to claim the protection of this Saint in their illnesses and in the calamities that sometimes afflicted the region. As the devotion of the people kept growing and God deigned to confirm it by miracles, the bishop of Le Mans made the elevation of St. Simeon's body in the presence of a great multitude of the faithful. Part of the precious relics was exposed for public veneration in the Saint's oratory; the other part was put back in his tomb, or carried to churches we no longer know.

Throughout the Middle Ages the faithful continued to show St. Simeon a deep veneration. It was to encourage the people's devotion to this great Saint that Pope Alexander VII, at the request of the bishop of Le Mans, established a Confraternity of St. Simeon in the chapel dedicated to him. This Confraternity soon became considerable through the number of the faithful who enrolled in it to gain the indulgences granted by the Sovereign Pontiff.

In 1793 a pious woman, Mme Deraine de la Gauffrie, seeing that the relics of St. Simeon were in danger of being profaned, and perhaps destroyed, by the revolutionaries of the district of Domfront, secretly removed this precious treasure from the chapel and hid it in her house until the re-establishment of Catholic worship. She then returned the holy relics, and the documents establishing their authenticity, to the chapel, which had been made a parish church.

In our own day devotion to St. Simeon continues to be held in honour in the cantons of Passais, Le Teilleul and Landivy. On 27 December 1862 the parish priest of Saint-Siméon (Orne) gave the following details on the cult of his beloved Saint:

"I believe I am rather below than above the truth in saying that more than six thousand pilgrims visit our church each year. More than four thousand come on St. John's day. A good number have travelled ten, fifteen, twenty leagues to come. St. Simeon is invoked above all for temporal goods, in particular to obtain God's blessing on cattle. When his relics are carried in procession to obtain rain or fine weather, there is so extraordinary a concourse that one can hardly form an idea of it without seeing it with one's own eyes. There is also, at some distance from our little town, a spring at which several people go to draw water out of devotion. According to the belief of these persons, this water cures fever. The spring bears the name of Saint-Siméon."

Vie des Saints du diocèse de Séez, by the abbé Blin, curé of Durcet.

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[1] St. Martin, founder-abbot of Saujon (*Coenobium Saliginense*), is already named in the Martyrology of France of 16 November. We refer our readers to note 3 of that martyrology (vol. xiii, page 438).

[2] He was buried in the crypt of the church of Saint-Pierre which he had founded and which in the course of time took the name of Saint-Agnan. Later his bones were transferred to the upper church and placed under the high altar. The church having been burnt in 1131, some relics of the holy bishop could be saved: they were transferred in 1136 into the new basilica. It is the anniversary of this translation that the Church of Chartres keeps on this day. The relics of St. Agnan, visited for the last time in 1774, were for the most part profaned in 1793; the few fragments that could be saved are still kept today in the same church. — *Proper of Chartres.*

[3] Cf. *Saint Symphorien et son culte*, by the abbé Dinet, canon of Autun.

[4] We have given the life of St. Andrew on 30 November.

[5] Everyone knows Cicero's *Offices* (*De Officiis*). Two Roman emperors read this work so carefully that they knew it by heart. Yet it has not all the degrees of perfection it might have; it would be more useful if it had more method, at least in some places. Besides, the Roman orator could make nothing perfect: he had no idea of resignation, humility, mortification, penance and several other virtues; neither did he know the necessity of ordering the affections, nor that of referring our actions to an end worthy of a rational creature. Of all the systems of morality given by the pagans, Aristotle's is the most complete. The duties that flow from the four cardinal virtues are explained in it with as much order as elegance. Aristotle, however, knows little of the most heroic moral virtues, and he spoils the others by bringing into them a mixture of vanity, pride and self-love. His portrait of the perfectly virtuous man, *Ethics*, book vii, chap. 8, rests on an intolerable refinement of pride. See the *Maximes* of the duc de La Rochefoucauld, and *La Fausseté des vertus humaines*, by Esprit. After all, one should not be surprised to see absurdities and even impieties in the systems of morality given by the most celebrated philosophers of pagan antiquity. They had no other guide than human reason, whose lights are so often darkened by the passions. (See Cumberland, *On the Law of Nature*.) When man's virtues are purely human and are not supported by the principles of revelation, however brilliant they may appear, one must not let oneself be dazzled by their brilliance. The actions and affections they produce have scarcely any other source than self-love. Pure and disinterested virtue is very rare: it is found only where it is founded on the maxims of crucifixion and self-denial traced out in the Gospel. This is what assures the pre-eminence of St. Ambrose's *Offices* over all the works of the pagan philosophers. Although the holy doctor often confines himself to moral or philosophical considerations, he nonetheless shows the great advantages morality draws from the Gospel. He shows, for example (book iii, chap. 1), that Scipio's maxim, that he was never more occupied nor less alone than when he was with himself, was verified in a more excellent way in Moses, Elijah, Elisha and the Apostles. These great men knew not only how to converse with themselves, but also how to be always with God and to taste the sweetness of heavenly contemplation.

[6] The abbey originally bore the name of *Brige*, derived from a Celtic word meaning a bridge. Duplessis thinks there was formerly, as now, a bridge over the river at the confluence of the Aubetin and the Morin. It is from this that the forest now called the forest of Faremoutiers was called *Saltus Briegius*. The Latin name *Eboriacas* or *Evoriacas*, which the monastery bore in the 7th century, seems also to be derived from Celtic; it is from this monastery that the forest and the district south of the Marne took the same name. The country in question is known by the name of Brie. The buildings of this celebrated abbey have almost all been destroyed; what remains of them is now a private residence. Its situation, its views and the beauty of its gardens are remarkable.

[7] There were two monasteries at Faremoutiers, one of men and the other of women. Jonas was a monk at Faremoutiers a short time after the foundation of that house, and he has left us an edifying account of those who lived there.

8 December

Martyrologies

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY.

The Immaculate Conception of the glorious and ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of God. — At Rome, the triumph of St. Eutychian, pope, who buried with his own hands, in various places, three hundred and forty-two Martyrs, with whom he was associated under the emperor Numerian by a holy death for Jesus Christ; he was buried in the cemetery of Callistus.[1] 283. — At Alexandria, St. Macarius, martyr, who under the emperor Decius confessed Jesus Christ with a constancy all the greater as the judge pressed him the more urgently to deny Him, and was at last condemned to be burned alive. 250. — At Trier, St. Eucharius, disciple of the apostle St. Peter and first bishop of that city.[2] 1st c. — In Cyprus, St. Sophronius, bishop, who was the admirable defender of wards, orphans and widows, and the help of all the poor and all the oppressed. — At the monastery of Luxeuil, St. Romaric, abbot, who, having held the first rank at the court of King Theodebert, renounced the world and surpassed all others in the practices of monastic observance. 653. — At Constantinople, St. Patapius, solitary, celebrated for his virtues and miracles. — At Verona, the ordination of St. Zeno, confessor. 4th c.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED.

In the dioceses of Agen, Ajaccio, Albi, Angers, Autun, Bayeux, Beauvais, Blois, Cahors, Cambrai, Carcassonne, Châlons, Chartres, Cologne, Coutances, La Rochelle, Laval, Le Puy, Meaux, Mende, Pamiers, Paris, Poitiers, Rouen, Saint-Dié, Soissons, Versailles, Verdun and Viviers, feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, mentioned in the Roman martyrology of this day. — At Saint-Léonard (Loir-et-Cher, arrondissement of Blois, canton of Marchenoir), in the diocese of Blois, St. Leonard of Dunois, anchorite. 6th c. — At Chémery (arrondissement of Thionville), in the diocese of Metz, Our Lady of Chémery, which has a celebrated Confraternity of the Immaculate Conception (established in 1500 by Dom Juan Sellier, Carthusian of the house of Sainte-Marie de Freistroff, and approved in 1609 by the Holy See, which enriched it with indulgences). — In the parish of Souprosse (canton of Tartas), in the diocese of Aire, Our Lady of Goudosse, which is the object of great veneration and the goal of numerous pilgrimages. Three hundred metres from the sanctuary is a venerated spring at which the pilgrims drink with confidence. — At Carcassonne, Our Lady of Health, whose sanctuary, dating from the 12th century, is owed to Raymond Roger IV, viscount of Carcassonne. Profaned in 1793 and sold for profane uses, the chapel was bought back in 1857 and repaired through the care of Mgr de La Bouillerie. — At Mâcon (Saône-et-Loire), in the diocese of Autun, dedication by Pope Innocent IV, accompanied by St. Louis and his whole court, of the church of the monastery of Saint-Pierre in that city. 1245. — At Lyons, Our Lady of Fourvière. — At Avignon, St. Caesaria, who lived near that city in a place where the Benedictine abbey of Saint-André de Villeneuve was later built. Her relics were long kept in the church of that celebrated monastery. 586. — Also at Avignon, St. Valens, who married St. Caesaria, of whom we have just spoken. The two spouses made a vow of virginity on their wedding day, distributed their goods to the poor and devoted themselves to the ascetic life in a desert near Villeneuve, on the right bank of the Rhône. The clergy and people of Avignon having afterwards designated Valens to occupy the episcopal see of their city, he yielded only to their repeated entreaties; he himself had the body of St. Caesaria laid in a little chapel on the mountain of Andaon, and fell asleep in the Lord at the age of more than eighty years. About 591. — In several countries of France and abroad, foundation by Mme de Melient [so printed, image n134] of Brittany of the Congregation of the Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, which received from Pius IX the name of Pius.[3] 1854.

MARTYROLOGIES OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

Martyrology of the Cistercian Order. — The Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God, which the whole Cistercian Order surrounds with particular veneration and cult.

Martyrology of the Three Orders of St. Francis. — The Immaculate Conception of the glorious Mary, ever Virgin, Mother of God, sole and particular patroness of our seraphic Order.

Martyrology of the Order of Friars Minor. — The Immaculate Conception of the blessed and glorious Virgin Mary, Mother of God, patroness, under this same mystery, of the whole seraphic Order. The Sovereign Pontiff Sixtus IV granted in perpetuity to those who assist at Mass and Office during the octave of this feast the same indulgences that the faithful can gain on the feast of the most holy Sacrament.

Martyrology of the Order of Servites of the Blessed Virgin Mary. — The Immaculate Conception of the glorious Mary, ever Virgin, Mother of God.

Martyrology of the Capuchin Friars Minor of St. Francis. — The Conception of the glorious Mary, Mother of God, special patroness of our Order of Capuchins under the mystery of the Immaculate Conception.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS.

Among the Friars Preachers, Blessed Frumentius of Hungary, martyr, of the Order of St. Dominic. This great personage did in the 13th century what St. Francis Borgia later imitated in the 16th. A powerful prince, he left his lands and fiefs to his sons and took the habit in a convent of Friars Preachers. His life was most holy; he had a particular attraction for sufferings and was always seeking occasions to endure some. One day, when the Tartars had burst into the country putting everything to fire and sword, and our fathers were taking the road to the mountains to escape the massacre, this blessed prince, desiring martyrdom, begged the Father prior to let him remain in the convent to console the Christians who stayed in the city; at the same time he thought of profiting by the occasion to win the immortal palm. His request was granted. When the Tartars came, he went into the convent church and prostrated himself joyfully, his arms in the form of a cross, at the foot of the altar. The ferocious pagans could not make him leave this pious posture, and, seeing that he persevered in it, they pierced his feet and hands — or rather they nailed him to the altar step — and crushed his head. When the enemy had withdrawn and the religious had returned to the convent, one of them, who had seen his torn and bloodied body, was much grieved that God had allowed him to die so cruel a death; the Blessed appeared to him and said: “My friend, the sufferings of this life are not to be compared with the glory God gives His friends who have endured something for love of Him.” Blessed Frumentius is publicly honoured in Hungary and Germany. 1242.

ST. LEONARD OF DUNOIS, MONK OF MICY, HERMIT IN THE FOREST OF MARCHENOIR (6th century)

Tranquillitatis mater eremus est. Solitude is the mother of peace. — St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies*.

St. Leonard of Dunois, who must not be confused with the other Saints of this name, was born towards the end of the 5th century of noble and pious parents. Faithful to the voice of grace, which called him to a high perfection, he understood early the nothingness of human things and, to escape the dangers of the greatness that the distinction of his talents and his birth seemed to assure him, he resolved to renounce all his goods and go and shut himself up in the celebrated monastery of Micy near Orléans, where he had no doubt made his first studies.

After living several years under the direction of St. Maximinus [Mesmin], abbot of Micy, St. Leonard obtained his holy abbot’s permission to leave the community and withdraw into solitude, so as to give himself more perfectly to the continual exercise of penance and prayer. Many religious acted thus in those times of fervour and faith: so as to think of nothing but heaven, they gladly abandoned the company of men.

St. Leonard, setting out from Micy, first followed the course of the Loire; then, turning a little to the right, he settled in the midst of a thick forest near the place where Theobald I, count of Dunois, built in the 10th century the celebrated fort of Marchenoir. This forest, called *Silvalonia*[1] or Forêt-Longue and known today

as the Forest of Marchenoir, then extended much further south, beyond the place where the town of Saint-Léonard has since been built, near the old road from Blois to Châteaudun. It was there that our Saint came to fix his abode, so as to occupy himself only with the salvation of his soul. His hermitage stood on a roughly triangular piece of ground, 36 metres from east to west and 33 from north to south, at the spot now lying between the house of Bel-Air and the dwelling of the steward of the forest of Marchenoir, which belongs to the most honourable family of Luynes.

With the help of some offerings made to him, the holy hermit had built near his cell a little chapel dedicated to St. Stephen, where the faithful of the neighbourhood came to pray with him and listen to his salutary instructions. It was in this place, then wild and shaded by age-old oaks, that the virtuous solitary lived in poverty and penance.

Wholly taken up with his eternal salvation, St. Leonard left the care of his body entirely aside. His habit was simple and coarse; he went barefoot and slept on a bed made of tree branches and a little moss; he fed on roots and some wild fruits he gathered in the forest. As one may well suppose, the holiness of his life was not long in spreading round about. Soon his humble cell became the pious meeting-place of a crowd of people who came from all sides to commend themselves to his prayers and receive his charitable advice. The lost traveller found with the Saint a shelter and good counsel; the afflicted drew abundant consolation from his words; the sick brought to him from the surrounding country went home cured and blessed God for having granted so great a saint to the region. Many sinners above all came to open their hearts to him and, encouraged by his words full of faith, went at once to confess their faults, so as to find peace of conscience again in the sacrament of reconciliation.

The eagerness of Christians to come to the chapel where St. Leonard prayed with them led several persons to settle near the virtuous anchorite’s cell; some houses were built to receive the pilgrims, whose number grew from day to day; the land round about began to be cleared to sow grain and plant vegetables, and in a few years there was seen to form a cluster of buildings that became the present town.

Meanwhile St. Leonard, whose reputation had grown in proportion to his many merits, was judged worthy by God to be admitted among the blessed in heaven. Himself desiring to possess Him whom he had so loved on earth, he blessed one last time those who had come to implore the help of his prayers and gave up his beautiful soul to God on 8 December, in the second half of the 6th century.

His body was buried in the chapel of St. Stephen, which he had so long sanctified by his prayers and in which he had worked so many miracles.

All the inhabitants of the surrounding country hastened from far away to his funeral, and his grave was bathed in the sweet tears of gratitude. At the solemn moment when the coffin was lowered into the tomb, every thought turned towards heaven, whither the soul of so tender a father and so powerful an intercessor had just ascended.

VENERATION AND RELICS.

The chapel of St. Stephen, which had become St. Leonard’s tomb, continued as before to be more and more frequented by pilgrims. The poor, the sick and the afflicted felt great relief each time they came to prostrate themselves on the venerated tomb, which one left only with the desire to come back again; and every day the reputation for holiness of the virtuous dead man was confirmed by striking miracles attributed to his intercession.

These miracles had continued to multiply for several centuries at the blessed solitary’s tomb, and the confidence of the faithful had not slackened for a single moment. Then Gaultier [Walter], bishop of Chartres, who at that time had jurisdiction over the Dunois country, had scrupulous enquiries made into the miraculous facts attributed to St. Leonard’s protection. The result was presented to a special council, and it was resolved

that the relics of the servant of God should be taken from the tomb and exposed for public veneration.

For this purpose, in the month of May 1226, Gaultier went to the town of Saint-Léonard, accompanied by the bishop of Le Mans and the abbots of Preuilly in Touraine, Bonneval in Dunois, Notre-Dame de Bourg-Moyen at Blois, Saint-Mesmin near Orléans, Saint-Calais in Maine, and L'Étoile near Château-Renault. On the 10th of that month this illustrious assembly set out in procession from the parish church, long since dedicated under the invocation of St. Leonard. An immense crowd of the faithful followed the religious procession, which arrived at the chapel where the body of the blessed man had rested for about seven hundred years. The tomb was opened in the presence of all the recollected bystanders; the bishop of Chartres took out the precious bones, wrapped them carefully in a linen cloth and laid them respectfully in a magnificent shrine.

At the end of the ceremony he decreed that every year in perpetuity the anniversary of this translation should be celebrated in the church of Saint-Léonard, and he placed in the shrine an authentic act attesting the identity and the exaltation of the relics. This act, signed by the prelate and the principal persons present, is dated the 6th of the ides of May (10 May 1226). At the same time he granted thirty days' indulgence to the faithful who should visit the church in the current year, and seven days' indulgence in perpetuity to those who should come on pilgrimage on the anniversary of this translation, now fixed on the fourth Sunday after Easter by special permission from Rome.

The relics of St. Leonard having thus been carried into the parish church, the faithful went there by preference to leave their gifts and offerings, at the same time as they went there to invoke the Saint, so that the little chapel of St. Stephen ceased to be kept up and soon fell into ruin. Its materials were removed, and on the place of the holy anchorite's burial a plinth of dressed stone was built, surmounted by a cross called the Cross of St. Stephen. This monument, renewed whenever its age requires, recalls without interruption the most touching memories and inspires the most salutary reflections. In the year 1818 the foundations of the old chapel that had received St. Leonard's body were discovered around this cross. These foundations, examined once more before their complete destruction in April 1845, were one metre thick and traced the plan of a little church of fourteen metres by six, inside measurement. Fixing the point where the cross stands, one sees that the tomb was at the entrance to the sanctuary of the chapel. The ground around these remains was probably the garden of the hermitage. It became a cemetery after the Saint's death, when the town was formed; and long after the translation of the relics it still kept this use, together with the space around the present church.

The relics of St. Leonard were inspected in 1353, 1394, 1634, 1733, 1772 and 1778. The shrine was renewed in 1394 and in 1772. It is this last that still exists; it is quadrangular in form, of gilded and carved wood. Restored in 1872, it is now enclosed in a cupboard supported by four wooden columns and adorns the altar of St. Leonard, placed to the right of the choir beside the altar of the Blessed Virgin.

The Saint's relics were profaned in 1794; saved in part (there are still kept a femur, four vertebrae and various broken and misshapen bones), they were restored to the veneration of the faithful in 1797 and definitively approved on 15 May 1824 by the abbé Guillois, vicar-general, delegated for the purpose by Mgr de Sauzin, bishop of Blois.

Every year, on the eve of the fourth Sunday after Easter, the shrine is exposed in the middle of the choir on a suitably decorated platform, where it remains exposed for several weeks. The next day, a great feast for the whole region, the clergy and people, preceded by the shrine, go in procession to make a pious station at the Cross of St. Stephen. This ceremony is most edifying: from early morning the bells proclaim the solemnity far and wide; the church fills with numerous pilgrims who press around the relics and pray fervently. Towards nine o'clock the procession leaves the church through an extraordinary multitude of strangers of every age and condition. The march is opened by the standard of the cross and by the parish banners

followed by the confraternities. Four young men in albs carry on their shoulders the venerated remains of the holy patron of the region, while the cantors sing in alternation the hymns of their forefathers, a pious and touching concert accompanied by the grave and solemn sound of the bells. Arriving at the Cross of St. Stephen, the procession spreads out around the place where Blessed Leonard lived and died. Other chants are heard, and when the celebrant recites the last prayer over the people a thousand fervent prayers rise from every heart to heaven. The procession returns in the same order. Then the Christian pulpit resounds with the wonders of the Almighty, and the panegyric of the glorious patron of the parish disposes the congregation to greet in profound adoration the Master of the universe, who is about to come down upon the altar for the salvation of men. After Mass people still press around the relics; one crowd replaces another. Each passes devoutly under the shrine, praying and commending himself to the Saint's protection. The same devotion continues until evening, and on the next day, the day of the customary fair, there are very few who do not turn aside from their business for a moment to come to the church and invoke the Saint's protection.

Extracted from the Vie de saint Léonard de Dunois *by the abbé Mouzé, curé of Saint-Léonard (Bar-le- Duc, Louis Guérin, 1873).*

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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ST. ROMARIC OR REMIRÉ, MONK OF LUXEUIL (653)

Pope: St. Martin I. — Kings of France: Sigebert II and Clovis II.

The soul that has forbidden itself the pomp of the world's vanity flies up to heaven full of riches. — St. Valerian, *Homilies.*

St. Romaric was of noble and even royal extraction, according to some historians. His father was called Romulf and his mother Romulinde. We have no details of his childhood; we know only that, although brought up in a palace amid all the splendours of luxury, he nonetheless received a Christian instruction which kept him on his guard against the dangers of the world. His taste for piety had grown with his age; he took a singular pleasure above all in visiting the monasteries and basilicas that held the relics of the Saints. He also loved to pour alms into the bosom of the poor; and, in a truer sense than the pagan emperor, he often repeated that he counted the day lost on which he had had no occasion to relieve some suffering member of Jesus Christ.

He held an important post at the court of Theudebert, king of Austrasia, and there had formed a close friendship with a noble lord named Arnulf, likewise in that prince's service. As pious as they were brave, the two officers, while discharging the duties of their office with scrupulous fidelity, nonetheless kept their hearts for a worthier Master. Convinced of the vanity of honours, they longed to strip themselves of them and consecrate themselves to God in retirement.

The most probable opinion is that St. Romaric was married to a girl of noble birth whose name has remained unknown. According to the authors who hold this view, he had by this marriage three daughters, named Asselberga, Adsalsuda or Adzaltruda, and Segeberga. Already detached himself from the things of earth, he strove to inspire the same spirit in his daughters. Two of them, answering his wishes, devoted themselves to the monastic life in the very convent founded by their father at Remiremont. The eldest, Asselberga, preferred to remain in the world and, against her father's advice, married a rich Frankish lord named Bethilinus.

Meanwhile Theuderic, king of Burgundy, had declared war on his brother Theudebert and defeated him near Toul. Then, pursuing him at the head of a large army, he beat him again at Tolbiac. Theudebert, betrayed by his own men, was delivered to this cruel prince, who handed him over to their common grandmother

Brunhild, by whose order he was first tortured and then put to death. Swollen with his victory, Theuderic advanced towards the city of Metz, on his way put Romaric's father to death, and forced Romaric to flee; for, ever faithful to his master, Romaric had preferred ruin and exile to a cowardly betrayal. All his goods were confiscated. He fled to Metz and went to find the bishop Aridius, a brutal man wholly devoted to Brunhild's interests. He threw himself at his feet and begged him to intercede with that princess to have his fortune restored to him; but this unworthy prelate rejected his request and even, in a fit of anger, gave him a kick. Then Romaric got up and went to prostrate himself in the church of St. Martin, saying: "O blessed Martin, I have put myself under your protection. Where are you then? What are you doing? Come to the help of an unfortunate man, if you wish people still to have confidence in you!"

His prayer was not in vain; a little later the death of Theuderic was learned, and affairs so changed their face that the victors of the day before became the vanquished of the morrow. Aridius and Brunhild herself were reduced to begging Romaric humbly to be so good as to help their flight from Metz, which he generously did, without in any way remembering the injuries he had received. His palace and his goods were restored to him; Clothar himself, inheriting Theudebert's friendship for him, gave him a distinguished place at his court.

These events had contributed not a little to detaching Romaric entirely from the goods of the earth. He had just received a striking lesson in the instability of things here below. From his first acquaintance with St. Arnulf, he had formed with him the plan of going to Lérins; various obstacles prevented the execution of their design and, as regards Arnulf, it became plain that Providence had raised them up. For, after the death of Pappolus, bishop of Metz, he was designated with one voice, and in spite of his resistance, to replace him. It was the second year of Clothar's reign over all Gaul, in 614. Romaric, deprived of his friend, was perhaps no longer thinking of carrying out his plan, when an incident arranged by heaven brought him back to the way on which he was to enter.

St. Amatus [Amé], a monk of Luxeuil, was then evangelizing some towns of Austrasia. Having no doubt heard of Romaric's piety, he went to ask him for hospitality. Invited during the meal to speak of the things of God, the Saint took as his subject the absolute detachment counselled by the Gospel, thundered against riches, the prey of rust and moths, and spoke with such eloquence that all Romaric's uncertainties were settled. He at once distributed almost all his goods to the poor, took with him those of his servants who wished to accompany him, giving the others their freedom, and set out with Amatus for the monastery of Luxeuil.

St. Eustasius was then governing it, and such was the fervour reigning there that it could justly be called the nursery of Saints. Romaric showed himself not unworthy of that glorious phalanx. He had brought the greater part of his fortune to the abbey and led several of his servants there; and such was his humility that he was seen obeying with perfect docility even those among them who had filled the lowliest offices in his palace. His eagerness to seek out the low and toilsome employments was remarked, as if he had needed to expiate his former greatness by humiliation. All the exercises of penance were sweet to him. Work in the garden attracted him especially, because it was the occupation of the novices; but while giving himself to this labour he found means to exercise his mind by learning the psalms by heart. In a short time Romaric attained a high perfection.

The close friendship formed between Romaric and Amatus had only grown in the cloister and, despite the purity of intention from which it sprang, it did not fail to become for Romaric an occasion of a fall. St. Amatus having let himself be drawn, up to a certain point, into the schism of Agrestius, his authority drew his disciple in too. Some negligences on certain points of the Rule brought on Amatus and Romaric reproaches from Eustasius. We do not know whether it was on this occasion, or in pursuance of a plan already formed, that the two monks left Luxeuil for the purpose we are about to relate.

Of his immense fortune Romaric had kept one estate in the Vosges, probably on the advice of St. Amatus and with the aim of settling there later. This place was an old castle or *castrum* called *Habendi* or *Habundi*, situated on a mountain near the Moselle. When the time had come, and perhaps because of the disagreements that had arisen between them and Eustasius, the two monks first founded there a convent of women, at the head of which they placed the virgin Mactefelda or Macteflede. Amatus, while bearing the title of abbot, left its direction to Romaric. Soon nuns flocked there; two of Romaric's own daughters took the veil there; an admirable fervour animated this new-born community, and the holy founders saw reproduced in the weaker sex the admirable spectacle Luxeuil had offered them, with its six hundred monks marching with one step in the ways of perfection. Mactefelda joined her efforts and examples to theirs to give this foundation a vigorous impulse; she established it on the most solid foundation possible, the life and death of a Saint; for she governed it only a short time, God having called her early to enjoy eternal glory.

At her death, Romaric, fearing that bad choices imposed from outside might in future bring troubles into the monastery, wished to assure it full independence. He therefore laid down that the abbess should be elected by the community alone; that in temporal matters Habendi should depend only on the royal authority and, in spiritual matters, on the see of St. Peter. If by chance the person elected should prove little worthy of her office, the community had the right of remonstrance; and, should the scandal have crossed the threshold of the monastery, it was for the Sovereign Pontiff alone to set it in order. This regulation was approved by King Clothar; Pope John IV later confirmed it by letters written in his own hand.

We have said that two of St. Romaric's daughters entered Habendi as nuns. The third, Asselberga, informed of the course her father had taken, resolved to draw to herself what might remain of the paternal inheritance, in which, according to one author, she had had no share. She therefore sent her father a first child that had been born to her, in the hope that Romaric would let himself be moved and give back to his granddaughter what he had refused to his daughter. The Saint received this new kind of present with joy, baptized the child, gave her the name of Tecta or Gertrude, and entrusted her upbringing to his nuns. But the mother's worldly views were disappointed: not only did she not obtain what she desired, but even her daughter did not come back to her. She remained in the convent, took the veil there, and later became its abbess.

Shortly after the founding of this monastery, the Saints built a second one for men. They gave it, like the first, the Rule of St. Columbanus. Amatus again left its direction to his disciple. As for himself, withdrawn into a cave, he came down only every Sunday to explain Holy Scripture to his sons and daughters and give them counsel for their spiritual advancement. For the rest, Romaric governed himself only by his advice; their union grew ever closer, so that they formed, so to speak, but one soul in two bodies.

Agrestius, having come under the mask of humility to ask for a place at Remiremont, was clever enough to awaken in the heart of Amatus memories that had perhaps already died out. It is certain that the illustrious solitary had some part, more or less, in the schism of that dangerous sectary, but only in what touched certain secondary points of the Rule of St. Columbanus. Now such was Romaric's attachment to his master that he made no difficulty about following him even when he went astray. He had incurred, as Amatus had, the reproaches of the abbot Eustasius; like him, he lent an ear to Agrestius's perfidious suggestions. We lack details on this circumstance of our Saint's life; we therefore do not know to what extent he too took part in the schism, nor how long he persisted in it. Probably his error was short-lived; and, as he had followed Amatus in his fault, he imitated him also in his repentance.

A little before 625, Romaric learned that his friend Arnulf, bishop of Metz, had just resigned his office intending to live as a solitary. He remembered that it was to him, after God, that he owed his first thought of embracing the monastic life. He went to find him at Metz, accompanied him on the whole journey, which was marked by numerous miracles, and, wishing to have him near, led him to a place called according to some Horemberg, according to others *Adventius*, about two thousand paces from the Saint-Mont. It was there that he had himself prepared a retreat for him. St. Arnulf yielded to his friend's wish, and this drawing

together only confirmed the old friendship that united them.

Meanwhile Asselberga had not given up her plans, and one failed attempt did not prevent her from making a second. Having had a son, she hastened to send him to her father, hoping to be more fortunate than the first time. But her ambition was again disappointed. Romaric accepted the new trust confided to him with still greater joy; he baptized his grandson himself, St. Amatus being pleased to stand godfather, named him Adelphus, and, when he was of age, sent him to his friend Arnulf to be brought up in the knowledge and fear of the Lord. God again blessed his servant's pious intentions. Adelphus grew in virtue even more than in age, and deserved to succeed his grandfather: the Church honours him as a Saint.

After the death of St. Amatus, Romaric succeeded him as abbot of the two monasteries. He so acted that no one noticed the change of superior. Wholly devoted to the good of his communities, he even gave himself to bodily labour to provide for their needs, although he was of very weak constitution. And if it sometimes happened that they lacked necessities, his custom was to turn to Jesus Christ and say to Him with tears: "You have enough, Lord, and even more than enough: come then to the help of Your poor servant, whose needs You know." And his lively confidence was always heard: help arrived in time. It is related that one day workmen employed on heavy labour came to ask him for meat to restore their exhausted strength, and that he told them: "Wait a moment; the God who can do all things will provide you with some." At that very instant the convent dog darted through the forest and started a stag, which came falling from the top of the rock and broke its head. It was brought to the servant of God, who said to the workmen: "God has not failed us any more than usual. Take and eat the flesh of this animal, and leave the hide for our sisters, who need it."

Another time, finding himself at the house of an inhabitant of the Vosges whom he often visited, the man's wife, who was very pious, complained to him that she had nothing to drink to offer him, her provision of ale [*cervoise*] having run out the day before. "Do not be uneasy," Romaric told her, "but have faith: for God can provide food and drink even in the desert. Go into your room." She went in and found her vessel of ale filled to the brim. She kept it religiously, and declared later that many sick people had recovered their health by drinking of it.

Romaric had set up near the nuns' monastery a dwelling for those of them who were stricken with leprosy. One of these poor lepers, having secretly procured some water he had used to wash himself, rubbed her limbs with it and was perfectly cured. She lived long afterwards, proclaiming aloud the miracle of which she had been the object.

Romaric had also established a leper-house for men near his monks' convent and had himself undertaken to serve it. He cared for the sick and dressed their sores with his own hands. The sight of those hideous wounds, those putrefied limbs, did not repel this man brought up in the refinements of luxury. The charity of Jesus Christ had extinguished in him all the repugnances of nature, and his example stirred the others to imitate him. Romaric thus spread around him the good odour of his virtues. All had their eyes fixed on him as on a model and a guide; a holy emulation drew everyone in his footsteps.

The hour of reward was drawing near for Romaric. Yet his charity dictated to him a step that deserves mention. After the death of Duke Pippin, King Sigebert had named his son Grimoald mayor of the palace. Sigebert having died in his turn, this same Grimoald had Sigebert's son Dagobert tonsured, charged Dido, bishop of Poitiers, to take him to Ireland, and put his own son on the throne. This act raised universal discontent in the kingdom. Romaric himself was stirred by it in the depths of his retreat; and, despite his age and the difficulties of the road, he went to the court to announce to the king what God had revealed to him of the future. Such was the Saint's reputation that Grimoald, knowing that he would come to see him during the night, himself took a torch and went half the way to meet him. Seized with fear at the sight of him, as if he had discovered in him some heavenly sign, he began to tremble; then, embracing him respectfully, he listened to the reproaches and the ominous predictions the Saint had to make to him and to the great men of

the court. Far from taking offence, he promised to repair his wrongs and sent Romaric back loaded with gifts. The biographer adds that before returning home the holy old man went once more, as far as his strength allowed, through all the lands of the monastery, giving pious counsel to the tenants, exhorting them to persevere in the doctrine he had taught them and to attend before all else to the salvation of their souls.

As soon as he was back, fever seized him; but his blessed tongue was no less active in praising God or teaching the truth. The illness grew worse little by little, and the hour of his deliverance drew near. A holy deacon, carried in spirit to heaven, had seen there immense preparations as for a great banquet; and when someone asked why the guests did not sit down at table, the holy pontiff Arnulf, lately dead, replied: “We are waiting for our brother Romaric, who is to join us today.” On the other hand, young men keeping watch at the entrance of the monastery had seen a thick cloud envelop the mountain and the dying man’s cell. It was a Sunday, the sixth of the ides of December (8 December) 653. Matins were over and day was beginning to break when some religious, coming to Romaric’s bed to turn him, saw him faint in their arms. A priest who was present cried out: “Wait, my venerable master, until the holy Viaticum has been brought to you.” At once the dying man came to himself, raised his right hand to heaven and made the sign of the cross over himself and over those present. As soon as he had received the Holy Eucharist, he closed his lips himself with his hand, then his eyes, and fell peacefully asleep in the Lord. At once the cloud covering his cell parted and, while the religious were intoning the psalms, a dazzling light was seen to appear in the air and illuminate the mountain. Then a globe of flame detached itself from it and rose majestically towards heaven. No one doubted that this was a sign of Romaric’s blessed entry into the splendours of eternity.

He was buried beside St. Amatus. After the destruction of the old monastery his body was translated into the new one, about the year 910, together with those of Sts. Amatus and Adelphus, by Dreux or Drogo, bishop of Toul. In 1051 Pope Leo IX, having come to Lorraine, canonized St. Romaric, made a new translation of his relics, and ordered them to be exposed to public veneration. Several miracles took place at his tomb immediately after his death and in the course of the centuries. His name is inserted in the Roman martyrology and in that of France. He is represented: 1° standing, in religious habit, holding a rosary; 2° with a sceptre and a crown at his feet; 3° healing a possessed man; 4° sometimes with no other attribute than an open book.

Taken from the Vie des Saints de Franche-Comté, *by the professors of the Collège Saint-François-Xavier of Besançon.*

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE MOST HOLY VIRGIN

Raised to a dogma in 1854. — Pope: Pius IX.

Tota pulchra es, amica mea, et macula non est in te. You are all fair, beloved Virgin, and the searching eye of a God could not discover in you the least stain. — Song of Songs iv, 7.

Joachim was old and Anne barren; so there was no likelihood that they would have children, having had none in the twenty years they had been united in the bonds of marriage. But they went to the temple, offered a sacrifice, addressed their prayers and vows to heaven, accompanied them with sighs and tears, and distributed their goods liberally to the ministers of the altar and to the poor, so that, giving to God what was in their power, they might also receive from His hand the treasure of His blessings. Their desires were at last granted, and Anne, notwithstanding her age and her barrenness, conceived that admirable daughter for whom all the ages had sighed. “Thus,” says St. John Damascene, “a barren woman, the wife of an old man, became a mother, so that this miracle might prepare men for a wonder incomparably greater, the singular union of

motherhood with virginity, which was to come about a few years later in her who was the fruit of this first miracle."

It is this august conception of Mary that is today the subject of the Church's gladness and veneration. She rejoices to see the rising of this dawn, which comes to announce to her the approach of the Sun of justice. She rejoices to see the forming of this ark, which is to save her from the general deluge of sin. She rejoices to see the birth of this rainbow, which assures her that God's anger will soon be appeased. But what fills her with joy in particular is that Mary's conception has nothing of the shame and infamy of that of other men. In theirs the matter is impure; the form, which is the rational soul, is defiled with the filth of sin; and the mind, which is the noblest part of that soul, is buried in darkness and deprived of all knowledge. But in Mary's we find quite contrary advantages. The matter is perfectly purified; the soul is exempt from sin and enriched with the fairest ornaments of grace; the mind is filled with a very high knowledge of divine and human truths.

Holy Scripture teaches us that, the will of all men being contained in that of the first, who was their head in the moral as well as in the natural order, they all sinned in him and through him, and all come into the world with the stain and infamy of that sin. From this St. Paul concludes to the necessity of a Redeemer, and the Councils and the Fathers infer with such force against the Pelagians that no one can be saved except by the mercy of God and the healing grace of Jesus Christ. But we have certain proofs — drawn from the same Holy Scriptures, from the writings of the holy Fathers, from the wise conduct and the decrees of the Church, from the consent of the faithful, and from what reason and good sense dictate to us — that Mary, alone among all women and alone among all persons born of Adam by way of common generation, must be excepted from this general rule.

It seems that God willed to teach us this from the beginning of the world, by His curse on the serpent that had deceived the first woman and led her to eat the forbidden fruit. *Inimicitias*, He said to it, *ponam inter te et mulierem, semen tuum et semen illius; ipsa conteret caput tuum*: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, between your seed and hers; but she shall prevail over you and crush your head." St. Irenaeus, St. Cyprian, St. Epiphanius and the other Fathers say that by this woman God means the Blessed Virgin, and some of them remark that this is why He does not say "I put, from now on," but "I will put." He means therefore to signify to us that between Mary and the devil, represented by the serpent, as between Jesus Christ and all the powers of hell, there will be a perpetual and irreconcilable war, and that in this war she will always be victorious and crush the head of her enemy. Now this would not be so if at the moment of her conception she had been defiled with original sin. Far from being then at war with the devil and victorious over him, she would have been his friend, or rather his slave; she would have bowed beneath his power and dominion. There would have been a divorce between her and Jesus Christ, and she would have found herself in a state in which God could have had no friendship or inclination for her. We must therefore necessarily acknowledge that she was preserved from that general misery which flooded the whole human race, and that she never contracted original sin.

The Bridegroom of the Canticle declares this singular privilege of Mary very clearly when he says to her in chapter iv: "You are all fair, my beloved, and there is no stain in you." For if she is all fair, she is so not only in her birth, her life, her death, her resurrection and the state of glory she possesses in heaven; she is so too, or was so, at the moment of her creation, and she was never without being fair. And if there is no stain in her, we must exclude from her not only mortal and venial sin but also original sin, which, according to St. Augustine and the other Fathers, is a horrible deformity that makes a soul execrable in God's eyes.

All the figures of the Old Testament that sacred interpreters have constantly applied to the Blessed Virgin also lead us to the same truth. Noah's vessel, sailing happily over the waters of the flood without receiving any harm while the rest of the world was submerged; the ark of the covenant, made of incorruptible wood, gilded within and without, and containing only the Tables of the Law, the manna and the rod of Moses;

Gideon's fleece, which remained dry while all the ground around was soaked, and was covered with dew in the general dryness of the field where it was spread; the cloud of the prophet Elijah, which rose from the depths of the sea without carrying away any of its bitterness: these were sensible prophecies that Mary, born of a corrupt race, would contract nothing of its corruption, and that, being among sinners, she would have no part in their sin.

Such was the sentiment of the most ancient Fathers of the Church. They always called the Blessed Virgin "most pure, most irreproachable and most immaculate," without any of them ever including her in particular in the general law of sin. Some hail her as "fairer than the cherubim, purer than the seraphim, more innocent and holier than all the heavenly spirits."

It is true that when this truth, which lay as it were hidden in the bosom of the Church and enclosed in the general propositions the holy Fathers had used, began to unfold, there were several disputes among the doctors about it; but after some time of discussion everyone declared for it. Several times the Holy See, seeing that the faithful honoured the immaculate Conception of Mary, encouraged this devotion, authorized a special feast, forbade the teaching of the contrary doctrine, and made the office of the Immaculate Conception with octave obligatory for the whole Catholic world. Finally, on 8 December 1854, one of the most fortunate and glorious days of mankind on earth, we saw what the preceding ages had sighed for with such ardour: the Vicar of Jesus Christ, Pius IX, the successor of St. Peter, declared from the height of the apostolic chair that belief in the Immaculate Conception of the most holy Virgin Mary is a doctrine of faith, and that no one can deny it without separating himself from the unity of the Church.

Besides, several excellent reasons would suffice, without the formal decision of the Church, to persuade us of this doctrine. Mary is Mother of God and has for her Son Jesus Christ, the Holy of Holies. This truth, so solemnly defined at the Council of Ephesus against the blasphemies of Nestorius, is received and revered by all the faithful. St. Peter Damian, following the Fathers and Doctors, calls this dignity of Mother of God "an immense dignity," and assures us that only the Workman Himself could surpass this great work. God, wishing to grant Mary so incomprehensible a favour, to raise her to so admirable a dignity, to set her above the thrones, the cherubim, the seraphim and every possible creature, wishing in short to make her such that there neither was nor could be anyone worthier beneath Himself — could He allow her at her Conception to be the slave of the devil, the heir of hell and an accursed and execrable creature, worthy of His horror and His curses? Would He not thereby have given Satan great cause to glory in having been, at least for one moment, the master and sovereign of so precious a creature and in having had her under his power and dominion? And would He not at the same time have wronged the glory of His omnipotence by doing only by halves so rare and excellent a work?

Moreover, Mary, to be the worthy Mother of the divine Word, had to share in a most eminent way in the perfections and holiness of the eternal Father, since she was to be His Vicar on earth and give a human life to Him to whom He gives a divine life in eternity. Now the holiness of God is a perpetual and unchangeable holiness: He is holy, He has always been holy, and it is in the splendours of the Saints that He has begotten His Word. Therefore Mary, to be worthy Mother of God, must always have been holy and never infected with the corruption of any sin, nor consequently of original sin.

It was further necessary for this that she be like Him whom she was to bring into the world, since there must be resemblance between the Son and the mother, and where it is lacking, this is a defect of generation. Now original sin is nothing else, according to St. Denis, than a state of unlikeness to God, *habitus dissimilitudinis Dei*; and not only of unlikeness but of opposition, contrariety and incompatibility; for Jesus Christ necessarily hates whoever is defiled with this crime and, hating him, necessarily condemns him and casts him from His sight. Judge then whether Mary, destined to be His mother, could ever have contracted this sin and been defiled by it.

Finally, she had to be such that it would be no reproach or confusion to Him to acknowledge her as His mother. Now if she had ever been guilty, it would doubtless be a reproach and a subject of shame and confusion for His sovereign and infinite majesty to acknowledge and own her as His mother. There is no doubt that an honourable man blushes at the faults and disorders of those who brought him into the world. Thus Mary, having been chosen from all eternity to be the worthy mother of the Son of God, a mother who should be not His confusion but His honour and glory, we must without doubt admit that she was preserved from sin and conceived in innocence and in the privilege of a most eminent holiness.

We shall be still more certain of this truth if we reflect on the help that her Son — who did not yet exist according to His humanity but subsisted according to His divinity and already regarded her as His mother — was bound to give her at the moment of her conception. For it is certain that at that so important moment He could preserve her from sin by giving her in advance the grace of a perfect sanctification. Now, if He could, how can we imagine that He did not do it and did not will to do it? Does He not command us too to honour our fathers and mothers and to help them in their needs as promptly as we can? What! Would He have failed in a law He prescribed to other children?

Furthermore, Mary was to be her Son's co-operator in the redemption of men. We attribute this privilege to her only after all the Fathers of the Church. Pope Innocent III, in his sermon on the Assumption, says in a word: *Quidquid damnavit Eva, salvavit Maria*, "Mary saved all that Eve had lost." Not that she redeemed us by her satisfactions and merits; but she supplied the flesh and blood that served for our redemption; she was the first altar on which the Saviour was immolated, and she sacrificed Him for us at the same time as He sacrificed Himself. The consequence of this principle is that Mary was not a sinner; for how could she have worked for the deliverance and reconciliation of sinners if she herself had for one instant been of the unhappy number of sinners? For this she had to share in her Son's priesthood and, as

St. Epiphanius says, to be the Priest and the Victim of our ransom. Does not St. Paul also say that our Priest must be holy, innocent, pure and undefiled? She had to be singularly and supremely pleasing in God's eyes; and how would she have had this prerogative if she had once been guilty and, by her former crime, had been, like other men, the murderer of Him to whom she had given life? There had to be nothing in her to blot out and forgive; and would there have been nothing to forgive her if her Son's death had been offered not to preserve her from sin but to reconcile her after she had contracted its stain? She was therefore never guilty, and it is by this perfect innocence that she justly merited to be associated with the office and glory of our redemption.

Finally, Mary is as it were the general of God's armies; by this title too she must never have had sin. The Holy Spirit, in the Song of Songs, represents her to us not only as an intrepid warrior but as a whole army set in battle array and terrible to its enemies; Solomon, as a tower defended by a thousand shields and as a bridal bed surrounded by sixty of the valiant of Israel. All the Fathers, lastly, apply to her these words of chapter iii of Genesis: *Ipsa conteret caput tuum*, "She it is who shall crush your head." Does this allow us to believe that she was ever conquered by Satan, bowed beneath his yoke and was his captive? What is the serpent's head if not original sin? Is it not by that sin that all men have been wounded and the poison of other sins has crept into the world? If then Mary crushed the serpent's head, must we not admit that she overcame original sin and was never its slave?

As exemption from sin is inseparable from sanctifying grace, this grace was greater in Mary than any ever given to other creatures, not only in their first beginning but in the consummation of their perfection; it was even greater than that of all the angels and all men together, because, according to St. Augustine, St. Bernard and St. Thomas, her grace had to be proportioned to the dignity for which she was destined. Now the dignity of Mother of God by itself is worth more than all we can conceive of great and magnificent in angels and men: the Fathers call it "infinite, unspeakable, incomparable, incomprehensible"; therefore her grace surpassed all that has been infused into angels and men, and all that they have attained by their merits and

good works. Besides, this grace had all the interior advantages of original justice, which were to subject the mind to God, the flesh to the mind and the movements of nature to reason, and to give a perfect power of never sinning either mortally or venially. For what keeps grace from having these advantages in us is that we lost them by the sin of our origin. Since, then, the Blessed Virgin had no share in that stain, we must admit that her grace had all the strength and vigour of original justice. From all that we have just said, it is plain that the soul of the Blessed Virgin in her Conception was not defiled with the filth of sin but, on the contrary, adorned with the most precious ornaments of grace.

We add that the matter of which her body was formed was perfectly purified. We are obliged to admit with shame that the sin of our first father so corrupted and infected the substance that serves for our generation that it is in us a seed of disorders and crimes. It kindles concupiscence, it enlivens the passions, it stirs up the rebellions of the flesh against the spirit, and it feeds that perpetual civil war between body and soul, between the higher and the lower part. But this corruption had no place in the Blessed Virgin; the matter that grace rather than nature prepared for her formation was wholly freed from this contagion and was given her in a state so pure that it was incapable of any disordered movement. Three reasons persuade us of this truth: first, that this matter was to compose the body of a Virgin purer than the thrones, the cherubim and the seraphim — so pure, in the manner of speaking of St. Anselm and the Angelic Doctor, that no greater and more perfect purity can be conceived beneath God; second, that this matter was also to serve for the composition of the body of Jesus Christ, for the flesh of Jesus was formed from that of Mary, and one may even say that there was a time when it was but one flesh with Mary's; third, that this matter was afterwards to serve Jesus Christ for the redemption of mankind and to be offered to the eternal Father as a spotless Victim for our reconciliation and salvation.

It remains, to show the perfection of her Conception, to show that her mind at that moment was not wrapped in darkness but enjoyed the noblest lights of nature and grace for knowing divine and human truths. This is what St. Jerome teaches us when he says that she was never in darkness but always in light: *Non fuit in tenebris, sed semper in luce*. It is also what the Church teaches us when she applies to her all that is said of Wisdom in Proverbs and Ecclesiasticus; for it is impossible for Wisdom to be in obscurity and ignorance. If then Mary has merited the glorious name of Wisdom, we must be persuaded that she was never for a single moment without enjoying the light of reason and a most perfect understanding. At the moment she was sanctified, that is to say at the very moment of her Conception, she was endowed with the use of reason; she enjoyed the most sublime lights for knowing God and knowing herself, and for making acts proportioned to the greatness of the grace and the eminence of the charity given her.

Some theologians add that, since one cannot deny her the great privilege that St. Augustine and St. Thomas say was granted to Moses and to St. Paul, of seeing for some moments in this life the pure light of the divine essence, one may believe that the instant of her Conception was one of those precious instants in which so admirable a fervour was conferred on her. This is not the place to treat such important subjects thoroughly. We shall be content to say with Denis the Carthusian that, as Mary was most like her Son in holiness, so she was most like Him in knowledge and wisdom; and with the abbot Rupert, that her Bridegroom so brought her into His cellars that He hid from her nothing of the high truths of Holy Scripture.

What then was the glory, the eminence and the perfection of her Conception! And have we not cause to cry out today with holy gladness: "Your Conception, O Virgin Mother of God, has filled the whole world and all creatures with joy! We find in it none of the defects and miseries of ours; your soul is without stain in it, your body without defilement, your mind without darkness. All in it is holy, all is pure, all is luminous, all is worthy of a Mother of God, all is worthy of Him who is to be born of you, all is worthy of Him who is to repair the world by the body and blood He will receive from you." Is it surprising after this that a feast has been established to honour every year so great a mystery, so worthy of respect and praise?

The time when it began in the Churches of East and West cannot be fixed precisely. It was celebrated among the Greeks, at least in some particular churches, from the 6th century. In the West it is not mentioned before the 11th century.

The most holy Virgin, honoured especially in the mystery of her immaculate Conception, is the patroness of upholsterers, cloth-shearers and coopers. This patronage seems odd to us, and we confess we can in no way explain its origin.

DEFINITION OF THE DOGMA OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF OUR LADY

The history of the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception is too important for us not to give it here in summary. Spain was constantly at the head of all the Catholic countries in seeking a dogmatic definition from the Holy See; its approaches in the 18th century are continual.

One of its kings, in whom devotion to Mary was hereditary, Charles II, asked that the office of the Immaculate Conception with octave be made obligatory for the whole Catholic world. Innocent XII, by his Bull *In excelsa* of 15 May 1693, granted this request. The measure was completed when Clement XI, in 1708, made the feast of the Conception obligatory for the whole Church. Benedict XIV, who had resolved to encourage devotion to the Immaculate Virgin, had, it is said, shown the intention of publishing a Bull on the subject; but the plan was never carried out. He only ordered that on the feast of the Immaculate Conception there should be a papal chapel in the presence of the Sovereign Pontiff and his whole court. But the most celebrated monument of the Immaculate Conception is beyond question a letter of Blessed Leonard of Port Maurice, regarded as the expression of a prophetic spirit. It bears witness to the most ardent desire to see this great mystery defined, and foretells the greatest blessings for the time when the Holy See should think it could pronounce the definition.

Let us pass to the 19th century. The Franciscan Friars of the kingdom of Naples asked the Holy See for permission to celebrate the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin in the preface of the Mass, a thing until then unheard of. Pius VII granted their wishes on 17 May 1806. This favour stirred the holy ambition of the dioceses of Seville, of Lyons and of a host of others: they obtained the same concession, as did a great number of religious Orders, among others that of St. Dominic, which at last associated itself with the common belief. Another devotion gave a new impetus to the piety of the faithful towards Mary Immaculate. On 20 September 1839 the Congregation of Rites granted, by two rescripts, to the bishop of Forlì and the bishop of Ghent permission to add to the Litany of Loreto, which recalls so well the prerogatives of our good Mother, this beautiful invocation: *Queen conceived without sin, pray for us!* In a short time this holy practice became general. Pope Gregory XVI, in 1840, received the petitions of fifty-two cardinals, archbishops and bishops insisting on the usefulness and moral necessity of pronouncing the definitive judgment. Shortly after arrived some forty similar requests from the Asian Missions, South America, Spain, Italy, Savoy, Moravia and Bohemia. His Holiness Pius IX received, before 2 February 1849, forty requests from the bishops of the kingdom of Naples, with a fresh petition from His Majesty the King of the Two Sicilies; ten requests from the archbishops and bishops of France; eighty from archbishops and bishops in every part of the world, not counting the petitions of religious Orders, Chapters and particular churches. The Holy Father could not remain indifferent to these unanimous wishes of the Catholic episcopate — he who, as he declared in his Bull *Ineffabilis*, had from the first days of his pontificate been preoccupied with this grave matter. In the years 1847 and 1848 he appointed a commission of consultors chosen among the most distinguished prelates and theologians of the Roman Church and submitted to them the question whether the pious belief in the Immaculate Conception could, according to the usages of the Catholic Church, be solemnly defined. At the end of 1848 Pius IX, driven from Rome by the revolution, took refuge at Gaeta; he had the work of the commission continued on the soil of exile.

Several times he assembled the cardinals exiled like himself and took their advice on the plan of defining the prerogative of the Mother of God. It was from Gaeta that he addressed, on 2 February 1849, to all the bishops of the world the celebrated encyclical inviting them to send up to heaven the most fervent prayers that it might enlighten the Head of the Church on this important matter, and asking them at the same time what was the belief of their flocks and their personal belief concerning the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin.

The Holy Father wished to establish the unanimous consent of the whole Church. His aim was not to call forth new demonstrations of the mystery; yet a great number of prelates gave such good grounds for their faith, and set out the proofs of the pious belief with such depth and learning, that the replies of the episcopate, taken together, contain a complete and irrefutable demonstration of the mystery. It is impossible to read them without conceiving the highest idea of the learning and piety of the Catholic episcopate, without admiring its attachment to the Holy See and its devotion to the cause of the Mother of God. The unanimity of the bishops is also most remarkable. Of some seven hundred and fifty cardinals, patriarchs, archbishops, bishops and vicars apostolic whom the Church counts in her bosom, more than six hundred had replied to the Holy Father before he pronounced the definition. If one allows for oversights, illness, death, vacant sees and letters lost because of great distances, one may say that the whole Catholic episcopate answered the encyclical of 2 February 1849 and so showed the keen interest it took in the matter of the definition.

To the episcopate and the faithful were joined the theologians and doctors who devoted their pens to Mary's glory: among the most celebrated must be named Fr. Rivalora, Cardinal Lambruschini, Fr. Perrone, Fr. Marianus Spada, Fr. Biancheri, Fr. Bigoni, etc. The *Mémoire* of Dom Guéranger, abbot of Solesmes, is a little volume full of sense and reason, with a quite original stamp. The author knew how to make the ancient arguments his own, so that they seem new under his pen; he also disposed, triumphantly, of the difficulties then raised against the mystery itself and against its definability.

But of all the writings that appeared before the definition, none can be compared for extent, importance and solidity with the great work of Fr. Passaglia, who later suffered so sad a shipwreck in the faith, now happily repaired. The Bull of definition was modelled on this work. The Pope wished these publications to be reproduced after the bishops' replies, as contemporary documents of the great cause he was about to judge. They were therefore gathered, like all the other papers, into the curious collection of the *Pareri*, which thus reached ten volumes, a complete copy of which was given to all the bishops present in Rome at the solemnity of the definition.

When the consultors had expressed their opinion in writing, the Holy Father had these opinions printed in three separate volumes to submit them to the twenty consultors, a special commission that met several times in the course of 1852 and 1853 under the presidency of Cardinal Fornari. The minutes of the sessions were drawn up with the greatest care under the title *Brief account of the acts of the special commission appointed by His Holiness Pius IX to examine the subject of the Immaculate Conception of the most holy Virgin Mary*.

With the exception of two members who had belonged to the commission of twenty consultors, all the assembled theologians were of the opinion that the Blessed Virgin's privilege was solidly proved by arguments drawn from Holy Scripture, the monuments of tradition, the doctrine, magisterium and spirit of the Church, and the declaration of the Council of Trent. All, save one, judged that the Holy See could, without departing from the ordinary rules, pronounce the definition of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of Mary. This was also the unanimous opinion of the cardinals.

In the first months of 1854 it became known that the Sovereign Pontiff had resolved to define the mystery of the Immaculate Conception of the most holy Virgin and to give this solemn act all the splendour that circumstances allowed. The whole Catholic episcopate would have gone to Rome had the Holy Father wished it. But whether he did not wish to impose a simultaneous widowhood on all the Churches of the

world, or feared to give some offence to the powers, or had other motives, he confined himself to inviting the foreign cardinals and a small number of prelates of each Catholic nation. Many others went to Rome to attend this feast. Three cardinals were charged with presiding over this august assembly.

One of them, Cardinal Brunelli, explained the intentions of the Sovereign Pontiff, which were not to gather the bishops in Council, nor to authorize a discussion on the substance of the question or on the timeliness of the definition — two points on which the assent of the Catholic episcopate was already known to him and whose judgment he reserved to himself — but to hear their opinion on the draft Bull, which, though already prepared, did not yet wholly answer his thought. They therefore examined the texts of Scripture and the monuments of tradition that were to appear in the Bull, and the form to be given it.

After consulting the bishops, the Holy Father consulted the cardinals of the Roman Church, whom he gathered in secret consistory on 1 December following; when he had their unanimous assent, glad of this agreement, he resolved to pronounce the definition of the Immaculate Conception on 8 December.

When the so impatiently awaited day arrived, the holy city was crowded with pious pilgrims hastening from every part of the world, and the Roman people, faithful to its ancient renown, was preparing to honour worthily the Mother of all the faithful.

At eight in the morning the bishops gathered in the great Ducal Hall of the Vatican palace to put on their pontifical vestments. Clad in the white cope and white linen mitre, they went to the Sistine Chapel, where the Sovereign Pontiff soon arrived. On arriving, the Holy Father knelt at the foot of the altar and recited aloud the antiphon: *Sancta Maria et omnes sancti tui, quaesumus, Domine, nos ubique adjuvent, ut dum eorum merita recolimus, patrocinia sentiamus.* Then the cantors intoned the Litany of the Saints; at the verse *Sancte Michael* the bishops formed in rank by order of seniority and went down in procession by the great staircase of the palace to the basilica of St. Peter. The cardinals, in chasuble and precious mitre, preceded the Holy Father, who closed the procession beneath a white canopy. Arrived in the middle of the basilica, the bishops ranged themselves in a half-circle before the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament and there awaited the Sovereign Pontiff, with whom they all knelt. His Holiness first recited a short private prayer and then sang the three collects *Deus qui nobis sub sacramento*, *Deus refugium nostrum* and *Actiones nostras*, which ended the litany. These prayers over, the procession formed again, and the bishops, followed by the cardinals and the Holy Father, went two by two to the choir arranged behind the high altar of the basilica, with the pontifical throne at the far end, as for ordinary papal chapels. As soon as the cardinals, bishops and prelates had taken their places, the Sovereign Pontiff sat on the throne prepared near the altar on the Epistle side, to receive the obedience of the clergy. The cardinals bowed deeply before him before kissing his ring. The bishops, after the cardinals, genuflected on the first step of the throne; kneeling on a cushion at the Holy Father's feet, they respectfully kissed the ring he held out to them, covered with his stole; on leaving him they genuflected a second time and bowed their heads right and left towards the assistant cardinals. We shall not describe the magnificent rites of the pontifical office as celebrated by the Sovereign Pontiff in St. Peter's, first because these ceremonies do not belong to our subject, and then because they have often been described elsewhere. We shall add only that among the twelve bishops assisting at the pontifical throne was the venerable archbishop of Paris, Mgr Sibour. He carried the hand-candle during the pontifical Mass and while the Holy Father pronounced the definition.

When the holy Gospel had been sung in Latin and in Greek, according to the rite used in the Sovereign Pontiff's office, the deacons of the two rites went together to the Holy Father's throne at the far end of the choir to present him the book of the Gospels and receive his blessing; then they returned to the high altar, on which they laid the sacred volume.

It was eleven o'clock in the morning.

The venerable Cardinal Macchi, dean of the Sacred College, then advanced, despite his great age, towards the Sovereign Pontiff's throne at the end of the choir, accompanied by the dean of the archbishops and the dean of the bishops present at the ceremony, and also by the archbishop of the Greek rite and the archbishop of the Armenian rite, and addressed to the Holy Father in Latin the following petition:

"Most Holy Father,

"That which the Catholic Church ardently desires and asks with all her prayers — namely, that the Immaculate Conception of the most holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God, be defined by a supreme and infallible judgment of Your Holiness, to increase the praise, glory and veneration of Mary — we come, in the name of the Sacred College, of the cardinals, of the bishops, of the whole Catholic world and of all the faithful, humbly and earnestly to beg Your Holiness to accomplish on this solemnity of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin, and so to fulfil the wishes of all. To this end deign, O Holy Father, in the midst of the celebration of the unbloody sacrifice begun in this great church consecrated to the Prince of the Apostles, in the presence of so majestic an assembly of bishops and faithful, to raise your apostolic voice and pronounce the dogmatic decree of the Immaculate Conception of Mary, a decree that will bring forth new joy in heaven and fill the whole world with gladness."

The Holy Father replied that he willingly welcomed this request of the Sacred College, the episcopate and the faithful, but that before satisfying it the help of the Holy Spirit must be invoked. At once the whole assembly knelt and intoned with admirable unison the hymn *Veni Creator*, whose spirited singing made the sacred vaults ring with devout echoes and moved every heart. After singing the collect, the Sovereign Pontiff, standing before his throne, began in deep silence to pronounce in a strong, clear and distinct voice the definition of the mystery of the Immaculate Conception.

When the Holy Father reached these solemn words: *To the greater glory of the Mother of God, by the authority of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul and by Our own…*, wholly penetrated with the greatness of the act he was performing, touched by the impatient expectation of the clergy and faithful whose eyes were fixed on him and who hung on every word, carried no doubt in thought to the heavenly abode where the joy of the angels answered that of the elect on earth, the Sovereign Pontiff, moved to the depths of his being, felt his voice fail and his eyes fill with tears. But, mastering nature and overcoming his emotion, he soon continued his discourse in a strong voice, moved and moving, and, after yielding once more to the power of his feelings, he finished reading the decree amid a sentiment of universal joy.

PIUS, BISHOP, SERVANT OF THE SERVANTS OF GOD, *For a perpetual memorial.*

"God, who is ineffable, whose ways are mercy and truth, whose will is omnipotence itself, whose wisdom reaches from end to end mightily and orders all things sweetly, foreseeing from all eternity the lamentable ruin of the whole human race that would follow from Adam's transgression, and having decreed, in the mystery hidden from the beginning of the ages, to accomplish by the still more mysterious sacrament of the Incarnation of the Word the first work of His goodness — so that man, driven into evil by the perfidy of diabolical iniquity, should not perish against the design of His mercy, and that what was to fall in the first Adam should be raised up in the second with a happiness greater than that misfortune — chose and prepared from the beginning and before the ages a Mother for His only-begotten Son, of whom, made flesh, He should be born in the blessed fullness of time; and He loved her above all creatures with such a love that in her alone He placed, by a sovereign predilection, all His good pleasure. Raising her incomparably above all the angelic spirits and all the Saints, He filled her with the abundance of heavenly gifts taken from the treasury of the Godhead in so wonderful a manner that, always and wholly free from every stain of sin, all fair and all perfect, she had in her that fullness of innocence and holiness, the greatest that can be conceived beneath God, such that, save God, no one can comprehend it. And indeed it was altogether fitting that she should ever shine with the splendours of the most perfect holiness and, wholly exempt even from the stain of original

fault, should win the most complete triumph over the ancient serpent — this so venerable Mother, to whom God the Father willed to give His only Son, begotten of His bosom, equal to Himself, whom He loves as Himself, and to give Him in such a way that He is by nature one and the same, the common Son of God the Father and of the Virgin; she whom the Son Himself chose to be substantially His Mother; she of whom the Holy Spirit willed that by His operation He should be conceived and born from whom He Himself proceeds.

“This original innocence of the august Virgin, so perfectly in harmony with her admirable holiness and with the sublime dignity of Mother of God, the Catholic Church — which, ever taught by the Holy Spirit, is the pillar and ground of truth — acting as mistress of the doctrine divinely received and contained in the deposit of heavenly revelation, has never ceased to explain and to favour more and more every day by every means and by striking acts. This doctrine, in force since ancient times, deeply engraved in the souls of the faithful and wonderfully spread through the whole Catholic world by the care and efforts of the sacred pontiffs — the Church herself has indeed most clearly taught it when she did not hesitate to propose the Conception of the Virgin to the veneration and public worship of the faithful. By this solemn act she presented it to be honoured as extraordinary, wonderful, wholly different from the beginnings of the rest of men, and altogether holy; for the Church celebrates with feast-days only what is holy. And this is why she is accustomed, both in the ecclesiastical offices and in the sacred liturgy, to use the very words of the divine Scriptures that speak of uncreated Wisdom and represent its eternal origins, and to apply them to the beginnings of this Virgin, who in the counsels of God had been the object of one and the same decree with the Incarnation of divine Wisdom.

“All these things, known everywhere to the faithful, show sufficiently with what care the Roman Church, mother and mistress of all churches, has applied herself to spreading this doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin; but this Church, centre of Catholic truth and unity, in which alone religion has been inviolably kept and from which all other churches must borrow the tradition of the faith, has such dignity and authority that it is fitting to recall her acts in detail. She never had anything more at heart than to uphold, protect, promote and defend by the most striking means the

Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, its worship and its doctrine. This is attested and proclaimed by so many solemn acts of the Roman Pontiffs Our predecessors, to whom, in the person of the Prince of the Apostles, Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself divinely entrusted the charge and supreme power of feeding the lambs and the sheep, confirming their brethren, and ruling and governing the universal Church.

“Our predecessors, indeed, gloried in instituting in the Roman Church, by virtue of their apostolic authority, the feast of the Conception with a proper office and Mass, in which the prerogative of exemption from the hereditary stain was affirmed in the clearest and most manifest manner. They strove moreover to increase the splendour of this feast and to spread by every means the worship instituted: by enriching it with indulgences; by authorizing cities, provinces and kingdoms to place themselves under the patronage of the Mother of God honoured under the title of the Immaculate Conception; by approving confraternities, congregations and religious communities instituted in honour of the Immaculate Conception; by stirring with their praises the piety of those who erected monasteries, hospitals, altars and churches under this title, or who bound themselves by oath to defend vigorously the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God. They were especially glad to order that the feast of the Conception be celebrated throughout the Church like that of the Nativity; then that it be celebrated with an octave in the universal Church; then that it be ranked among the feasts of precept and holily observed everywhere; finally, that every year on the day consecrated to the Conception of the Virgin there be a pontifical chapel in Our patriarchal Liberian basilica. Desiring to instil this doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God ever more deeply into the souls of the faithful, and to stir their piety to honour and venerate the Virgin conceived without sin, they gladly permitted the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin to be proclaimed in the Litany of Loreto and in the very preface of the Mass, as if to establish the law of prayer. As for Us, following in the footsteps of so many of Our

Predecessors, We have not only received and approved what they so wisely and piously established; but, remembering the decree of Sixtus IV, We have clothed with the sanction of Our authority a proper office of the Immaculate Conception and, to the great consolation of Our soul, have granted its use to the universal Church.

"But because the things belonging to worship are closely and intimately bound to the very object of the worship, and cannot remain determined and fixed if that object remains in a state of doubt and ambiguity, Our predecessors the Roman Pontiffs, while devoting all their care to increasing the worship of the Conception, applied themselves solicitously to declaring and inculcating its object and doctrine. They therefore taught clearly and openly that the feast had as its object the Conception of the Virgin, and they proscribed as false and contrary to the mind of the Church the opinion of those who thought and affirmed that it is not the Conception but the sanctification that the Church honours. Nor did they think they should deal more gently with those who, to ruin the doctrine of the Virgin's Immaculate Conception, had devised a distinction between the first and second instant of the Conception, saying that the Church does indeed celebrate the Conception but does not mean to honour it in its first instant or moment. Our predecessors, in fact, regarded it as their duty to protect and spread with the greatest zeal not only the feast of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin but also the doctrine that the Conception, from the first instant, is the true object of this worship. Hence those altogether decisive words by which Our predecessor Alexander VII declared the true intention of the Church: 'It is the ancient and pious belief of the Christian faithful that the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary, from the first instant of its creation and of its union with the body, was, by a special grace and privilege of God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ her Son, Redeemer of mankind, preserved and exempt from original sin; and it is in this sense that they honour and solemnly celebrate the feast of her Conception.'[1]

"Our predecessors strove above all, with jealous care and extreme vigilance, to keep the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God inviolate and safe from all attack. Not only did they never allow that this doctrine should in any way be censured or insulted; but, going much further, they proclaimed by formal and repeated declarations that the doctrine by which We confess the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin is fully in harmony with ecclesiastical worship, and that this ancient and universal doctrine, as the Roman Church understands, defends and spreads it, is in every respect worthy to be formulated in the Sacred Liturgy itself and in the solemnities of prayer. Not content with this, so that this doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin might remain inviolate, they forbade under severe penalties the maintaining, publicly or privately, of the contrary doctrine, wishing by repeated blows to bring it down. And so that these striking and repeated declarations should not seem vain, they gave them a sanction. Our predecessor Alexander VII, whom We have just cited, recalled all these things in these terms:

"'Considering that the holy Roman Church solemnly celebrates the feast of the Conception of Mary, spotless and ever Virgin, and formerly ordered a proper office on this mystery according to the pious and devout disposition of Our predecessor Sixtus IV; wishing in Our turn to favour this praiseworthy devotion, as well as the feast and the worship that is its expression, which has never changed in the Roman Church since it was instituted; and desiring, after the example of the Roman Pontiffs Our predecessors, to protect and favour this piety and devotion which consists in honouring and celebrating the Blessed Virgin as having been, by the action of the Holy Spirit, preserved from original sin; finally, to keep the flock of Christ in unity of spirit and in the bond of peace, to extinguish dissensions and remove scandals: at the instance and prayers of the above-named Bishops, together with the chapters of their Churches, and at the instance and prayers of King Philip and his kingdoms, We renew the constitutions and decrees that the Roman Pontiffs Our predecessors, and especially Sixtus IV, Paul V and Gregory XV, issued in favour of the opinion affirming that the soul of the Blessed Virgin Mary, in its creation and its union with the body, was endowed with the grace of the Holy Spirit and preserved from original sin, and also in favour of the feast and worship of the Conception of the Mother of God, established as stated above in the sense of this doctrine; and We command that the said

constitutions and decrees be observed under the penalties and censures specified in them.

"'Moreover, as to each and all of those who seek to interpret these constitutions and decrees so as to lessen the favour resulting from them for the doctrine in question, and who strive to call into discussion the feast or the worship rendered in the sense of this doctrine, or to make it the object of their attacks, directly or indirectly — as under pretext of examining whether this doctrine can be defined, of commenting on or interpreting Holy Scripture, or the holy Fathers or Doctors; all those, in a word, who should dare, for whatever motive and in whatever way, to speak, preach, treat or dispute against it, in writing or by word of mouth, by determining this or that, by affirming, by putting forward arguments, or by leaving unanswered the arguments alleged, or by whatever other means used to the same end: as to all these, besides the penalties and censures contained in the constitutions of Sixtus IV, to which We mean to subject them and do subject them by these presents, We will that by that very fact and without further declaration they be deprived of the power of preaching, giving public lectures, teaching and interpreting, and of all active or passive voice in any election; they shall therefore by that very fact, and without further declaration, be struck with perpetual incapacity to preach, lecture publicly, teach and interpret, and they cannot be absolved or dispensed from these penalties except by Ourselves or Our successors; and We mean further to subject them to the other penalties that We or the Roman Pontiffs Our successors may inflict on them, as We subject them by these presents, renewing the constitutions or decrees of Paul V and Gregory XV recalled above.

"'As for books in which the said doctrine, or the feast or worship rendered in the sense of this doctrine, is called into doubt, or in which anything whatever is written against it, or which contain discourses, disputations or treatises intended to combat it, We prohibit all those published after the cited decree of Paul V or that may be published in future, under the penalties and censures specified in the Index of prohibited books; and We command and will that they be held and considered as expressly prohibited by that very fact and without any declaration.'

"Now everyone knows with what zeal this doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mother of God has been professed, upheld and defended by the most illustrious religious Orders, by the most celebrated theological academies and by the Doctors most versed in sacred science. Everyone knows likewise how eager the bishops have always been, even in ecclesiastical assemblies, to declare openly and publicly that the most holy Mother of God, the Virgin Mary, by the merits of the Lord and Redeemer Jesus Christ, was never subject to original sin, but was wholly preserved from the original stain and thus redeemed in a more wonderful manner. To all these authorities is joined the gravest and highest authority, that of the Council of Trent. In framing the dogmatic decree on original sin, in which, in accordance with the testimonies of the Holy Scriptures, the holy Fathers and the most approved Councils, it laid down and defined that all men are born defiled by original fault, the Council solemnly declared that it was not its intention to include in this decree and in this generality of its definition the blessed and Immaculate Virgin Mary, Mother of God. By this declaration the Fathers of Trent showed, as far as the times and circumstances made it opportune, that the Blessed Virgin Mary was exempt from the original stain, and they thus clearly expressed that nothing in the divine Scriptures, nothing in tradition or in the authority of the Fathers, can validly be alleged that in any way impairs this great prerogative of the Virgin.

"And nothing is more true: celebrated monuments of venerable antiquity, of both the Eastern and the Western Church, prove with evidence that this doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary — so strikingly explained, declared and confirmed more and more each day, so wonderfully spread among all the peoples and nations of the Catholic world with the firm assent of the Church, by her teaching, zeal, learning and wisdom — has always been professed in the Church as received from our fathers hand to hand and as bearing the character of revealed doctrine. For the Church of Christ, vigilant guardian and protectress of the dogmas entrusted to her, changes nothing in them, takes nothing from them, adds nothing to them; but, treating ancient things with scrupulous attention, fidelity and wisdom, if there are any that

antiquity has sketched and the faith of the Fathers has indicated, she studies to bring them out and set them in light, so that these ancient dogmas of heavenly doctrine acquire evidence, brightness and clearness while keeping their fullness, integrity and proper character, and that they develop, but only within their own nature, that is, keeping the identity of the dogma, of the sense and of the doctrine.

“The Fathers and writers of the Church, taught by the heavenly oracles, had nothing more at heart, in the books they composed to explain the Scriptures, defend the dogmas and instruct the faithful, than to celebrate in rivalry and exalt in a thousand wonderful ways the Virgin’s supreme holiness, her dignity, her freedom from every stain of sin, and her glorious victory over the cruel enemy of mankind. That is why, when they relate the words by which God, at the beginning of the world, announcing the remedies prepared in His mercy for regenerating mortals, confounded the audacity of the seducing serpent and wonderfully raised the hope of our race, saying: ‘I will put enmity between you and the woman, between her seed and yours,’ the Fathers teach that by this oracle the merciful Redeemer of mankind, Christ Jesus, the only Son of God, was clearly and openly announced, that His blessed Mother the Virgin Mary is also designated in it, and that the enmity of the Son and of the Mother against the devil is equally and formally expressed in it. Hence, just as Christ, the Mediator between God and men, having taken human nature, blotted out the handwriting of the sentence that was against us and nailed it in triumph to the cross, so the most holy Virgin, united with Him by a close and indissoluble bond, waging with Him and through Him eternal hostility against the venomous serpent and triumphing fully over this enemy, crushed its head with her immaculate foot.

“This unique and glorious triumph of the Virgin, her most excellent innocence, purity, holiness and integrity preserved from every stain of sin, her ineffable wealth of all heavenly graces, virtues and privileges, her greatness — the same Fathers saw their image now in the ark of Noah, which, built by God’s command, escaped wholly safe and sound from the common shipwreck of the whole world; now in the ladder Jacob saw rising from earth to heaven, on whose rungs the angels of God went up and down, while God Himself leaned upon its top; now in the bush Moses saw all on fire in a holy place, which, amid the burning flames, far from being consumed or suffering the slightest diminution, wonderfully grew green and covered itself with flowers; now in the tower impregnable before the enemy, from which hang a thousand shields and all the armour of the mighty; now in the garden enclosed, which cannot be violated and into which no guile can bring corruption; now in the shining city of God, whose foundations are on the holy mountains; now in the most august temple of God, which, radiant with divine splendours, is full of the glory of the Lord; now in a host of other symbols of the same kind, by which, according to the tradition of the Fathers, the sublime dignity of the Mother of God, her spotless innocence and her holiness preserved from every injury had been admirably figured and foretold.

“To describe this same whole, this abundance of divine gifts and this original integrity of the Virgin of whom Jesus was born, the same Fathers, using the words of the Prophets, have celebrated the august Virgin herself as the pure dove, the holy Jerusalem, the exalted throne of God, the ark of sanctification and the house that eternal Wisdom built for itself; as that queen who, full of delights and leaning upon her beloved, came forth from the mouth of the Most High all perfect, all fair, all dear to God. And considering in heart and mind that the Blessed Virgin Mary was, in God’s name and by His command, called full of grace by the angel Gabriel when he announced to her her incomparable dignity of Mother of God, the Fathers and ecclesiastical writers taught that by this singular and solemn salutation, of which there is no other example, it is declared that the Mother of God is the seat of all divine graces, that she was adorned with all the gifts of the Holy Spirit — nay more, that she is as it were the infinite treasury, the inexhaustible abyss of these gifts — so that she was never touched by the curse and, sharing with her Son the eternal blessing, merited to hear from the mouth of Elizabeth, inspired by the Holy Spirit: *Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb.*

“Hence it is their sentiment, no less clearly expressed than unanimous, that the glorious Virgin shone with such brilliance of all heavenly gifts, such fullness of grace and such innocence, that she was as it were an

ineffable miracle of God, or rather the crown of all miracles and, in a word, Mother of God; and that, brought as near to God as created nature allows and more than all creatures, she rises to a height that the praises neither of men nor of angels can reach. To attest this state of innocence and justice in which the Mother of God was created, they not only often compared her to Eve, an innocent and pure virgin before she fell into the deadly snares of the cunning serpent, but set her above Eve, finding a thousand wonderful ways of expressing this superiority. Eve, indeed, by wretchedly obeying the serpent, lost original innocence and became his slave; but the Blessed Virgin, constantly increasing her original gifts, far from ever lending her ear to the serpent, entirely destroyed his strength and power by the divine virtue she had received.

"That is why they have never ceased to call the Mother of God: lily among thorns; earth wholly untouched, virginal, spotless, immaculate, ever blessed and free from every contagion of sin, from which the new Adam was formed; paradise all radiant, all delightful, all perfect in innocence, immortality and delights, planted by God Himself and defended against all the snares of the venomous serpent; incorruptible wood that the worm of sin never spoiled; fountain ever clear, sealed by the power of the Holy Spirit; divine temple; treasure of immortality; the only daughter not of death but of life; offshoot of grace and not of wrath, which, by a special providence of God, springing green from an infected and corrupt root, has ever flowered outside the established and common laws. And as if these things, for all their splendour, were insufficient, they declared in express and precise words that when there is question of sin, there can be no question at all of the holy Virgin Mary, to whom a superabundance of graces was given to overcome it entirely. They professed that the most glorious Virgin was the restorer of her race and a source of life for mankind; that she was chosen before the ages; that the Almighty had prepared her for Himself; that God had foretold her when He said to the serpent, 'I will put enmity between you and the woman'; and that it is she, beyond doubt, who crushed the venomous head of that same serpent. That is why they affirmed that this Blessed Virgin was, by grace, exempt from every stain of sin and pure of all contagion of body, soul and mind; that, ever in communion with God and united to Him by an eternal covenant, she was never in darkness but always in light; and that it was for this reason — for the original grace that was in her, and not for the state of her body — that she was a dwelling worthy of Christ.

"To all that We have just said must be joined the magnificent words by which, speaking of the Conception of the Virgin, the Fathers bore witness that nature, confessing itself conquered by grace, stopped trembling and powerless to go on; for it had to be that the Virgin Mother of God should not be conceived of Anne until grace had borne its fruit; this conception, indeed, was that of the first-born woman of whom the first-born of all creatures was to be conceived. They affirmed that the flesh of the Virgin, taken from Adam, had not received the stains of Adam; that thus the Blessed Virgin was a temple created by God Himself, formed by the Holy Spirit, truly enriched with purple and with all the brilliance that gold wrought by this new Bezalel can give; that she must rightly be honoured as the proper masterpiece of the Godhead, as withdrawn from the fiery darts of the evil spirit, as a nature all fair and without any stain, shedding upon the world at the moment of her Immaculate Conception all the fires of a brilliant dawn. It was not fitting, indeed, that this vessel of election should be tarnished with the common stains; for, quite different from all others, it came from nature without coming from the fault. Nay more, it was altogether fitting that, as the only Son had for Father in heaven Him whom the Seraphim proclaim thrice holy, He should also have on earth a Mother who had never been deprived of the splendour of holiness. And this doctrine had entered so deeply into the minds and thoughts of our fathers that it had led them to adopt that quite special and astonishing language in which they were accustomed to call the Mother of God: Immaculate and immaculate in every respect; innocent and innocence itself; spotless and of perfect integrity; holy and free from every stain of sin; all pure, all chaste, the very type of purity and innocence; fairer than beauty, of a grace above every kind of charm; holier than holiness, the only holy one; most pure in soul and body; the Virgin who surpassed all chastity and all virginity; the only one who was made wholly the tabernacle of all the graces of the Holy Spirit; she who, beneath God alone, is above all creatures, who by nature is fairer, more perfect and holier than the Cherubim

and Seraphim and the whole host of Angels, and whose praises no tongue on earth or in heaven can worthily celebrate. This language, as everyone knows, passed naturally into the monuments of the sacred liturgy and the ecclesiastical offices; it is found here and there, it reigns and dominates there; the Mother of God is invoked and praised there as the one dove of beauty, free from corruption; as the rose ever in the brightness of its bloom; as wholly and perfectly pure, ever immaculate and ever blessed; and she is celebrated there as innocence that has suffered no injury, as another Eve who brought forth Emmanuel.

"It is not surprising, then, that this doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mother of God — contained in the divine Scriptures, in the judgment of the Fathers, who handed it on by so many and such express testimonies; expressed and exalted by so many illustrious monuments of venerable antiquity; proposed and confirmed by the Church by her gravest judgment — it is not surprising that this doctrine should have stirred such piety, religious feeling and love in the very pastors of the Church and in the faithful peoples, that they gloried in professing it ever more strikingly from day to day, and that nothing is sweeter and dearer to them than to honour, venerate, invoke and celebrate everywhere with ardent devotion the Virgin Mother of God conceived without original stain. Thus, from ancient times, Pontiffs, members of the clergy, religious Orders, even emperors and kings, have earnestly asked this Apostolic See to define the Immaculate Conception of the most holy Mother of God as a dogma of Catholic faith. These requests have been renewed in our days; they were addressed above all to Our predecessor Gregory XVI of happy memory, and to Ourselves, by bishops, by the secular clergy, by religious Orders and by the faithful peoples.

"Knowing all these things perfectly, therefore, finding in them for Ourselves motives of the greatest joy and making them the object of serious examination, scarcely had We, despite Our unworthiness, been raised by the mysterious designs of divine Providence to this chair of Peter to take in hand the helm of the whole Church than, in the sentiment of veneration, piety and love with which We had been filled from Our childhood towards the most holy Virgin Mary, Mother of God, We had nothing more at heart than to do all that the Church could still desire to honour the Blessed Virgin further and give new lustre to her prerogatives. But, wishing to bring to this all possible maturity, We set up a special Congregation formed of several of Our venerable Brethren the Cardinals of the holy Roman Church, distinguished for their piety, prudence and knowledge of divine things; We chose besides, from both the secular and the regular clergy, men deeply versed in the theological sciences, so that everything concerning the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin might be examined by them with the greatest care and they might set out to Us their own opinion. And although the great number of requests addressed to Us to define at last the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin showed Us clearly what was on this point the mind of most of the pastors of the Church, We sent to all Our venerable Brethren the bishops of the Catholic world an encyclical letter given at Gaeta on 2 February 1849, asking them to offer prayers to God and then to let Us know in writing what was the piety and devotion of their faithful towards the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God, and above all what they themselves thought of the definition to be made and what was their wish on this point, so that We might give Our supreme judgment with all possible solemnity.

"It was certainly no slight consolation to Us when the replies of Our venerable Brethren reached Us. Writing to Us with the eagerness of an inexpressible joy and happiness, they not only confirmed to Us anew their own pious sentiments and the mind that animates them, their clergy and the faithful people towards the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin, but they also asked of Us, as with one common voice, that the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin be defined by the supreme judgment of Our authority. We felt no less joy when Our venerable brethren the Cardinals of the H. R. C. composing the special Congregation We have mentioned, and the consultor theologians chosen by Us, after maturely examining everything, asked Us with the same zeal and eagerness for this definition of the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God.

"Following the glorious footsteps of Our predecessors and desiring to proceed according to the established rules, We then convoked and held a Consistory in which, having spoken to Our venerable brethren the

Cardinals of the holy Roman Church, We had the extreme joy of hearing them ask Us to be pleased to issue a dogmatic definition concerning the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mother of God.

“Full of confidence in God and persuaded that the opportune moment had come to define the Immaculate Conception of the most holy Virgin Mother of God — which the divine oracles, venerable tradition, the constant mind of the Church, the admirable agreement of Catholic pastors and faithful, and the striking acts and constitutions of Our predecessors attest and wonderfully set in light — having examined all things with the greatest care and offered to God assiduous and fervent prayers, it seemed to Us that We should no longer delay to sanction and define by Our supreme judgment the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, and so to satisfy the most pious desires of the Catholic world and Our own devotion to the most holy Virgin, in order to honour more and more in her her only Son Our Lord Jesus Christ, since all honour and praise given to the Mother redounds to the glory of the Son.

“Wherefore, having unceasingly offered in humility and fasting Our private prayers and the public prayers of the Church to God the Father through His Son, that He would deign to direct and strengthen Our soul by the power of the Holy Spirit; having further implored the help of the whole heavenly Court and called upon the Spirit the Comforter with Our groanings; acting today under His inspiration, for the honour of the holy and undivided Trinity, for the glory of the Virgin Mother of God, for the exaltation of the Catholic Faith and the increase of the Christian Religion: by the authority of Our Lord Jesus Christ, of the blessed Apostles Peter and Paul, and by Our own, We declare, pronounce and define that the doctrine which holds that the Blessed Virgin Mary, from the first instant of her Conception, by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God, in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of mankind, was preserved and exempt from all stain of original fault, is revealed by God, and must therefore be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful. If therefore any — which God forbid — should presume to think in their hearts otherwise than has been defined by Us, let them learn and know that, condemned by their own judgment, they have suffered shipwreck in the faith and left the unity of the Church; and further, that if by word, by writing or by any other outward means they should dare to express these sentiments of their heart, they would by that very fact incur the penalties laid down by law.

“Our lips open in joy and Our tongue speaks in gladness! We render, and shall never cease to render, the humblest and most ardent thanks to Christ Jesus Our Lord, who, despite Our unworthiness, has granted Us the singular favour of offering and decreeing this honour, this glory and this praise to His most holy Mother; and We rest with entire and absolute confidence in the certainty of Our hopes. The Blessed Virgin — who, all fair and immaculate, crushed the venomous head of the cruel serpent and brought salvation to the world; who is the praise of the Prophets and Apostles, the honour of the Martyrs, the joy and crown of all the Saints; who, sure refuge and invincible helper of all in peril, all-powerful mediatrix and reconciler of the earth with her only Son, glory, splendour and safeguard of holy Church, has ever destroyed heresies; who has snatched the faithful peoples and nations from the greatest calamities and from evils of every kind, and has delivered Us Ourselves from the countless perils that assailed Us — the Blessed Virgin will by her powerful patronage bring it about that, all obstacles being removed and all errors overcome, holy Catholic Church our Mother may grow stronger and flourish more each day among all peoples and in all lands; that she may reign from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth; that she may enjoy fully peace, tranquillity and liberty, so that the guilty may obtain pardon, the sick healing, the weak strength of soul, the afflicted consolation, those in peril help; so that all who stray, seeing the darkness of their minds dispelled, may return to the path of truth and justice, and there may be but one flock and one shepherd.

“Let all Our beloved sons of the Catholic Church hear Our words; let them persevere, with a still livelier ardour of piety, religion and love, in honouring, invoking and praying to the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God, conceived without original stain, and let them have recourse with entire confidence to this sweet Mother of grace and mercy in all their dangers, anguish, needs, fears and terrors. There is nothing to fear,

there is never cause to despair, when one walks under the guidance, patronage and protection of her who, having for us a mother's heart and taking in hand the business of our salvation, extends her solicitude to the whole human race. Appointed by the Lord Queen of heaven and earth, exalted above all the choirs of angels and all the orders of the Saints, seated at the right hand of her only Son Our Lord Jesus Christ, her motherly prayers have a most powerful force: what she wills she obtains; she cannot ask in vain.

"Finally, so that this definition of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary may come to the knowledge of the whole Church, We have willed to publish this apostolic letter, which will preserve its memory for ever, ordering that copies or exemplars of this letter, even printed, if signed by a public notary or furnished with the seal of a person constituted in ecclesiastical dignity, shall have credit with all, as if the original itself were produced.

"Let it therefore be lawful for no man to infringe this text of Our declaration, decision and definition, or by rash audacity to contradict and oppose it. If anyone should dare to commit this outrage, let him know that he will incur the indignation of Almighty God and of His blessed Apostles Peter and Paul.

"Given at Rome, at St. Peter's, in the year of the Incarnation of Our Lord one thousand eight hundred and fifty-four, the sixth of the ides of December, in the ninth year of Our pontificate."

PIUS IX, POPE.

This reading ended, the cardinal dean again prostrated himself at the Holy Father's feet to thank him for the decree of definition he had just pronounced and to beg him to make it public by an authentic Bull. At the same time the apostolic protonotaries came forward, and the promoter of the faith, as consistorial advocate, begged the Holy Father to order that minutes be drawn up of this solemn act; the Sovereign Pontiff at once gave orders to that end.

These last ceremonies were scarcely noticed by the public and the clergy, who were wholly absorbed in the sweet thought of having heard the dogmatic definition of the great privilege of the Mother of God pronounced.

Scarcely had the last words of the definition left the Pontiff's lips when the cannon of Castel Sant'Angelo announced the great event, with redoubled salvoes, to the holy city and the surrounding country. All the bells of Rome were set ringing, and the houses were decked as if by enchantment.

After the *Ite missa est* the Holy Father intoned the *Te Deum*, sung alternately by the cantors of the papal chapel and by the choir. The tone in which this canticle was sung bore witness, by its liveliness and brilliance, to the sweet and deep joy that filled every soul, and added fresh lustre to the feast. The Holy Father, after the collect of thanksgiving, gave the pontifical blessing, recited the last Gospel and, wearing his tiara, blessed on his throne the golden crown set with precious stones that he was to place on the head of the image of the Blessed Virgin painted in the chapel of the chapter altar of St. Peter's. The coronation took place in the presence of the bishops and of the immense crowd that filled the basilica.

The number of persons present at the ceremony of the definition has been estimated at fifty thousand; this figure is not exaggerated. The church of St. Peter was filled in all its parts, to the point that movement in it had become impossible. No one in Rome remembered ever having seen such a crowd gathered beneath the vaults of St. Peter's.

CONGREGATION OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

The Congregation of the Daughters of the Immaculate Conception is a religious congregation [i.e. sodality] recognized by the Church, enriched by her with precious graces, and specially recommended to young women living in the world as a most advantageous means of helping them to reach salvation. The august name under whose protection the Church has placed this association shows well enough the value she sets on

it. The Immaculate Conception being the most glorious privilege of the most holy Virgin, must not the pious family that bears its name and its blessed banner have the first claims to her motherly protection?

Aim of the association. — All Christians are by adoption children of Mary; but not all bear this title worthily, and not all will have a share in her ineffable privileges. The aim of the association is to reawaken the Christian sap in the souls of young women and, through them, to give Christianity flowers of innocence, the world flowers of charity, and heaven angels. Now, as the most perfect model of the Christian virtues is the most holy and immaculate heart of Mary,

whoever aspires to the title of child of Mary in the ranks of her Immaculate Conception binds herself seriously to the imitation of this perfect model. The Congregation therefore by its very nature turns away anyone who does not feel the generous resolve to work at her salvation and to practise, with edification, the whole of the Christian life. To aspire to the honour of being a sodalist, more is needed than the ordinary life of people of the world: there must be an exemplary life, an ardent and sustained desire to work at one's perfection.

Favours granted to members of the association. — The favours reserved to the children of Mary in the association are of two kinds. 1° The spiritual favours are a considerable number of indulgences, plenary for the most part, to be gained during life and fixed especially on the feasts of the most holy Virgin; a plenary indulgence at the hour of death; a host of partial indulgences each time an associate fulfils one of the practices of the Rule; a personal share in all the good works, communions, alms, acts of charity and all possible merits of the other associates; but above all the assurance that Mary, the best of mothers, watches with a more tender affection over those who call themselves her children. 2° The favours of the second order to which the title of child of Mary gives a right are: (1) the right to wear the white dress, the sky-blue cord, the ribbon and the medal on the breast on feast-days, at processions or solemn gatherings; (2) the right to wring from the world, which sees a girl pass before its eyes in virginal livery, the most flattering and enviable praise: "Then she is pure, then she is good!"; (3) the right to be visited in sickness by devoted companions, and to be helped in need from the small resources of the Congregation; (4) the right to the attendance of the whole Congregation on the day of the funeral of one of its members, with a quite special ceremony in her favour; (5) the right to the offering of the holy sacrifice of the Mass in the name of the Congregation on the very day of a sodalist's death or the first free day after it; (6) the right to her share in a solemn service to be celebrated for all the sodalists who have died in the course of the year.

We have completed Father Giry's account with the work entitled L'Immaculée Conception de la bienheureuse Vierge Marie, considérée comme dogme de foi, *by Mgr J.-B. Malou, bishop of Bruges, and the* Manuel de la Congréganiste de

l'Immaculée Conception, *by a parish priest of the diocese of Valence.*

OUR LADY OF FOURVIÈRE, AT LYONS

The 8th of December 1852 was a great feast-day for the city of Lyons: the colossal image of Mary in gilded bronze was inaugurated on the bell-tower of Fourvière. We gladly seize the occasion of this anniversary to say a word to our pious readers about this venerated sanctuary.

Our Lady of Good Counsel was a little chapel going back to the year 840; it was later called Our Lady of Fourvière (*de foro veteri*), because it was built where the old Roman city and its forum had stood, on the ruins of the colossal buildings raised by the emperors. Successively enlarged in the course of the centuries, it was already a remarkable monument in 1793, when the Revolution stripped it of its ornaments and sold it as national property.

After peace had been restored to the Church, Cardinal Fesch, having become archbishop of Lyons, bought back Fourvière, and on 19 April 1805 Pius VII, who had come to France for the emperor's coronation,

himself reopened the venerated sanctuary and was the first to offer the expiatory sacrifice there. From that day devotion to Our Lady of Fourvière resumed its ancient vigour; divine worship began its exercises there again, pilgrims came in crowds, love and confidence enriched the pious sanctuary with ornaments and gifts of every kind; many signal graces were obtained there, and the walls were covered with the ex-votos of gratitude.

This gratitude of the people of Lyons has expressed itself in our day in a great demonstration. They had the generous idea of replacing the original chapel of Fourvière with a large and beautiful church that would show the city's protectress from afar to every eye. With this in view they bought the neighbouring properties to free the chapel from the buildings that hid it from view; they turned the steep flanks of the hill into a green promenade of easy access; they raised a monumental bell-tower, on whose summit they placed a colossal statue of Mary in gilded bronze, stretching out over the city her hands full of blessings.

Today the throng of pilgrims at Our Lady of Fourvière is prodigious. About sixteen thousand Masses a year are celebrated in the chapel, sometimes more than eighty in a single day. At least two hundred thousand communions are made there each year, sometimes many more. From twenty to thirty bishops come there yearly; the number of other pilgrims is incalculable. The inhabitants of the city flock there first on the feasts of the Virgin, then whenever they suffer or fear some misfortune or undertake some enterprise; and finally and above all on the 1st of January each year: that day people hurry to Fourvière very early, the chapel is opened earlier than usual, the crowd rushes in. It is Lyons coming to wish its good Mother a happy New Year and to receive her blessing as its New Year's gift.

Extracted from Notre-Dame de France, *by the curé of Saint-Sulpice [abbé Hamon]*.

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[2] After the interregnum of only five days that followed the death of Pope St. Felix I (269–274), on Sunday 3 January 275, Eutychian, a Tuscan by origin, was raised to the See of St. Peter. He sat under the reigns of Aurelian, Tacitus, Probus and Carus, from the consulate of Aurelian III and Marcellinus (275) until the ides of December under the consulate of Carus II and Carinus (283). By a constitution he regulated the ceremony of the blessing of beans and grapes on the altar of the Lord. During his life he buried with his own hand, in various places, three hundred and forty-two Martyrs. By a special decree he ordered that all Martyrs should be clothed in the dalmatic and the purple *colobium* before being buried; at the same time he required an exact report of their burial to be sent to him. In five ordinations, in the month of December, he laid hands on fourteen priests, five deacons and nine bishops for various churches. He received the crown of martyrdom (8 December 283) and was buried in the cemetery of Callistus, then carried to Luni (now Lunigiana), his native place. After the destruction of that city he was laid at Savona (intendancy of Genoa), where the episcopal see of Luni had just been transferred. — *Liber Pontificalis*; Darras, *Histoire de l'Église*; Artaud de Montor, *Histoire des souverains Pontifes romains*.

[3] We have sketched the notice of St. Eucharius of Trier, as well as that of his successors Sts. Valerius and Maternus, on 14 September, vol. XI, p. 111.

[4] This Congregation, which dates from the very year of the definition of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, already has four houses: one in Rome, installed at the Villa Campana, a portion bought with the foundress's money; one in Brittany, in a château of Mme de Melient; a third near Fribourg in Switzerland; a fourth at Annecy (Haute-Savoie). — Note of the abbé Ducis, archivist of the department of Haute-Savoie; letter of March 1872.

[5] When the forests of Marchenoir and Fréteval, now separate, still formed a single whole, which lasted until about the 14th century, the whole bore the name of Forêt-Longue (*Silvalonia*, *Silva longa*). After their separation the name of Forêt-Longue was still given for some time to that of Marchenoir. — Bordas, *Hist. du Dunois*, p. 12.

[1] Alexander VII, Const. *Sollicitudo omnium Ecclesiarum*, 8 December 1661.

9 December

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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Martyrologies

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY.

At Toledo, in Spain, the heavenly birthday of St. Leocadia, virgin and martyr, who, in the harsh prison where she had long languished under Diocletian by sentence of Dacian, prefect of the Spains, on hearing the account of the frightful torments endured by St. Eulalia and the other martyrs, knelt down to pray and, in the fervour of her prayer, gave back her virginal soul to Jesus Christ. 303. — At Carthage, St. Restitutus, bishop and martyr, whose praises St. Augustine sang in a sermon he preached on the day of his feast. — Also in Africa, the holy martyrs Peter, Successus, Bassian, Primitivus, and twenty others. — At Limoges, St. Valeria, virgin and martyr. 46. — At Verona, St. Proculus, bishop, who, having been struck in the face, beaten with rods and driven from the city during the persecution of Diocletian, was afterwards restored to his Church and died there in peace. — At Pavia, St. Syrus, first bishop of that city, who renewed the miracles and virtues of the Apostles. — At Apamea, in Syria, St. Julian, bishop, whose holiness shone with great brightness in the time of the emperor Severus. — At Périgueux, St. Cyprian or Subran, abbot, a man of great holiness.[1] About 586. — At Nazianzus, St. Gorgonia, sister of St. Gregory the Theologian, who himself wrote the history of her virtues and miracles. About 371.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED.

In the diocese of Auch, St. Valeria, virgin and martyr at Limoges, mentioned in the Roman martyrology of this day. 46. — In the dioceses of Bordeaux, Chartres and Meaux, St. Ambrose, bishop and confessor, whose life we gave on 7 December. 397. — In the dioceses of Carcassonne and Nice, St. Eutychian, pope and martyr, of whom we spoke on the preceding day. 283. — In the diocese of Clermont, St. Nectarius, confessor, one of the apostles of that country.[2] 1st c. — In the diocese of Perpignan, St. Leocadia, virgin and martyr, mentioned in the Roman martyrology of this day. 303. — In the dioceses of Nancy and Saint-Dié, St. Romaric or Remiré, monk of Luxeuil, whose life we gave on 8 December. 653. — In the diocese of Toulouse, St. Nicholas, bishop of Myra and confessor, whose life we gave on the 6th of this month. 324. — In the diocese of Périgueux, Sts. Cyprian, Sour and Amand, confessors, the first of whom is mentioned in the Roman martyrology of this day. 6th c. — In the former Benedictine abbey of Jouarre (*Jotrum*), in the diocese of Meaux, St. Balda, virgin, third abbess of that monastery. Her relics were formerly kept in a shrine at the Benedictine monastery of Nesle-la-Reposte (*Nigella abscondita*), in the diocese of Troyes. 7th c. — At Vannes, St. Budoc, bishop of the ancient see of Dol. 7th c. — At Gray (Haute-Saône), in the diocese of Besançon, Blessed Peter Fourier, parish priest of Mattaincourt (Vosges), founder of the Congregation of Notre-Dame, reformer and general of the Congregation of Our Saviour. We gave his life on 7 July. 1640. — Formerly, in the Benedictine abbey of Saint-Riquier, in the diocese of Amiens, the feast of Blessed Enguerran, abbot of that monastery. 1045. — At Saint-Médard of Soissons, translation of the relics of St. Sebastian, martyr (20 January), and of St. Gregory, pope (12 March).[3] 826.

MARTYROLOGIES OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

Martyrology of the Order of St. Basil. — At Nazianzus (Cappadocia), St. Gorgonia, widow, of the Order of St. Basil, sister of Blessed Gregory the Theologian, who himself wrote the history of her virtues and miracles. About 371.

Martyrology of the Order of Discalced of the Most Holy Trinity. — St. Bibiana or Vivian, virgin and martyr, whose heavenly birthday is kept on 2 December.[4] 363.

Martyrology of the Three Orders of St. Francis. — In the States of the Church, St. Silvester, abbot, founder of the Congregation of Silvestrine religious, who fell asleep in the Lord on 26 November.[5] 1267.

Martyrology of the Order of Friars Minor. — At Waldsee, in the diocese of Constance, Blessed Elisabeth, virgin, religious of the Third Order of our Father St. Francis, called the Good, who went to her heavenly Spouse, enriched with divine graces, on 5 December. Clement XIII approved the immemorial cult paid to her.[6] 1420.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS.

Among the Friars Preachers, Blessed Dominic Spatafora, confessor, of the Order of St. Dominic. The inhabitants of Montecerignone, in Italy (duchy of Urbino), having resolved to build a convent of Friars Preachers to serve a miraculous image of the Virgin called Our Lady of Graces, the undertaking was entrusted to Blessed Dominic Spatafora, known for his zeal and holiness. The blessed Father fully answered the common expectation. When the work was finished, he obtained leave to remain in this new convent, so as to devote himself with greater fervour to the service of Mary. There he completed his sanctification, and at the same time produced in souls incredible fruits of salvation, both by his teaching and by his good example. He took the discipline every day without fail; he fasted often on bread and water; his great austerity towards himself never allowed him either to ask or to accept any dispensation from the Rule. God having revealed to him the day of his death, he said nothing of it to anyone until the day itself; but when it had come, after attending all the exercises of choir, he called to him all the religious present, humbly asked their pardon for all the faults he might have committed, warmly commended holy observance to them, and took leave of them, telling them that he was to die that day. And indeed, after receiving the last sacraments, he fell asleep that very day in the sleep of the just. Twenty-four years after his death (1545), his body was found fresh as if he had just died. This miraculous circumstance increased the devotion with which the faithful already surrounded him. Numerous and signal miracles have made his tomb illustrious. 1521. — At Samosata (now Samsat), ancient capital of Commagene, on the Euphrates, the holy martyrs Hipparchus, Philotheus, James, Paragrus, Abibus, Romanus and Lollian, victims of the persecution raised by the emperor Maximian. 297. — In England, St. Wulfhilda (Wilfrida, Vulfilda), nun at Winchester, abbess of Barking (county of Essex), foundress-abbess of the monastery of Horton (county of Dorset). Her relics were kept in the abbey of Barking, and the English, before the so-called Reformation, surrounded them with great veneration. 990.

ST. VALERIA, VIRGIN AND MARTYR AT LIMOGES (46)

Pope: St. Peter. — Roman emperor: Claudius I.

Forestalled by the gifts of the Spirit of God, this rose sprung from thorns remained a virgin in her flesh. — Office of St. Valeria.

This illustrious virgin was the only daughter of the proconsul Leocadius and of Susanna, daughter of Manilius Armillus and niece of Lucius Capreolus. After her father’s death Valeria, withdrawn into a castle built at the gates of Limoges, grew up under her mother’s wing; and in this life almost wholly removed from the world, both of them, by their kindly liberality and their good offices, made themselves dear to all their neighbours, who surrounded them with veneration and love. The death of Leocadius had left an immense, irreparable void in this family; but the great wealth it enjoyed preserved for it the general esteem and confidence.

Meanwhile, at the same time as the emperor Claudius Tiberius was entrusting Julius Silanus with the government of the province of Aquitaine, the apostle St. Peter, who had come to Rome only two years before, was sending Martial, one of the seventy-two disciples of Our Lord, into Gaul to preach the faith of the Gospel there. He assigned him the city of Limoges as the centre of his apostolic labours, and gave him as travelling companions and coadjutors Alpinian and Austriclinian. On arriving in that city they received hospitality from a lady named Radegund, whose dwelling was near the castle. On the very day after his arrival, blessed Martial began to preach the Gospel publicly, and his preaching was followed by innumerable miracles. There was at that time in the castle a poor madman, tightly bound with strong chains, whom no one dared approach because of the violent excesses into which he was carried when his malady tormented him most. The servant of God, hearing an extraordinary noise in the castle, asked the cause and, having learned it, went to visit Susanna, who, informed of all the wonders worked by blessed Martial, begged him to cure this sick man as he had cured the others. To which he answered: “If you believe, you will see the glory of God.”

Moved with tender compassion for the unfortunate man, he made the sign of the cross over him: his chains at once broke, and he was entirely cured. Amazed at the powerful efficacy of the sign of the cross, and deeply touched by the miracle, Susanna and Valeria pressed blessed Martial with questions, and so gave him the occasion to reveal to them the mysteries of the faith and to unfold before them the ravishing beauties of Gospel morality. As the grace of the Holy Spirit was working powerfully in these happily prepared souls, the holy apostle of the Limousin had little trouble in persuading them to embrace Christianity. Susanna and her daughter threw themselves at his feet, asking him to baptize them. Blessed Martial granted them this favour, and while he was praying to the Lord for them both were filled with the Holy Spirit. Six hundred servants of Susanna's household, freedmen or slaves, likewise received baptism, and that opulent house was flooded with the most brilliant rays of the Christian faith.

A little later Susanna passed to a better life. This trial, so painful to Valeria's heart, shook neither her faith nor her constancy; and without a moment's hesitation she resolved to advance more and more in the ways of Christian perfection. She gave St. Martial rich presents, many benefices, and much land and many vineyards. She also placed in his hands a great part of the gold, silver and precious stones she had found in the treasury of her house. Further, she gave him a large number of serfs, so that when this man of God should pass from time to eternity, these serfs, having become fervent servants of the Most High, might occupy themselves, at the very place of his burial, in praising the Lord and honouring the memory of the holy apostle. Then, attaching herself to his steps, she profited wonderfully by the lessons of wisdom he was good enough to give her, and soon penetrated the highest secrets of the

Christian life. She listened with unspeakable satisfaction to the lofty teaching of her holy master, instructed herself solidly in all the mysteries of the faith, and engraved the maxims of the Gospel deep in her heart. Not content to bear the yoke of the precepts, she believed herself called also to the practice of the evangelical counsels. Her progress in virtue was rapid; and everything in her revealed a soul enriched with heavenly gifts and belonging henceforth more to the divine abode than to earth.

The most perfect order reigned in the house of Valeria, which had become the refuge of the holy Apostle, whose spiritual daughter she was. There gathered in crowds those who came from all sides to ask St. Martial for the cure of their sicknesses or the grace of baptism. St. Valeria wished strangers to be generously lodged there; and the poorest among them were the object of quite particular care on the part of our illustrious virgin, who wished to render them herself the humblest services, the most abject and the most repellent in the eyes of the world. Her virtues, winning her the esteem and respect of the inhabitants of the city, added to the prestige of her rank and gave her an influence and a power before which the most considerable men, and even the holders of authority, bowed. The children of paganism, already subdued by the lustre of her birth, paid homage to her precious qualities and showed her on every occasion a boundless deference. It seemed as though the dignity of the proconsulate with which her father had been invested still cast over her one of its brilliant reflections.

Valeria was assiduous at the preaching of St. Martial, and she gathered in her heart with holy eagerness the words of salvation and life, to make them the food of her soul. Filled with the Spirit of God, she spent days and nights in prayer, gave herself to fasting, to holy vigils and to all the works of mercy, thus preluding, without knowing it, the hard combats she would one day have to sustain for the glory of God against the world and hell. God having poured into her soul the liveliest lights of His grace, she understood the nothingness and vanity of the pleasures and perishable riches of this world; and although she had for a long time been able to regard herself as the betrothed of the new proconsul, she resolved to renounce all greatness and the honour of that alliance, so as to have no other spouse than the King of heaven and earth, our Saviour Jesus Christ. She therefore went to find St. Martial, prostrated herself at his feet and pronounced before him the vow of virginity, promising the Lord to remain invincibly united to Him.

God accepted and blessed this sacrifice of sweet odour, and enriched the heart of this pious virgin with His most admirable gifts; and Valeria became from that time one of the purest glories of that new-born Church. The holy apostle, all of whose counsels she followed with humble docility, preaching one day to all the assembled faithful, was explaining to them the answer of our divine Master to a young man who, coming up to His sacred person, had said to Him: “Good Master, what good shall I do that I may have life everlasting?” Jesus answered him: “Why askest thou Me concerning good? One is good, God; but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” — “Which?” he asked. — Jesus answered: “Thou shalt do no murder; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness; honour thy father and thy mother; and thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” — The young man said to Him: “All these have I kept from my youth; what is yet wanting to me?” — Jesus said to him: “If thou wilt be perfect, go, sell what thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.” These words penetrated Valeria to the depth of her soul and, all on fire with love for the divine Spouse she had chosen, she ardently desired to reach that high perfection, the precious fruit of holy poverty. And so from that moment she began to distribute to the poor all that remained to her of greatest value, her diamonds, her gold, her silver, her finest garments; and she stripped herself of the slaves and vast estates which she had long since, together with her pious mother, given to St. Martial to provide for the needs of the Church and to found useful institutions in it.

A voluntary poor woman, Valeria followed the way of virgins with greater perfection; and in the eyes of the world she lost nothing of her dignity or of the influence her illustrious birth assured her. “Let poverty no longer be despised,” cries Bossuet, “nor treated as base-born. It is true that she was of the dregs of the people; but the King of glory, having espoused her, has ennobled her by this alliance, and so grants to the poor all the privileges of His empire.”

This great sacrifice was hardly consummated when the proconsul Julianus Silanus, Valeria’s betrothed, arrived at Limoges. He was invested with the greatest powers and had the government of the whole country from the Rhône to the Ocean as far as the Pyrenees. Informed beforehand of Valeria’s conversion to Christianity, of her prodigious largesse and of her resolution to live in the state of virginity, he tried to hide his indignation and vexation as far as possible; he sent for her and ordered her to appear before him. Valeria hastened to obey and, with a grave and modest bearing, knelt before him and humbly waited until it should please him to question her. At the sight of her Silanus could not contain his anger and, in a haughty and altered voice, asked her whether it was true that she had given her faith to another spouse, and who the audacious mortal was who had dared to poach on his preserves and rob him of the heart and love of his betrothed. Valeria, then speaking with an altogether angelic modesty, answered that she would think herself the most unhappy and unworthy of creatures if she had ever had the thought of preferring anyone else whatever to him; but that, obeying a divine inspiration, she had given her heart and her love to the King of heaven and earth, whose spouse she had become by uniting herself to Him by the vow of virginity. She added that not only did she see nothing in this that could offend him, but he ought even to feel greatly honoured by it, since in fact she placed above him in her esteem only the Creator of heaven and earth, the Redeemer of men, who died on the cross to make them reign with Him in heaven. “It is to the apostle of these happy lands, to Martial, the disciple of Jesus Christ,” she said, “that I am indebted for this signal honour. Be docile to his voice like me; learn to know the true God; be a Christian; let us both be virgins, and we shall remain eternally united in the bonds of heavenly love.” Beside himself with anger, stricken with grief and shame, Silanus cut the interview short and, without hearing anything more, condemned her to capital punishment, and charged Hortarius, his squire, with seeing to the execution of the sentence.

Valeria’s generous resolve overturned in an instant Silanus’s dreams of fortune; he was frustrated in his most legitimate hopes, and no doubt felt himself deeply wounded in his pride. But like most of the great men of Rome he was also full of hatred for the religion of the Galilean, and at the hearth of his wholly patrician

family he had certainly imbibed contempt for the Christians, whose invincible courage amid the cruellest tortures was regarded by the idolaters as real madness. So Silanus obeyed this twofold feeling of contempt and hatred in pronouncing sentence of death against Valeria.

Justly proud of the lot reserved for her, Valeria, whose holy soul overflowed with contentment and joy, went to her execution with a smile on her lips, as though she were going to a pleasure party. Never was she seen more content: the assurance of her gaze, the firmness of her step, her speech always calm and measured, were a convincing proof of the happiness she felt within, and showed how happy she counted herself to prove to the heavenly Spouse the love with which she was consumed for Him, by shedding her blood for the glory of His name. On the way she said to Hortarius, who was leading her to execution: “How mistaken you are! Foolish man, you think you are leading me to death, and I am running to life; but you — you will die this night. What will become of your treasures and your riches?” Then, having come to the place of execution, she raised her hands to heaven and, addressing Jesus Christ, said to Him: “My Saviour Jesus, my Lord and my Master, You have deigned to call me by Your grace to the knowledge of Your holy name, and Your servant, blessed Martial, has made known to me Your unspeakable goodness and the merciful designs of Your tenderness towards me, Your poor and unworthy handmaid. In acknowledgement of this immense favour I have disdained the alliances of earth and united myself to You by a sacred bond, by an irrevocable vow; for I did not wish any power in the world to be able to deprive me of Your nuptials and Your bridal bed. It is therefore for You, and because I will not be separated from Your faith and Your love, that I am going to die. Send to my help the Angels of heaven to protect and defend me against the dangerous assaults of the devil, and grant that I may be eternally united to You in the holy Jerusalem.”

As she finished praying, a voice from on high was heard answering her: “Fear nothing, Valeria; the Angels gaze on you with rapture, they envy your happiness, and they are preparing to receive you into the eternal splendours of Sion.”

At these words Valeria’s face lit up with a brilliant ray, and a luminous reflection of the heavenly joys seemed to come down upon her. Then the glorious virgin, raising her eyes to heaven, cried: “My God, my Father, into Your hands I commend my spirit.” Having said these words, she bowed her head, and the executioner cut it off with a single stroke. At the same instant all the spectators of this moving scene, Christians or pagans, saw the soul of St. Valeria come forth from her body, all dazzling with light like the sun, and the Angels carried it to heaven in a globe of fire, making the air resound with harmonious songs and ravishing melodies.

Meanwhile, as the executioner was contemplating with secret satisfaction the work of destruction and death he had just accomplished, he was astonished, and all the people with him, to see the body of the blessed martyr rise from the ground, take its head in its two hands and, as though still full of vigour and life, advance with a firm step through the city towards the place where St. Martial then was. The blessed apostle had gone that morning to the basilica of St. Stephen, and was offering there the adorable sacrifice to obtain for his dear Philothea, Valeria, the strength and courage she needed to consummate her immolation generously and win the glorious palms of martyrdom.

Approaching the altar where St. Martial was offering the Victim of the world to the eternal Father, she laid her head gently at his feet, and her body stretched itself on the sacred pavement. Drops of blood fallen from St. Valeria’s head became, as it were, encrusted in the marble of the altar, say several chroniclers.

St. Valeria did not confine herself to laying her head at St. Martial’s feet; she wished also to leave in that place an indelible and unimpeachable mark of her spirit of obedience and of her martyrdom, by imprinting the deep traces of her feet on a marble which, found again in the 11th century, was uncovered and exposed to the veneration of the faithful. This precious stone, carefully kept for several centuries, was visited, touched and religiously kissed by numerous pilgrims desirous of sharing in the merits and powerful intercession of

the glorious servant of God.

VENERATION AND RELICS.

Immediately after St. Valeria's death her cult was held in great honour throughout the region. Her body long rested in the place where St. Martial had buried it, and where Duke Stephen had had a sumptuous church built in her honour and under her name, to the glory of the true God. Later, at a date impossible to determine, her precious remains were transferred to the church of a very ancient Benedictine abbey called Chambon, where they still rest, except for a very small portion kept in the cathedral of Limoges in a very beautiful reliquary. The wonders worked at the Saint's tomb contributed not a little to enhancing the cult paid to her; her relics were placed in a richly restored chapel, and from then on a greater number of pious pilgrims were seen hastening to her altar.

The cult of St. Valeria spread throughout France, and her memory was venerated at Paris in the church of Saint-Martial, restored by St. Eligius in the 7th century. After the revolutionary storm a parish church was built in the rue de Bourgogne under the title of St. Valère — who is the same as St. Valeria, virgin and martyr at Limoges; this church has been suppressed and turned into a mere catechism chapel of the parish of Sainte-Clotilde, whose boundaries include the greater part of those of Sainte-Valère. In the church of Sainte-Clotilde there is a chapel dedicated to St. Valeria, whose statue stands above the altar.

Taken from the Histoire de sainte Valérie, *by the Rev. Fr. Ambroise, Capuchin Friar Minor.*

ST. LEOCADIA OF TOLEDO, VIRGIN AND MARTYR (303)

Pope: St. Marcellinus. — Roman emperors: Maximian Herculius; Diocletian.

I recognize no true and commendable nobility but that which unites virtue with the splendour of birth. — Peter of Blois, *Letters.*

Spain has such veneration for this Saint that we think it fitting to make known to France the greatness of her merit before God and before men. She was of Toledo (New Castile), of an illustrious and Christian family. Her virtue far surpassed her years, and from her childhood she gave herself with such devotion to the service of Our Lord and to all the exercises of Christianity that in her native city she was regarded as a model of innocence and piety. She was thus glorifying the name of Jesus Christ by her good works when the impious Dacian, sent into Spain by the emperors Diocletian and Maximian to exterminate the worship of the true God, entered Toledo, where the pagans at once denounced our Saint to him as one of the most fervent of Christians.

He had her brought before his tribunal and, knowing her rank, reproached her for having attached herself to a religion that had nothing in it but what was low and contemptible (so he called the worship paid to the sovereign Creator of all things). Leocadia, who knew well in what true greatness consists, answered him steadfastly that she thought herself infinitely happy to be the handmaid of God and of His Son Jesus Christ, and that nothing would be able to make her renounce her religion, even should he prepare for her the most atrocious torments and the cruellest and most ignominious death. Dacian, irritated by this answer, had her scourged in his presence like a wretched slave; then, her body being already all bloody, he had her led to a dungeon until harsher punishments could be prepared for her. Leocadia went into that pit with as much joy as if she had been led into a magnificent palace to celebrate her wedding feast; and indeed, seeing on her way Christians lamenting the wretched state in which they saw her, she consoled them, telling them that they ought rather to rejoice at the grace she was receiving of enduring something for Jesus Christ, her Lord and her Spouse.

Meanwhile, Dacian having posted lieutenants in the other cities as so many ministers of his fury, Calpurnian, whom he had left at Mérida (Estremadura), made St. Eulalia suffer torments so horrible that few martyrs

have endured the like, as we shall see on the following day. Leocadia, being informed of it, conceived such grief at the cruelties practised against the servants and handmaids of the true God that, life becoming unbearable to her amid so many crimes and miseries, she begged her heavenly Spouse to take her to Himself. Her prayer was heard; and in the greatest fervour of her prayer, having tenderly kissed a cross which she had engraved on a hard stone by the mere pressure of her finger, she gave back her beautiful soul to Him whom she loved above all things. This was on 9 December 303.

St. Leocadia is represented: 1° dying in her prison; 2° tenderly kissing a cross, as we have just said; 3° with scourges near her, because she had been cruelly beaten before being thrown into prison to await fresh torments there.

VENERATION AND RELICS.

The pagans threw the body of St. Leocadia over the walls of the city of Toledo to be devoured by the dogs and crows; but the Christians carried it off and buried it with honour in a place quite near the city. Since then a church has been built over her tomb, and several archbishops of Toledo, among others Eugenius III, Ildephonsus and Julian, chose their burial there. Several Councils were also held there and several miracles worked. Besides this church, owed to the liberality of King Sisebut, there are two others at Toledo under the name of St. Leocadia: one on the site of her prison, the other on the site of her father's house.

In the 9th century, at the time of the invasion of Spain by the Moors or Saracens, the relics of St. Leocadia were carried away from Toledo to remove them from profanation by the infidels. Part was taken to Saint-Ghislain, a small stronghold a league from Mons, in Hainaut. Later, in the 16th century, at the time of the conquest of the Low Countries by Philip II, king of Spain, this first portion of the relics was brought back to the city of Toledo by order of that prince.

The other portion of St. Leocadia's body was transferred to the monastery of Saint-Médard of Soissons, and these precious remains stayed there for several centuries. They were there in the time of Charles the Bald, king of France (840–877), as Nithard attests in book III of his Chronicle: "As Charles was advancing towards Soissons, the monks of Saint-Médard came hastening to meet him and begged him to carry the bodies of Sts. Medard, Sebastian, Gregory, Tiburtius, Leocadia, etc., into the basilica where they now rest, which was then for the greater part built. The prince consented, stopped at that place, and carried the bodies of the Saints on his own shoulders with great respect."

To understand the reason for the Saint's translation to Vic-sur-Aisne, a market town four leagues from Soissons, one must know that the land of Vic had been given to the monastery of Saint-Médard by the princess Bertha, daughter of Louis the Pious; and then that Odo, count of Paris and later king of France (887–898), under whose protection the abbey was, had built (889) a stronghold at Vic-sur-Aisne "to safeguard the properties of the monastery entrusted to his advocacy." Later the religious of Saint-Médard, finding themselves constantly harassed by the turbulent lords of Coucy, obtained that the lords of Pierrefonds should maintain in the castle of Vic a body of troops commanded by a knight. This was in fact done at the end of the 11th century and throughout the 12th.

In 1196 the religious transferred the relics of St. Leocadia to this stronghold. The ceremony, fixed for Ascension Day, was carried out with the greatest pomp, and the relics were placed in the castle chapel. A young religious, Dan Gautier or Gautier de Coincy, was the first prior of the little community thenceforth charged with guarding the Saint's relics and serving her chapel. In 1219, the very year of the capture of Damietta (Egypt), thieves broke by night into the chapel of St. Leocadia, carried off the shrine, stripped it of its rich ornaments and threw the relics into the river Aisne. Gautier, in despair, lost his sleep over it. He spent several days and nights praying and groaning. The Lord let Himself be touched by such fervent supplications. At the end of five days, on the eve of Pentecost, the precious bones were found in the Aisne. Gautier drew them out himself and laid them provisionally on the bank of the river, near which he planted a

cross. A multitude of miracles were then worked through the invocation of the Saint. Milo of Bazoches, fiftieth abbot of Saint-Médard, came to make the recognition of the relics, enclosed them in a silver reliquary enamelled with gold; and on 22 July they were carried back with great ceremony to the chapel of the castle of Vic.

After the incident just related, the chapel of St. Leocadia remained in peaceful possession of its patroness's shrine until the time of the League (1576). Condé with his Huguenots one day seized Vic-sur-Aisne. The Leaguers retook the place in 1590; but they could not resist the sieur d'Humières, sent by Henry IV, and were all put to the sword. In the pillage the shrine of St. Leocadia, which was covered with plates of silver and other precious materials, was broken and the relics thrown on the ground. They were about to be given to the flames when Claude de Lépine, parish priest of Haramont (Aisne, arrondissement of Soissons), a witness of this profanation, gathered them up secretly and sent them by a soldier to the abbey of Longpré

(*Longum pratum*), of the Order of Fontevrault, where his sister had made her profession. Fresh miracles having been worked there, the Pope granted indulgences to the faithful who should visit the church of Longpré on the feast of St. Leocadia.

In 1695 the relics of the Saint were very solemnly transferred from the old shrine into another "more seemly and suitable," says the official report, "without breaking the old seals or stamps"; and the feast of this translation was fixed on 12 February, "to be kept henceforth from year to year." The monastery of Longpré having been destroyed at the Revolution of 1793, the precious shrine was carried in 1805 to the church of Haramont, where it is still to be seen. Its ebony sides are decorated with very graceful arabesques and scrolls in gilded copper. It contains many bones as well as the head of the Saint, except for the lower jaw and some teeth, which, having been given back at the beginning of this century to the church of Vic-sur-Aisne, are there an object of veneration for the pious faithful. On Whit Monday a procession is made round the town in which the shrine of St. Leocadia is solemnly carried.

Devotion to St. Leocadia has not cooled at Vic-sur-Aisne. And so, at the request of the dean, Mgr de Simony, bishop of Soissons, was able to establish there the Confraternity of St. Leocadia, whose main object is the spiritual advancement of those who join it. "They will remember," says the Ordinance, "that they must edify one another by a more exact attendance at the offices, by a purer conduct, a more Christian life and a more frequent reception of the Sacraments."

A small particle of the Saint's relics is in the chapel of the lycée of Amiens.

We have completed Father Giry's account with Notes kindly supplied to us by M. l'abbé Henri Congnet, canon of Soissons.

BLESSED ENGUERRAN, ABBOT OF SAINT-RIQUIER, IN THE DIOCESE OF AMIENS (1045)

Pope: Gregory VI. — King of France: Henry I. Ubi patientia, ibi laetitia. Where patience is, there is joy. — St. Ambrose, *Letters.*

Enguerran or Angelran,[1] who was surnamed the Wise, belonged to an obscure family, but of free condition, which lived in the practice of the Christian virtues. He was born at Saint-Riquier (Somme) about the year 975. His mother, in a dream, saw a garland come forth from her womb which, going to encircle the walls of Centula (the original name of Saint-Riquier), drew the admiration of the onlookers. She hastened to tell this vision to her husband, who saw in it a presage of the greatness the future held for their child.

Gifted with a happy nature and an open mind, the young Enguerran made rapid progress in the study of letters. Desiring to consecrate himself wholly to the service of God, he took the monastic habit at the abbey of Saint-Riquier, where he gave the example of deep humility, of great love of the rule, and of that wholly

Christian charity which knows neither hatred nor envy. It was under the direction of Abbot Ingelard that he first gave himself to study; his progress was so considerable that it was decided to put him in a position to be ignorant of nothing in the sciences of the time, and the completion of his education was entrusted to the celebrated Fulbert, bishop of Chartres, who had just introduced into plainchant the innovations of Guido of Arezzo. The hopes conceived were not disappointed: under so skilful a master Enguerran became very learned in grammar, music and dialectic. After receiving the priesthood he returned to Saint-Riquier, whose school was soon made famous by his teaching.

He was to climb the degrees of the hierarchy with giant strides. After the death of Ingelard, that is, in 1022 at the latest, the religious of Saint-Riquier chose Enguerran as their abbot. King Robert, whose every wish this election fulfilled, desired to go to Centula on the occasion. But the newly elected, believing himself unworthy to assume the responsibility of such a burden, fled into a neighbouring forest. The good king, while admiring this humility, ordered the men-at-arms of his suite to make an active search of all the surroundings: the fugitive, discovered in the forest of Oneux, was brought back to the monastery. The king made him touch the bell-ropes to invest him with the abbatial authority, and the ecclesiastical consecration took place without any delay.

The new abbot devoted all his care to giving the example of an irreproachable life, encouraging good and preventing evil. While devoting himself to the salvation of souls, he did not neglect the material interests entrusted to him: the abbey owed to him the rebuilding of the church of Saint-Benoît, the erection of an infirmary and of a chapel dedicated to St. Vincent, the acquisition of sacred vessels of gold or silver, the copying and binding of many manuscripts, and a rich decoration of the altars.

Ingelard, abbot of Saint-Riquier, had concluded an agreement concerning certain estates of his monastery with Notker, bishop of Liège. After that prelate’s death his two successors had ratified the former arrangements. A new titular, named Durand, had just been enthroned. Enguerran went to find him and, thanks to the recommendations of Ebles of Roucy, archbishop of Reims, obtained a confirmatory charter dated 18 September 1022. Some time afterwards he went to Normandy to solicit the generosity of Duke Richard II. He received from him a purple chasuble and the gift of the church of

Équemauville, *Scabelli villa*, canton of Honfleur. The duke’s brother Robert, archbishop of Rouen, at the same time presented the church of Saint-Riquier with a fine tapestry.

If our Saint had the material interests of his abbey so much at heart, he also knew how to make noble use of them. Enguerran was not content to grant the requests of the poor; he knew how to forestall them by disguising his gifts. He sometimes went out of the abbey with the alms-purse, and when he saw a poor man approaching he would let a few silver coins fall and stop the passer-by to point them out to him: “Take for yourself,” he would say, “what Providence seems to have intended for you.”

That same Providence knew how to watch over the interests of the generous abbot. Malbrancq tells us that Enguerran one day sent two of his religious to carry out an important mission and gave them, according to custom, the monastic blessing. On the road robbers seized the two Benedictines’ mounts; but it was in vain that they tried to use them: neither whip nor spur could make them move. The thieves repented and gave the horses back to their owners.

Enguerran’s zeal and charity were known to all: a cruel trial was to bring out his patience and firmness. He was struck by a paralysis so complete that he could no longer lift his hand to his mouth nor move in his bed. The poor sick man regarded this painful state as a just punishment of his sins, and counted himself happy to redeem his faults in this way. As he often passed from sadness to joy, and was questioned about these changes of mood, he answered that at times he was thinking of the eternal pains he had deserved, and at times of the happiness the angels and saints taste in heaven.

Many of the monks thought that because of this disability Enguerran should be replaced. Taking advantage of this feeling, one of them, Fulk, son of Angelran, count of Ponthieu, sought to usurp the functions of abbot. Thanks to his father's credit he obtained this appointment from Henry I, who, for some unknown reason, happened then to be in those parts. Fulk, to have his pretended rights recognized, gave a sumptuous feast to the knights of Ponthieu in the refectory of the abbey. When Enguerran, who until then had known nothing of these audacious machinations, was told what was happening, he had himself carried to the door of the refectory, and there pronounced anathema on those who wished to violate the rights of justice. The assembly having fled, he declared to Fulk, struck dumb with confusion, that he would never be abbot in his lifetime. This prediction was not belied by events: for Fulk was named abbot of Forest-Montiers only on the day after Enguerran was buried.

Paralysed as he was, the courageous monk had himself carried in a carriage before the king, reproached him energetically for his weakness and threatened him with eternal punishment if he persisted in his unjust intention. Henry I showed a repentance which the future proved sincere: for some years later, at the request of Enguerran, who felt himself unable to continue his functions, the king gave him Gervin as successor. This pious monk of Verdun would consent only if he were called to that dignity by the votes of the monks. Enguerran fell in with his views and hastened to have the election held which was to relieve him of the burden of affairs. Gervin was ordained by Fulk, bishop of Amiens, on the day of the Annunciation in the year 1045.

Enguerran, despite his infirmities, followed all the exercises of the community as far as possible, and attended on a portable bed the meditations, the offices and the solemn Mass. He even happened to sing the prayers of the holy sacrifice as though he were at the altar — which several regarded as a strange singularity in a man surnamed the Wise. One day, when he had sung the Mass in this way, he asked for a little wine to quench his thirst. After tasting what was offered him, and then another, he exclaimed: "It is not that wine that I want, but the wine I drank at my Mass." It was then understood that a heavenly draught had been mysteriously administered to him at the moment of communion, while he seemed to be celebrating the holy mysteries; and they answered him: "Father, you can no longer have any of that wine, unless He who granted it to you wishes to give you some again." The pious abbot was quite confused at having revealed the miraculous favour with which he had been honoured.

As Enguerran's illness grew worse, it was found necessary to send a deputy to court on important business. Abbot Gervin entrusted this message to a religious who alleged a host of excuses to be exempted from it, because he wished to be present at the death of the holy abbot, which was believed to be very near. This disobedience caused him to be summoned before Enguerran, who, after reproaching him, added: "Carry out the orders you have been given, and know that I shall not be put in the ground before your return." And so it happened. The blessed abbot gave back his soul to God on 9 December in the year 1045. The monk we have spoken of was returning from his mission and was at Amiens when he learned this sorrowful news. He set out on horseback for Saint-Riquier, and was still able to behold the lifeless remains of the venerable abbot.

Gervin I presided at his burial, which took place in the church dedicated to St. Riquier, before the altar of St. Lawrence. Guy, who was then archdeacon of the cathedral of Amiens and later became its bishop, composed a eulogy in verse of his former master and the following epitaph:

Quem tegit hic tumulus, lectissimus Angelirannus Hujus coenobii pastor et abba fuit. Dux gregis Ecclesiae, monachum spes inclyta vitae, Vixit, et in mundo mundus, et in Domino.

[He whom this tomb covers, the most excellent Angelran, was shepherd and abbot of this monastery. Leader of the Church's flock, glorious hope of the monks' life, he lived pure in the world, and in the Lord.]

Hariulf tells us that a miracle made this tomb illustrious. A woman of Feuquières, canton of Moyenneville, brought her paralysed daughter there and had a candle burned. The young invalid fell asleep for a moment

and woke up cured.

WRITINGS OF BLESSED ENGUERRAN.

Enguerran was regarded as one of the most learned men of his time. This is the testimony St. Gerard gives him: *qui eo tempore caeteris philosophabatur altius* ("who in that time philosophized more deeply than the rest"). We can hardly check this literary judgement, because Enguerran left us few writings. The only important work of his that remains, the verse Life of St. Riquier, is of great poetic mediocrity. These are the works due to Enguerran's pen:

1° The verse *Life of St. Riquier*, dedicated to Fulbert of Chartres. The first book is a very literal translation of the biography written by Alcuin. The second and third books follow just as closely an anonymous account of miracles composed in the 9th century. The fourth book seems to belong properly to the author and relates the translation of the body of St. Riquier in 981. Only the first and last books were published by Mabillon.

2° Verse Histories of St. Vincent, martyr, and of St. Austreberta, which have not come down to us.

3° A rhymed *Catalogue of the Abbots of Saint- Riquier*. Hariulf considers it defective because Nithard, Ribbodo, Helgaud and Coschin do not appear in it. Is this really an omission, or was it not rather Hariulf who wrongly multiplied the number of abbots of Centula?

4° *Hymns* in honour of St. Riquier, St. Valery and St. Wulfran. That of St. Wulfran remained in use in the liturgy of Amiens until the reform of M. de La Motte.

5° The *Epitaph* of Oger or Odelger, prior of Saint-Riquier, and probably that of Guy, abbot of Forest-Montiers, both transmitted to us by Hariulf.

It can be seen from the choice of these subjects that Enguerran was essentially a diocesan hagiographer.

Extracted from the Hagiographie du diocèse d'Amiens, *by M. l'abbé Corblet.*

ST. BUDOC, BISHOP OF THE ANCIENT SEE OF DOL (7th century)

Judual, prince of Brittany, who owed it to St. Samson that he recovered the inheritance of his fathers, and who afterwards reigned in that country under the name of Alan I, had by his marriage with Azenor, daughter of the count of Léon, six sons, the fourth of whom was called Deroch or Budoc. From his childhood he was entrusted to the holy bishop of Dol, that he might bring him up in his monastery and take care of his education. Under this excellent master Budoc made remarkable progress in learning and in piety. Having decided to renounce the world and consecrate himself to God, he was admitted to the clergy and later became abbot of the monastery of Dol. His merit did not escape St. Magloire, who, wishing to lay down the burden of the episcopate, designated him as his successor and consecrated him bishop. The disciple was soon seen to be animated by the same spirit as the holy masters who had guided him in the ways of perfection, and it was recognized that he possessed all the virtues of a true pastor. The answer full of prudence and piety which he gave St. Magloire, when that venerable old man told him of the plan he had formed of leaving the country of Dol to enjoy more freely the sweetness of solitude, is a striking proof of his wisdom, and shows not only his zeal for his flock, which his holy predecessor edified by his life and his words, but also his aversion to those feelings of jealousy which sometimes take virtuous persons by surprise when they are engaged in the same good work.

History has not preserved for us the details of St. Budoc's actions during his episcopate. We know only that he undertook a journey to Jerusalem and won such esteem there that he was given a great number of relics, which were afterwards carried to Orléans and placed in the church of Saint-Samson. Despite the silence of historians about him, there can be no doubt that he was a holy prelate, and his cult has long been established in the church of Dol. The time of his death is entirely unknown; the Parisian martyrology, which mentions

him on 19 November, sets it in the year 580. Father Le Large believes it occurred in 588, the abbé Déric gives it as about 600, and Dom Lobineau places it in the 7th century. The day of his blessed death is better known: it is 8 December; but his feast has long been transferred to the following day because of that of the Conception. In the diocese of Léon he was formerly honoured on 18 November.

The relics of St. Budoc were kept at Dol at the time of the lawsuit between that church and the church of Tours, as is attested by a document used in that case and published by Dom Morice in his *Mémoires*. It appears that they were destroyed or lost when John Lackland, king of England, came at the beginning of the 13th century to besiege Dol and burned its cathedral. It is said that the parish of Plourin (Finistère), in the former diocese of Léon, still possessed some of them in the last century.

Extracted from the Saints de Bretagne, *by Dom Lobineau and the abbé Tresvaux.*

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[1] St. Cyprian devoted himself from his youth to the service of God and took the religious habit in a monastery whose abbot was called Savalo, in the time of Clothar I (511–561). Having perfected himself in the exercises of the cenobitic life, he withdrew into a solitude near the Dordogne. There he built himself a hermitage which gave rise to the town still called today Saint-Cyprien (Dordogne, arrondissement of Sarlat). God worked several miracles through his intercession, both in his lifetime and after his death. — St. Gregory of Tours, *De Gloria Confessorum*.

[2] After the great figure of St. Austremonius, apostle of Auvergne, appear those of Sts. Baudimus, Nectarius and Auditor, his illustrious auxiliaries. M. Vialle, parish priest of Saint-Nectaire (Puy-de-Dôme), wrote to us on this subject on 1 August 1871: “St. Baudimus has no legend in the breviary of the diocese of Clermont, and no feast is celebrated in his honour among us. It is the tradition of this country that this Saint came here from Rome at the same time as St. Austremonius. He was accompanied by St. Nectarius and St. Auditor (it is also said that these three priests were brothers). Our church possesses bones of these three Saints (fragments of the skull). I suppose that other relics of St. Baudimus were enclosed within a Byzantine bust which represents him; but they must have disappeared. This reliquary is fairly well preserved. It is of oak, covered with a sheet of gilded copper; the head and hands are of repoussé copper; his scapular is enamelled with imitation gems. St. Nectarius, secondary patron of the parish, is honoured here in a particular manner on 9 December. This Saint has a legend in the breviary of Clermont, which tells us that he was first titular patron of the parish to which he gave his name. Later this honour was transferred to St. Auditor, whose feast we celebrate here on 9 September. I have been unable to discover the reasons or the date of this change. St. Nectarius and St. Auditor have their tombs in our church; no one has been able to show me that of St. Baudimus.”

[3] See the article “Veneration and Relics” in the life of St. Sebastian (vol. I, p. 496) and in that of St. Gregory the Great (vol. III, p. 381).

[4] We sketched the notice of St. Bibiana on 2 December (vol. XIV, p. 23).

[5] See the notice of St. Silvester Gozzolini on 26 November (vol. XIII, p. 623).

[6] We gave the life of Blessed Elisabeth on the 5th of this month.

[7] Anguerand, Angeran, Angerand, Anjorant, Angelram, Angelran, Angelramne, Angelrane, Enguelran, Engeran, Enguerrand, Engueran, Ingelramne, Ingelranne, Ingerran, Ingueran, Inguerand. — Angerannus, Angelranus, Angelirannus, Angelramnus, Angalramnus, Engelramus, Enguerandus, Ingelramnus, Ingelranus, Ingueirandus.

10 December

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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Martyrologies

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY.

At Rome, the death of St. Melchiades, pope, who, having suffered much during the persecution of Maximian, saw peace restored to the Church and entered into the rest of the Lord. 314. — The same day, St. Carpophorus, priest, and St. Abundius, deacon, martyrs, who in the persecution of Diocletian, after being most cruelly bruised with blows of clubs, then put in prison with orders that they be given neither drink nor food, afterwards tormented on the rack and put back in a dungeon where they suffered a long time, at last had their heads cut off. 303. — At Mérida, in Spain, the martyrdom of St. Eulalia, virgin, who, among other

frightful torments she suffered at the age of twelve under the emperor Maximian, by order of the governor Dacian and for the confession of Jesus Christ, was put on the rack and had her nails torn out; then, while her sides were being burned with blazing torches, the fire suffocated her and she gave up the ghost. 303. — In the same place, St. Julia, virgin and martyr, companion of St. Eulalia, who joined her as she was going to execution and never left her. 303. — At Alexandria, the holy martyrs Mennas, Hermogenes and Eugraphus, who suffered under Galerius Maximian. — At Lentini, in Sicily, the holy martyrs Mercurius and his companions, soldiers, who were beheaded under the governor Tertullus in the time of the emperor Licinius. — At Ancyra, in Galatia, St. Gemellus, who, after suffering cruel tortures, consummated his martyrdom under Julian the Apostate by the punishment of the cross. — At Vienne, St. Sandoce or Sandou (*Sindulphus*), bishop and confessor. About 650. — At Brescia, St. Deusdedit, bishop. — At Loreto, in the March of Ancona, the Translation of the holy house of the glorious Virgin Mary, Mother of God, in which the Word was made flesh. 1294.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED.

In the dioceses of Agen, Ajaccio, Albi, Arras, Autun, Beauvais, Blois, Bordeaux, Cahors, Châlons, Carcassonne, Chartres, Cologne, Clermont, La Rochelle, Le Puy, Lyons, Meaux, Nancy, Nice, Pamiers, Reims, Rouen, Saint-Brieuc, Saint-Dié, Saint-Flour, Tarbes, Versailles and Viviers, feast of the translation of the house of the Blessed Virgin Mary, mentioned in the Roman martyrology of this day. 1294. — In the dioceses of Limoges, Paris and Poitiers, St. Valeria, virgin and martyr at Limoges, whose life we gave on the preceding day. 46. — In the dioceses of Auch, Mende, Perpignan and Rodez, Sts. Eulalia and Julia, virgins and martyrs at Mérida (Estremadura), mentioned in the Roman martyrology of this day. 303. — In the diocese of Soissons, St. Edibius, bishop of that see and confessor. 5th c. — In the former Benedictine abbey of Saint-Riquier (*Centula*), in the diocese of Amiens, St. Guitmar (Guitmaire, Guitmer, Guimar, Guimare, Guimer, Witmaire, Witmer, Widmer, Vitmar; *Guitmarus*, *Vitmarus*), fourth abbot of that monastery. He was buried in the church of Gournay-en-Bray (Seine-Inférieure), which then bore the name of Saint-Étienne.[1] 8th c. — At Cahors, the death of St. Gausbert, bishop of that see and confessor, of whom we shall speak on 12 December. About 950. — In the former Benedictine abbey of Affligem-Sainte-Marie, between Brussels and Ghent, in Belgium, Blessed Fulgentius, confessor. A native of Walloon Brabant, he embraced the monastic life in the abbey of Saint-Airy of Verdun, where he spent twelve years. Theoderic, bishop of that city (1047–1089), having been excommunicated by Pope St. Gregory VII because of his blind attachment to the emperor Henry IV, the abbot and monks of Saint-Airy found themselves obliged to leave their monastery. Fulgentius then returned to his homeland; soon he entered the new-born abbey of Affligem and was elected its abbot (1086). For thirty-six years he gave there the example of all the virtues of an excellent superior, and the number of religious grew considerably under his direction. 1122.

MARTYROLOGIES OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

Martyrology of the Camaldolese Order. — At Loreto, in the March of Ancona, the translation of the sacred dwelling of Mary, Mother of God, where the Word was made flesh. 1294.

Martyrology of the Order of Friars Preachers. — As among the Camaldolese.

Martyrology of the Three Orders of St. Francis. — As among the Friars Preachers.

Martyrology of the Order of Friars Minor. — As among the Friars Preachers.

Martyrology of the Order of Hermits of St. Augustine. — As among the Friars Preachers.

Martyrology of the Order of Servites of the Blessed Virgin Mary. — As among the Friars Preachers.

Martyrology of the Capuchin Friars Minor of St. Francis. — As among the Friars Preachers.

Martyrology of the Order of Discalced Carmelites. — As among the Friars Preachers.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS.

In Mexico, Blessed Sebastian Montagnol [Montañés], martyr, of the Order of St. Dominic. This holy religious, following in the footsteps of Blessed Louis Bertrand, was evangelizing the country of the Zacatecas in Mexico, and doing great good there. Jealous of his successes, the devil raised up among the Indian tribes an impostor who, by means of false miracles, had himself adored as God. At the instigation of this agent of Satan a good number of Christians renounced the faith and, joining the idolaters, persecuted those who had remained faithful to the Gospel. One day, when the feast of the Immaculate Conception of Mary was being celebrated, these madmen entered the church, profaned the sacred hosts and stripped the image of the Mother of God, exposed for public veneration, of its ornaments. The blessed Father, unable to endure such impiety, rebuked them sharply for their sacrilege; but they, made still more furious by these reproaches, shot their arrows at the holy preacher and put him to death by the same death as his patron. His corpse was left outside, exposed to the teeth of wild beasts. But the Lord defended it from their attacks until the month of March of the following year, when it was found fresh and whole, exhaling a very sweet fragrance. Fresh blood was still flowing from his wounds. The faithful conceived a great veneration for the holy Martyr. They placed his relics in the church and chose him as protector of their Christian community. This having taken place before the prohibitive decrees of Pope Urban VIII, this blessed man was, in the year 1634, in possession of a legitimate cult, and it has been possible to continue it to our own day. 1616.

TRANSLATION OF THE HOUSE OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN FROM NAZARETH TO DALMATIA, AND FROM DALMATIA TO LORETO (1294)

Pope: Celestine V.

Introibimus in tabernaculum ejus, adorabimus in loco ubi steterunt pedes ejus. Yes, we will all wish to enter His house; we will wish lovingly to kiss the ground once trodden by His sacred feet. — Ps. cxxxi, 7.

Towards the end of the thirteenth century the sudden and terrible news that the Holy Land was lost to the Christians spread a deep sadness through pious souls; but at the same time another piece of news, silent and calm, came to gladden pious souls, and gladdens them still: the holy house of Nazareth, where the Virgin Mary conceived the Word made flesh, had been carried by the angels into Dalmatia, and from there into the March of Ancona, near Recanati, to Loreto, where it still is.

It was in 1291; the holy places of Palestine had been overrun; the magnificent church that the empress Helena had built at Nazareth had just fallen under the destroying hammer of the Mohammedans; the holy house it enclosed was perhaps soon to suffer the same fate, when God commanded His angels to carry it to the happy lands of faithful Dalmatia. It was the 10th of the month of May; in the second watch of the night the sanctuary of Nazareth was set down on the shores of the Adriatic, between Tersatz and Fiume, in a place commonly called Rauniza by the people of the country. Nicholas IV was then governing the Church and Rudolf of Habsburg the empire; the town of Tersatz obeyed Nicholas Frangipani, sprung from the ancient race of the Anicii, whose authority extended over the lands of Croatia and Slavonia. At daybreak some of the inhabitants noticed with astonishment the new building, set in a place where until then neither house nor hut had ever been seen. The rumour of the wonder soon spread; people came running, examined and admired the mysterious building, built of small square red stones bound together with cement; they marvelled at the singularity of its structure, its air of antiquity, its oriental form; above all they could not explain how it stood upright, set on the bare earth without any foundation.

But their surprise grew when they went inside. The room formed an oblong square. The ceiling, surmounted by a little bell-turret, was of wood painted azure and divided into several compartments, sprinkled here and there with gilded stars. Round the walls and below the panelling were seen several semicircles curving next

to one another and seemingly interspersed with vases of various shapes. The walls, about a cubit thick, built without rule or level, did not exactly follow the vertical. They were covered with a plaster on which were painted the principal mysteries of this sacred place. A fairly wide door, opened in one of the side walls, gave entrance into this mysterious dwelling. On the right opened a single narrow window. Opposite rose an altar built of strong square stones, surmounted by an ancient Greek cross bearing a crucifix painted on a cloth glued to the wood, on which could be read the title of our salvation: *Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.*

Near the altar could be seen a little cupboard of admirable simplicity, meant to hold the utensils needed by a poor household; it contained some small vessels like those mothers use to feed their children. On the left was a sort of chimney or hearth, surmounted by a precious niche supported by columns adorned with fluting and volutes and ending in a rounded vault formed by five crescents joining and linking with one another. There was placed a statue of cedar representing the Blessed Virgin standing and carrying the Child Jesus in her arms. The faces were painted with a kind of colour like silver, but blackened by time and no doubt by the smoke of the candles burned before these holy images. A crown of pearls set on Mary's head enhanced the nobility of her brow; her hair, parted in the Nazarene fashion, flowed over her neck and shoulders. Her body was clothed in a gilded robe which, held by a broad girdle, fell flowing to her feet; a blue mantle covered her sacred back; both were carved from the same wood as the statue itself. The Child Jesus, larger than ordinary children, with a face breathing divine majesty and adorned with hair parted on the forehead like that of the Nazarenes, whose dress and girdle He wore, raised the first fingers of His right hand as if to give a blessing, and with the left held a globe, the symbol of His sovereign power over the universe. The image of the Blessed Virgin, at the moment of its arrival, was covered with a woollen robe of red colour, which is still kept today and remains unaltered. Such was the arrangement of the holy chapel when it came to rest in Dalmatia.[1]

The amazement was general; people asked one another what this unknown dwelling could be, what hand had traced these figures, what power had made this new sanctuary appear in an instant; all were asking, none could answer, when suddenly there rushed into the midst of the people the venerable pastor of the church of St. George, the bishop Alexander, a native of Modruš. His presence drew a general cry of surprise; he was known to be gravely ill, almost without hope of recovery; and yet here he was, full of life and health; the illness had vanished; the fever had not left the slightest trace.

In the night, on his bed of pain, he had felt the most ardent desire to go and see with his own eyes the wonder of which he had just heard; at that moment he vowed himself to Mary, whose miraculous image had been described to him. Suddenly heaven opened before his eyes, the most holy Virgin appeared amid the angels surrounding her and, in a voice whose sweetness ravished his heart within, said to him: "My son, you have called me; here I am to give you effective help and to unveil to you the secret you wish to know. Know then that the holy dwelling lately brought to this territory is the very house in which I was born and received almost all my upbringing. It was there that, at the tidings brought by the archangel Gabriel, I conceived the divine Child by the operation of the Holy Spirit. It was there that the Word was made flesh. And so, after my passing, the Apostles consecrated this roof, made illustrious by such high mysteries, and vied with one another for the honour of celebrating the august sacrifice there. The altar, carried to this same country, is the very one the apostle St. Peter set up. The crucifix to be seen there was placed there long ago by the Apostles. The cedar statue is my image made by the hand of the evangelist St. Luke, who, guided by the attachment he had for me, expressed by the resources of art the likeness of my features, as far as is possible to a mortal. This house, beloved of heaven, surrounded for so many centuries with honour in Galilee, but today deprived of homage amid the failing of faith, has passed from Nazareth to these shores. Here there is no doubt: the author of this great event is that God with whom no word is impossible. Moreover, that you yourself may be its witness and its herald, receive your cure. Your sudden return to health in the midst of so long an illness will bear witness to this wonder."

So Mary spoke, and, rising towards heaven, she disappeared, leaving the room fragrant with a heavenly odour. The faithful minister felt the illness vanish, the fever die away, his strength return; to rise, to throw himself on his knees, to bless his benefactress, to run to the august sanctuary to offer it his thanksgiving, were all at once the need of his gratitude and the proof that this supernatural visit was no chimera born in a brain disordered by pain.

Nicholas Frangipani, who then governed that country, was absent; he had followed Rudolf of Habsburg to the war; in the midst of that military expedition he received the news of this prodigious event. The prince gave him leave to quit the camp and go and make sure of the truth. The length of the way did not stop him; he came in person to Tersatz, where, without letting himself be carried away by a first enthusiasm, he made the most minute inquiries. Even this was not yet in his eyes a sufficiently certain demonstration: four of his subjects, chosen by his own hand, wise and prudent men, among whom were noticed, besides the bishop Alexander, Sigismund Orsich and John Gregoruschi, went to Nazareth to examine and compare the circumstances of this extraordinary fact. Their commission was carried out with as much fidelity as diligence. Their report was conclusive: at Nazareth of Galilee the birthplace of the most holy Virgin was no longer to be found; it had been detached from its foundations, which still existed; there was no difference between the nature of the stones left in the foundations and the quality of those that made up the holy building; there was perfect agreement in the measurements of the length and breadth of the building. Their testimony was drawn up in writing, confirmed by a solemn oath, and authenticated in the forms required by law.

No more doubt, no more uncertainty. Devotion took a rapid flight; the peoples came running from all sides. The provinces of Bosnia, Serbia, Albania and Croatia seemed to empty themselves to pour their inhabitants onto this land favoured by heaven. To meet the eagerness of the pilgrims, Frangipani had the blessed walls surrounded with great beams covered with planks, after the fashion of the country, where buildings of this kind were still in use, and lavished rich offerings to increase the splendour of this venerable sanctuary as its fame spread further abroad.

Three and a half years after its arrival at Tersatz, the house of Nazareth, carried by the hands of angels, rose again into the air and vanished from the sight of that desolate people. The prince had a little chapel built on the same spot and on the same traces, in which one still reads today: “Here is the place where once stood the most holy dwelling of the Blessed Virgin of Loreto, which is now honoured in the lands of Recanati.” On the road this inscription was engraved in the Italian tongue: “The holy house of the Blessed Virgin came to Tersatz in the year 1291, on 10 May, and departed on 10 December 1294.” The Sovereign Pontiffs granted several favours to the commemorative chapel of Tersatz. The clergy and people still sing there this hymn: “O Mary! here you came with your house, to dispense grace as the loving Mother of Christ. Nazareth was your cradle, but Tersatz was your first harbour, when you were seeking a new homeland. You have carried your sacred dwelling elsewhere, but you have none the less remained with us, O Queen of clemency. We rejoice at having been judged worthy to keep your motherly presence.”

From that time to our own day the Dalmatians are seen every year crossing the Adriatic in bands and coming to Loreto, as much to lament their widowhood as to venerate Mary’s cradle. Always on their lips are these solemn words: “Come back to us, Mary, come back.” In the year 1559 more than three hundred pilgrims from that country, with their wives and children, arrived at Loreto carrying lighted torches; they stopped first at the great door, where they prostrated themselves to implore the help of God and His holy Mother; then, all on their knees, ranged in order by the priests they had brought with them, they entered their temple in this way, crying with one voice in their native tongue: “Return, return to us, O Mary! Mary, return to Fiume!” Their grief was so lively and their prayer so fervent that the witness who wrote its history tried to silence them, fearing, he says, that such ardent supplications might be granted and the holy chapel be snatched from Italy to go and resume its former position at Tersatz. And so the Sovereign Pontiff wished to favour the

devotion of this good people by founding at Loreto a hospice to receive several Dalmatian families who could not bring themselves to return to their country by leaving the Virgin of Nazareth, and who no longer regarded as their homeland anything but the place she herself had deigned to choose for her residence.

As for the history of the new translation, here are the terms in which a hermit of the time and the country, Paul della Selva, wrote it to the king of Naples, Charles II:

“In the year of the Lord’s incarnation 1294, on Saturday 10 December, when all was plunged in silence and night in her course was in the midst of her way, a light come from heaven struck the eyes of several inhabitants of the shores of the Adriatic Sea, and a divine harmony, rousing the most deeply sleeping, drew them from sleep to make them contemplate a marvel surpassing all the forces of nature. They saw, then, and contemplated at leisure a house surrounded with heavenly splendour, upheld in the hands of angels and carried through the air. The peasants and shepherds stopped, stupefied at the sight of so great a marvel, and fell on their knees in adoration, waiting for the end and outcome of this wonder. Meanwhile this holy house, carried by the angels, was set down in the midst of a great wood, and the trees themselves bowed as if to venerate the Queen of heaven. Today they are still seen bent and curved as if to bear witness to their gladness. It is said that in this place there was once a temple dedicated to some false divinity and surrounded by a forest of laurels, which caused it to be given the name of Loreto, as it is still called today. Scarcely had morning come when the peasants hastened to Recanati to relate what had happened, and the whole people hurried to the Wood of the Laurels to make sure of the truth of this account. Among the nobles and the people many remained dumb with astonishment, many could not bring themselves to believe the miracle. The best disposed wept for joy and said with the Prophet: ‘We have found it in the fields of the wood’; and again: ‘He hath not done in like manner to every nation.’ They honoured this small and holy house and, entering it with devotion, paid their homage to the wooden statue of the divine Virgin Mary holding her Son in her arms. On their return to Recanati they filled the city with holy joy; the people often left the town to go and venerate the holy chapel; there was a perpetual concourse of faithful crossing one another on the road.

“Meanwhile the Blessed Virgin Mary multiplied wonders and miracles. The fame of so great a marvel spread into distant lands as into the neighbouring provinces, and all came running to the Laurel forest, which was soon filled with various wooden dwellings to serve as shelter for the pilgrims. While these events were taking place, the infernal lion that goes about unceasingly seeking some prey to devour raised up brigands, whose impious hands defiled the sacred wood with thefts and murders, so that the devotion of many cooled through fear of the evil-doers.

“At the end of eight months the first miracle was confirmed by a second wonder. The holy house left the profaned forest and was placed by the ministry of the angels in the middle of a hill belonging to two noble brothers, the counts Stephen and Simeon Rainaldi de Antiquis, of Recanati. Meanwhile the devotion of the faithful was growing, and the small and holy dwelling was enriched with great gifts and numerous offerings. The noble and pious brothers were their custodians; but soon they yielded to avarice, appropriated the gifts, and let their judgement be perverted so far as to come to scandalous disputes over which of the two should get the better of the other.

“Then the holy house withdrew, four months after its arrival, from the hill of the two brothers and, by a third miracle, was carried by the angels to a new site about a stone’s throw away, in the middle of the public road that leads from Recanati to the seashore; and it is there that I still see it today, and that I contemplate with my own eyes the continual graces it grants to those who come to pray there.”

Meanwhile the citizens of Recanati were anxiously watching the weakness of the holy walls; set on the ground, they had no foundations to support them. Was it not to be feared that, undergoing little by little the effects of time, they would collapse and so deprive the country of its finest ornament? What increased their fear still more was the very situation of the place, exposed to violent whirlwinds and frequent storms, where

torrents of rain seemed to conspire with the fury of the winds. They decided therefore to raise round this frail building a strong wall set on solid bases and built of fire-hardened brick. They did more still: informed every day of the numerous miracles God was working by the virtue of this holy house, they called in skilful painters to represent with the brush on this wall, particularly on the north side, all the details of the wonderful history, so as to make it easy for all, and above all for the unlearned, to understand this marvel and give thanks for it to the most holy Virgin.

Now here is what then happened, according to the testimony of a historian, Father Riera: “Public report,” he says, “spread through the provinces of Ancona, as a great miracle, that at the moment the work had just been finished the new walls were found so separated from the old that a little child could easily pass between them with a torch in his hand, to show the crowd, when occasion offered, the truth of this separation. This wonder made a strong impression on people’s minds, all the more because it was known for certain that before, they had been so closely joined that there was not the thickness of a hair between the two. Hence the common opinion that absolutely nothing can remain attached to the walls of the august house of Loreto, the Blessed Virgin so willing it, to prevent anyone believing that she needs the help of men to support her venerable dwelling. Whatever the cause of this phenomenon, the truth of the fact is beyond all controversy; for there are still living today several witnesses who have contemplated this admirable spectacle with their own eyes. And so, when in the time of Clement VII Rainero Nerucci, architect of the holy chapel, who has since remained on terms of pleasant intimacy with me, wished by the Pontiff’s order to pull down this brick wall, which time had already almost overthrown, in order to raise in its place the magnificent marble monument seen today, he noticed, not without great astonishment, that, against the rules of architecture and the plans of human art, all the stones foreign to the holy house had drawn away as if to pay it just homage. The same Rainero, and several others, also told me that these added walls had for several years been so far opened that through long cracks one could easily contemplate the ancient building and enjoy the admirable delights that seem to emanate from its holiness.”

At the beginning of the 14th century the inhabitants of Recanati built at Loreto a church to enclose the holy chapel. A town grew up round it, on which the Sovereign Pontiffs have never ceased to lavish spiritual and temporal favours. In the year 1464 Pope Pius II offered Our Lady of Loreto a gold chalice to obtain the cure of an illness, which he did in fact obtain there. The same year his successor Paul II, who raised a new basilica round the holy chapel, said in a bull of 15 October: “There can be no doubt that God, at the prayer of the most holy Virgin, Mother of His divine Son, grants every day singular graces to the faithful who piously address their prayers to her, and that the churches dedicated in honour of her name deserve to be honoured with the greatest devotion; yet those must receive more particular homage in which the Most High, at the intercession of this august Virgin, works more evident, more striking and more frequent miracles. Now it is manifest by experience that the church of St. Mary of Loreto, in the diocese of Recanati, because of the great, unheard-of and countless miracles which the power of this blessed Virgin makes shine forth there, and which we ourselves have experienced in our own person, draws within its walls peoples from every part of the world.”

Sixtus IV, successor of Paul II, declared Loreto the property of the Holy See; all persons attached to the service of the church were to depend immediately on him and be exempt from every other jurisdiction; two capable persons were to be named by the Sovereign Pontiff: one to take care of spiritual matters, under the name of vicar; the other to watch over temporal interests, with the title of governor. The vicar was to institute eight chaplains bound to residence and charged with singing every day a solemn Mass, since called the votive Mass; the penitentiaries were to add to the powers of absolution already granted that of dispensing from vows, or rather of commuting them into good works and help applied to the needs of the holy chapel. The Carmelites, charged with the custody of the Holy Places of Palestine, were called to guard the holy room of the Mother of God.

Leo X renewed all the past privileges and granted more precious and more abundant ones. A collegiate church was set up with twelve canons, twelve mansionary priests and six choristers; the indulgences of the apostolic stations at Rome were extended to the sanctuary of Loreto, where by visiting a single church one gained what could be obtained only by visiting several churches in the capital of the Christian world; the autumn fairs at Ancona, Pesaro and elsewhere were suppressed to give more lustre to the one held at Recanati at the time of the Nativity, where not only Catholics were seen, but even Greeks and Armenians, schismatics though they were, vying in devotion to Mary with the faithful children of the Catholic Church. The vow to make a pilgrimage to Loreto was reserved to the Pope, like those to visit the tombs of the holy Apostles or the sepulchre of Jesus Christ. The famous sculptor Sansovino was charged with surrounding the precious sanctuary with a magnificent work in white Carrara marble. The governor received the privilege of celebrating Mass in pontifical vestments and giving the people the episcopal blessing. Orders were given to fortify the castle and build ramparts, bastions and ditches defended by heavy pieces of artillery, so as to protect the church from surprise and attack.

Clement VII carried out the sublime plan formed by his predecessor and kinsman Leo X: the plan of the magnificent decorations that were to clothe the humble walls of the holy house on the outside with sculptures in white marble. For this great work he called in the most illustrious artists to vie in talent and genius in the accomplishment of so noble a task. He appointed as chief architect, for the church as for the portico, the famous Nerucci. The marbles had already been cut, the ornaments were ready to be put in place. Nerucci had the old wall pulled down, which was found, as has been said, standing apart from the fragile walls of the miraculous room. For several days the room remained exposed in all its simplicity to the eager gaze of popular devotion and curiosity. Everyone could make sure that it was set without foundations on the bare ground. Beneath it could be seen a dusty, crushed earth like that of a busy thoroughfare; there was even a bramble caught under the holy burden set down by the Angels; everything indicated a public road, in conformity with the constant testimony of tradition. However, the excavations needed for building the bases that were to support the precious marbles had to be begun; and then it was easy to be convinced beyond any doubt that the holy walls were set as if suspended on uneven and dusty ground. Jerome Angelita, in his official report to the same Pope Clement VII, makes particular mention of all these wonderful facts, which cannot be called in question.

The foundations were already rising out of the ground; but the plan settled by Leo X and approved by Clement VII required that the single door of the holy house be walled up and three others opened in its place, to avoid the accidents that happened every day through the crowding of pious pilgrims in so narrow a space. At this news the people were in consternation; a sudden murmur rose on all sides. Who would dare to violate with the blows of an audacious hammer these walls that the centuries themselves had respected? Yet the Pope’s order was pressing; the common good demanded its execution; the beauty of the work imperiously required it. The architect Nerucci took courage, raised his hand, struck a first blow; at once he turned pale, trembled, felt his strength fail, and fell senseless; he was carried home; the danger was imminent, his very life seemed in peril. His pious wife, seeing him in this grievous state, prostrated herself at Mary’s feet and invoked the august patroness of Loreto; her prayers were heard, the deathly lethargy soon passed off, and the imprudent architect was happily restored to his family and his work.

Meanwhile they hastened to inform the Pontiff of this marvellous event and to ask his decision in so difficult a case. He replied in these terms: “Do not fear to pierce the walls of the august sanctuary and to open the doors: so Clement VII commands.” So formal a command, and all the authority of the Apostolic See, could not bring the architect Nerucci to lay aside his fear and obey. In vain they urged him, in vain they tried to persuade him; all attempts were useless. On one side the Pope’s order pressed the work forward; on the other the public dismay held up its execution. Suddenly, against all expectation, a man came forward for a task that seemed so dangerous; he was a cleric attached to the choir of the sanctuary, and his name was Ventura Perini.

He first took three days to prepare himself for this undertaking by fervent prayers and rigorous fasting; on the last day, towards evening, he advanced towards the holy place, surrounded by a countless crowd of people; he knelt, kissed the holy walls again and again a thousand times, took the hammer; but before striking, his arm raised in the air, he addressed Mary and said to her with confidence: “Forgive, O holy house of the purest of Virgins! It is not I who pierce you, it is Clement, Vicar of Jesus Christ, in the ardour that moves him for your adornment. Allow it, O Mary! and satisfy the good desire of his heart.” At these words he struck a first blow, followed by several others, without suffering any harm; the other workmen took courage and imitated him in his work as in his devotion; the doors were opened, the stones, gathered with respect, were used to close the single opening that had formerly given entrance into the precious sanctuary; the beam that served as lintel was kept in the masonry as a monument and reminder of the former arrangement of the place; and the new plan with its magnificent sculptures was carried out.

Sixtus V, who became pope in 1585 — considering, as he says, that the town of Loreto is famous throughout the earth and encloses within its walls a notable collegiate church under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin Mary; considering how venerable is this church, in the midst of which rises the august house consecrated by the divine mysteries, where this pure Virgin was born, was greeted by the angel and conceived by the Holy Spirit the Saviour of the world; considering that this house was carried to this place by the ministry of angels, that miracles are worked there every day through the intercession and merits of this powerful patroness, and that the faithful servants of Jesus Christ hasten there from every part of the world to satisfy their devotion by pious pilgrimages — raised the town of Loreto to the rank of a city, gave its church the title of cathedral and established a bishopric there.

Clement VIII, who became Pope in 1592, made the pilgrimage to Loreto in person, and forbade the singing of any litanies other than those the Church now uses and which are commonly called the Litany of Loreto, because it was in that church that they were sung for the first time, in the redaction of Cardinal Savelli, to whom they are commonly attributed on the strength of a silver plate on which they were engraved in the year 1483, with this inscription to be read at the foot: “Paul Savelli, prince of Albano and imperial deputy.”

Clement IX, pope in 1667, after a severe examination by the Congregation of Rites, prescribed by a solemn decree that the history of the great wonder of Loreto be recorded in the Roman Martyrology on 10 December in these remarkable words: “At Loreto, in the territory of Ancona, the translation of the holy house of Mary, Mother of God, in which the Word was made flesh.” Innocent XII, in 1691, assigned a proper office and Mass for this great solemnity, and had the history of this wonder added in the Roman breviary at the end of the sixth lesson.

Benedict XIV, as learned as he was zealous a defender of the holy house, had before his elevation to the Holy See victoriously established its identity with the humble and modest dwelling of Nazareth against the criticisms of the Protestant Casaubon and the other adversaries of the truth. We need not be surprised, then, that he maintained all the exemptions and privileges of his predecessors and worked to embellish the august sanctuary by erecting the imposing mass of the great bell-tower and completing the fine terrace of the apostolic palace.

But the reign of this great Pontiff offers nothing more remarkable in regard to Loreto than the restoration of the pavement of the holy chapel and the conclusions that follow from the examination made at that time. It was in the year 1751; John Baptist Stella, a Bolognese, was governing the city; on the point of setting the workmen to work he rightly thought he should surround himself with the most respectable witnesses. He begged Monsignor Alexander Borgia to come and assist him on this important occasion, and at the same time called four other prelates, the bishops of Jesi, Ascoli, Macerata and Loreto. He summoned officially an architect and four master masons, who were joined by chance by three foreign architects who had come to the city to venerate the holy house. All being present, the digging began; they soon reached the bottom of the holy walls, sunk less than a foot below the pavement; the architects and master masons, who went down first

into the opening, drew out a dry surface earth mixed with small half-crushed pebbles like those found on beaten paths and public roads.

However, one of the most skilful architects was strongly bent on digging deeper, to see at what depth the virgin soil was found, on which foundations are usually laid to ensure their solidity. He had already gone so far under one of the sides that he disappeared entirely in the excavation. The custodian Xavier Monti began to tremble: the wall of the holy house is so thin! Will it not fall in ruins? Will it not crack in places? In vain he expressed his fears; the curious artist continued his researches. The diggers had already reached a depth of eight or nine feet when a cry went up: “Virgin soil! virgin soil!” He picked up a handful of it and, coming out overjoyed, showed it to all present, who withdrew blessing God, whose hand, against all the laws of architecture, has supported for so many centuries and despite the shocks of earthquakes the simple and humble dwelling of holy Mary.

The holy house is not built, as some have thought, of fire-baked brick, but is made of hewn natural stones, light, reddish, porous and impregnated with a certain odour of antiquity. It is built of materials unknown in Italy and common at Nazareth; all the objects it contains have an evident character of antiquity and of the East which does not allow their origin to be placed in the West; the dimensions of its extent correspond with entire exactness to the foundations left at Nazareth; it subsists in a miraculous manner, remaining upright amid the ruins of the most solid constructions, although set without foundation and out of plumb on the bare earth; it has always kept an entire inviolability, no one ever having been able with impunity to carry off the least part of it. Therefore the house of Loreto is not an ordinary building; therefore it is an enclosure protected by the almighty hand of God; therefore it did not originally rise on Italian soil, but was carried there from beyond the seas; therefore it is truly the room whose foundations have remained as witnesses in Galilee — that is, the room of Mary, the room in which the most august of our mysteries was accomplished.

To perpetuate for ever the memory of the wonder of the translation of the holy house of the Virgin Mary, Clement VII (1378–1394) permitted its feast to be celebrated in the basilica of Loreto. Urban VIII (1623–1644) extended this solemnity to all the churches of the March of Ancona. Innocent XII (1691–1700) approved a proper office for this feast; in 1724 Benedict XIII extended it to the whole Ecclesiastical State. This feast is popular in France, and a good number of our bishops have had it inscribed in the Proper of their dioceses.

Rohrbacher, Vies des Saints.

ST. EULALIA OF MÉRIDA, VIRGIN AND MARTYR (303)

This illustrious virgin, who must not be confused with her namesake St. Eulalia of Barcelona (12 February), was born at Mérida (Estremadura) of noble and Christian parents. Her father, named Liberius, had her instructed in the faith from her tenderest youth, together with another virgin named Julia, by Donatus, a very holy priest of their city. Learning that Dacian had arrived in Spain to persecute the Christians, and seeing the ardour his daughter showed to endure martyrdom, he feared she would go and present herself of her own accord to the judge to give her blood for Jesus Christ, as she had already consecrated her body to Him by the vow of virginity; so he sent her, with some servants and the priest Felix, to a country house he had thirty miles from the city, towards the borders of the province of Andalusia.

Meanwhile Dacian came to Mérida and left Calpurnian there to torment the faithful. Eulalia, informed of it, slipped away from the house where she was and came back with Julia, her most faithful companion, to find this tyrant. “Why have you come here,” she said to him first, “you who are the enemy of God, to whom this city is already entirely devoted; and why do you persecute the Christians, His faithful servants?” — “What are you saying, little girl?” Calpurnian answered her, “and what makes you so bold as to speak to me like that?” — “It is true,” replied the Saint, “that I am still little, for I am only twelve or thirteen; but I do not on

that account fear your threats or your torments, and I have already lived long enough on earth to wish to go and live eternally in heaven." The judge, hearing this speech, tried to win her by gentleness; but, seeing that he was wasting his effort, he handed her over to executioners to scourge her with every kind of rigour and cruelty. This torment only served to encourage her the more to bless Jesus Christ and despise the pagans. When she was brought back to the governor, she told him with fresh vigour that it was useless for him to torment her, because his power, which extended over her body, had and could have no hold on her soul; and that, moreover, she declared to him openly that she held his gods in horror, and the emperors too who worshipped them. On this answer she was taken to prison; and the next day Calpurnian, having had his seat set up in the middle of the public square, had her brought before him again. There she was scourged a second time with wet rods, boiling oil was poured on her breast, she was plunged into a bath of burning lime, and molten lead was thrown over her whole body; but as all these torments did not disfigure her: "Let her be led at once out of the city," said Calpurnian; "let her be stretched on the rack, let her nails be torn out, let her sides be burned with blazing torches, and then let her be thrown alive into the flames!" This terrible sentence only gave Eulalia joy. She was dragged by the hair to the place of execution, and all that the tyrant had ordered was carried out on her without mercy. It was in the rigour of these pains that, turning towards the persecutor, she said to him with surprising constancy: "Open your eyes, Calpurnian, and look at my face. Recognize me well, so that you may be able to know me again on the terrible day of the last judgement. We shall both appear there before Jesus Christ, our common Lord: I, for the reward of the torments I am enduring; you, for the punishment of your inhumanity towards the Christians." Several of the bystanders, hearing these words so firm and so generous, recognized the truth of our religion and detested idolatry. As for the executioners, wishing to silence this ever-constant, ever-invincible virgin and to carry out on her the last article of her sentence, they covered her with burning coals to finish consuming her. Then she opened her sacred mouth as if to swallow the flame, and at the same moment her soul was seen to come forth from it in the form of a dove, which flew away towards heaven.

The tyrant ordered her body to be left exposed for three days to the insults of the pagans; but divine Providence suddenly covered it with snow, which cleansed it, whitened it and gave it a marvellous beauty; it was then buried with great honour at Mérida by the Christians. Since then it has been carried to Oviedo, and it is seen in the great church, in a chapel dedicated to her. It is carried in procession in public necessities, and great help is then received through the power of her intercession with God.

St. Eulalia of Mérida is represented: 1° torn on the rack and exposed to the flame of torches; 2° breathing forth her soul in the form of a dove; 3° in company with St. Julia, her companion in martyrdom; 4° with her body covered by abundant snow.

This account is Father Giry's; we have completed it with the Caractéristiques des Saints *of the Rev. Father Cahier.*

ST. MELCHIADES OR MILTIADES, POPE (314)

"Melchiades or Miltiades," says the *Liber Pontificalis*, "was born in Africa; he sat three years, seven months and twelve days, from the consulate of Maximian (310) until the ides of January under the consulate of Volusian and Anianus (10 January 314). By a constitution he forbade all the faithful to fast on Thursday and Sunday, because the Manichaeans, true idolaters who were then infesting the city of Rome, had chosen these two days for their solemn fasts. He regulated by a decree the distribution of leavened bread blessed by the bishop under the name of *Eulogiae*. In one ordination, in the month of December, he laid hands on seven priests, five deacons and twelve bishops destined for various churches. He was buried in the papal crypt of the catacomb of St. Callistus on the Appian Way. After him the pontifical see remained vacant sixteen days."

The first year of St. Melchiades's pontificate (311) was marked by the consummation of the schism of the Donatists. The bishops of Africa, taking advantage of the peace that had just been restored to the Church by

the emperor Galerius, had assembled at Carthage to give a successor to Mensurius, bishop of that city, who had died during the persecution. The deacon Caecilian was elected unanimously. Felix, bishop of Aptunga, laid hands on him, seated him in the episcopal chair and handed him the inventory of the gold and silver vessels whose custody Mensurius had entrusted to the elders of the Church. Some of these unfaithful custodians had hoped to divert certain of these precious objects to their own profit. They leagued themselves with two intriguing deacons, Botrus and Celeusius, who had dared to display their pretensions to the see of Carthage. In concert with these ambitious ministers they called in those of the bishops of Numidia who had not been able to be summoned at the time of Caecilian's ordination. Under the direction of Donatus, bishop of Casae Nigrae, a town of Numidia, they formed themselves into a cabal and deposed Caecilian, on the pretext that Felix of Aptunga, who had laid hands on him, was a *traditor*; further, that Caecilian had refused to attend their assembly; and finally that, while still a deacon, he had prevented the faithful from bringing help to the Martyrs in their dungeons during the persecution of Diocletian. Regarding the see of Carthage therefore as vacant, they elected and ordained as bishop the lector Majorinus. Such was the origin of the long schism of Carthage, known as the schism of the Donatists because Donatus, the bishop of Casae Nigrae, was its most ardent and principal promoter.

Meanwhile Constantine had just defeated the tyrant Maxentius and made his triumphal entry into the eternal city. The Donatists presented him with a petition to support their schism with his authority. For sole answer Constantine charged the Pope with judging them and pronouncing a definitive sentence against them. In accordance with the emperor's intentions, Melchiades opened on 2 October 313, in the ancient palace of the Lateran, then inhabited by the empress Fausta, a council composed of nineteen bishops of Italy and Gaul. Donatus appeared in person to support the calumnious accusations his party never ceased to put forward against Caecilian, the lawful bishop of Carthage. But he succeeded only in drawing the council's severity on himself. Convicted of having rebaptized heretics and of having conferred episcopal ordination on men notoriously known to be *traditores*, he was excommunicated. Next the acts of the cabal of the bishops of Numidia who in 311 had condemned Caecilian were examined in detail. They were found tainted with irregularities, violence and party spirit. Each of the charges brought against Caecilian was then discussed and carefully weighed. None stood up to serious examination; they were nothing but a tissue of lying inventions and calumnies. The question thus cleared up, St. Melchiades, with the unanimous advice of the bishops of the council, proclaimed the innocence of Caecilian and the lawfulness of his ordination. But with that spirit of high prudence which marks all the measures that issue from the Holy See, the Pope would separate from his communion neither the bishops who had condemned Caecilian nor those who had been sent to Rome to accuse him. He even offered, adds St. Augustine, to receive into his communion those who had been ordained by Majorinus, the Donatist bishop of Carthage; so that in all places where there were two bishops as a result of the schism, the one who had seniority of ordination would be maintained and the first vacant see given to the other. Donatus alone was excepted from this measure of mercy. He was condemned as the author of all the trouble. He went back to Africa more embittered than ever and ready to stir up fresh discord. Pope St. Melchiades did not see the end of it. He died three months later, on 10 January 314. His moderation, prudence and charity won him the praises of St. Augustine, who exclaims, speaking of the holy Pontiff: "O excellent man! O true son of peace! O true father of the Christian people!" He was buried in the cemetery of Callistus, and later translated to the church of San Silvestro *in Capite* by St. Paul I.

M. l'abbé Darras, Histoire générale de l'Église, *vol. VIII, pp. 606–639.*

ST. EDIBIUS, ELEVENTH BISHOP OF SOISSONS (462)

St. Edibius, or Herlubius, is the eleventh bishop of Soissons. He succeeded Onesimus II and was the immediate predecessor of St. Prince or Principius, whose life we related on 25 September. It has been established from the records that Edibius occupied the see of Soissons in 451. At that time it was already

nearly seventy years since his cathedral church, originally dedicated to the Blessed Virgin, had been rebuilt on the same site and placed under the special patronage of St. Gervasius and St. Protasius.

Edibius showed great firmness of character during his episcopate. He made war on vice with such success that he overcame the obstinacy of the most hardened sinners. The Lord rewarded his lively faith and ardent zeal with the gift of miracles. He healed many sick people and several times drove the devils out of the bodies of the possessed. But the action that made him for ever famous and worthy of the gratitude of the people of Soissons was the victory which the ascendancy of his virtue and eloquence won over the ferocious Attila. This king of the Huns, so justly surnamed the scourge of God, had fallen with his barbarian hordes upon the Roman empire and wished to destroy it for his own profit. On his way he put everything to fire and sword, and razed the cities after slaughtering the inhabitants who had dared to resist him.

Metz had just fallen and been reduced to ashes; Arras and Reims had been taken by storm. Soissons was in consternation and expected the worst of misfortunes. St. Edibius, trusting in the power of the Most High, did not lose hope of saving his episcopal city from pillage and ruin. He prescribed fasts and prayers. Prostrate himself at the foot of the altars and before the venerated bones of the holy martyrs Crispin and Crispinian, he besought the God of mercies to spare his people a chastisement perhaps well deserved, it is true, but which might be turned away from their heads by repentance and penance. When therefore Edibius felt within himself that the Lord was beginning to let Himself be touched by so many tears, he rose full of confidence and holy boldness and went with all his clergy to the barbarian's camp, where he asked for an audience. Attila's fierce look did not disconcert the holy bishop. Upheld by an altogether divine strength, he spoke with such eloquence that the dreaded conqueror let himself be persuaded that it was in his interest to take another road. Thus was Soissons saved by the piety and courage of St. Edibius.

Eight or ten years after this event Edibius went to receive in heaven the reward of his virtues and his apostolic labours. His relics were placed in the church of Saint-Crépin-le-Grand; but the city of Soissons no longer has the happiness of possessing them today.

We owe this notice to the kindness of the late M. l'abbé Henri Congnet, canon of Soissons.

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[1] The cult of St. Guitmar disappeared from Gournay at a time difficult to determine. It is believed that the church where he was buried bore his name for some time. Be that as it may, when Hugh I, count of Gournay, built a church to shelter the relics of St. Hildevert, recently brought there, it was dedicated to that bishop of Meaux, and even the name of St. Guitmar was forgotten. — M. l'abbé Corblet, *Hagiographie du diocèse d'Amiens*.

[2] *Histoire critique et religieuse de Notre-Dame de Lorette*, by A. B. Caillau. Paris, 1843.

11 December

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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Martyrologies

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY.

At Rome, St. Damasus, pope and confessor, who condemned the heresiarch Apollinaris and restored to his see Peter, bishop of Alexandria, who had been driven from it. He found the bodies of many holy Martyrs and adorned their tombs with epitaphs in verse. 384. — Also at Rome, St. Thraso, who, because he supported from his own goods the Christians condemned to labour on the baths and other public works, or shut up in the prisons, was arrested by order of Maximian and crowned with martyrdom, together with two others, namely Pontian and Praetextatus. About 293. — At Amiens, the holy martyrs Victoricus and Fuscian, put to death under the same emperor. The governor Rictiovarus had iron spits driven into their nostrils and ears,

their temples pierced with red-hot nails, their eyes torn out and their whole bodies shot through with arrows; at last, after so many torments, they were beheaded with Gentian, their host, and so passed to immortal glory. 303. — In Persia, St. Barsabas, martyr.[1] 342. — In Spain, St. Eutychius, martyr. — At Piacenza, St. Savinus, bishop, renowned for his miracles. — At Constantinople, St. Daniel the Stylite. About 489.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED.

In the dioceses of Amiens, Paris and Soissons, the holy martyrs Victoricus, Fuscian and Gentian, mentioned in the Roman martyrology of this day. 303. — In the dioceses of Autun, Châlons, Pamiers and Paris, St. Damasus, pope and confessor, mentioned today in the same source. 384. — In the diocese of Carcassonne, St. Paul-Sergius, first bishop of Narbonne, whose life we gave on 22 March. 1st c. — In the diocese of Perpignan, feast of the translation of the house of the Blessed Virgin from Nazareth to Dalmatia and from Dalmatia to Loreto. We gave the history of this translation on the preceding day. 1294. — In Maurienne, St. Avre or Aupre of Sens (*Aper*), priest and hermit. After the bishop of Sens had conferred the priesthood on him, Avre asked his leave to distribute to the poor all that he possessed and to withdraw into Maurienne to exercise the sacred ministry there. God allowed him to take his road through the diocese of Grenoble. When he had arrived in that city, Clarus, who was its bishop, welcomed him kindly and, soon recognizing the holiness of the guest whom Providence was sending him, attached him to the clergy of his episcopal city, then entrusted him with the parish of La Terrasse (Isère, arrondissement of Grenoble). There Avre for several years displayed all the vigilance and all the zeal of an apostle; but, having fallen victim to the calumnies of some of his parishioners, he regarded this trial as a warning from heaven and left for good for Maurienne. Having obtained from Bishop Leporius the grant of the land where the village of Saint-Avre now stands, near the town of La Chambre (Savoie, arrondissement of Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne), he built there a cell, a hospice and a chapel in honour of St. Nazarius and his companions, and spent his days there amid the exercises of the most tender charity.[2] 7th c. — At Auxerre, St. Vilfer (Vilfère, Goufier; *Velferus*, *Vulferus*), monk of Moutier-Saint-Jean (*Reomus*, Order of St. Benedict), in the diocese of Dijon. 1017. — At Redon (Ille-et-Vilaine), in the diocese of Rennes, St. Fivetein or Fivetin (*Fidivetenus*), monk of Saint-Sauveur of Redon (Order of St. Benedict). About 888. — In Belgium, Blessed John Agnus of Ghent, confessor, of the Order of St. Dominic. He is known in history chiefly for a celebrated miracle of obedience. The prior of his convent had sent him to preach on an island of Zeeland (Holland). When he reached the water's edge, no boatman would undertake to carry him to his destination, because of the bad state of the river (the Scheldt), swollen by storms. Full of confidence, the holy religious made the sign of the cross with his staff, walked on the waters and reached the end of his journey. The whole population, warned by the bells, which rang miraculously without any human hand, was on the bank, and it accompanied the preacher in procession to the church. 1296.

MARTYROLOGIES OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

Martyrology of the Order of St. Basil. — At Constantinople, St. Daniel the Stylite, of the Order of St. Basil. About 489.

Martyrology of the Congregation of Vallombrosa. — The Octave of St. Bernard, bishop and confessor of our Order. 1133.

Martyrology of the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. — At Siena, in Tuscany, Blessed Franco, confessor, of the Order of Carmelites, illustrious for the austerity of his life, for frequent apparitions of the Mother of God, for his prophetic spirit and the glory of his miracles. He gave up his spirit amid the concerts and magnificent splendour of the angels. His feast is kept on 17 December. 1291.

Martyrology of the Order of Discalced Carmelites. — The same as above.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS.

Among the Greeks, the patriarch Joseph, governor of Egypt. 1635 B.C. — In Westphalia, Blessed Theoderic (Thierry) of Münster, Recollect. He first entered the Augustinian Fathers at Münster and took vows there; later he made profession in the convent of the Recollects of the province of Lower Germany. A true apostle of the faith and a zealous teacher of youth in Christian doctrine, he enlightened almost the whole of the Low Countries by his preaching. In 1489 and 1490, when the city of Brussels was ravaged by plague, Theoderic nursed the sick and administered the sacraments to them: his zeal for the salvation of souls made him proof against all fear of death. When the plague had ceased its ravages he resumed his preaching and again produced abundant fruits of salvation. When he had fallen asleep in the Lord he was buried in the choir of the old church of the Recollects at Louvain; later his bones were gathered into a shrine which was placed beside the altar of the infirmary. 1515.

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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THE PATRIARCH JOSEPH, GOVERNOR OF EGYPT (1635 B.C.)

King of Egypt: Pharaoh.

Castum animum nec aetas adolescentiae permovet nec diligentius auctoritas. A chaste heart lets itself be troubled neither by youth nor by the ascendancy of authority. — St. Jerome.

Of all the children of Jacob, Joseph (born at Haran, in Mesopotamia) was the most virtuous and the most lovable. So he became the object of his father's particular tenderness. Though lawful in itself, the old patriarch's predilection was not without its drawbacks. He could hardly conceal his preferences, and Joseph's brothers could still less fail to notice them; for, on the one hand, the affections of old men are readily indiscreet, and on the other, the mutual jealousy of brothers is suspicious and intractable. Besides several marks of exclusive goodwill, Jacob gave his beloved a linen tunic of many colours; from then on Joseph met in his brothers only feelings of hatred and words of bitterness: so slight a breath is enough to raise in the heart of man the storm of the most violent passions! Virtuous and simple, Joseph increased this hatred still further without wishing to: he told them of glorious dreams he had had. "I thought," he said, "that I was binding sheaves with you in the field, and I saw my sheaf rise and stand upright, and yours range themselves around it to worship it." And again: "I saw in another dream the sun, the moon and eleven stars worshipping me." His brothers cried out: "Shall you be our king, and shall we bow beneath your power?" His father himself rebuked him, perhaps to calm the irritation of his other children; for in his own mind he pondered Joseph's mysterious words and sought to fathom their meaning.

Now one day, when Joseph's brothers had led their flocks as far as Shechem, Jacob sent him to them. Joseph set out and found his brothers in the fields of Dothan. They saw him from afar and said to one another: "Here comes our dreamer; come, let us kill him and throw him into this old cistern; we shall say that a wild beast has devoured him, and so we shall see what good his dreams do him." Reuben, the eldest of them, was horrified at such a crime; he proposed to let Joseph down into the cistern: his secret intention was thus to save his life and give him back to his father. As soon as Joseph arrived they stripped him of his robe, the fatal object of envy, and threw him into the cistern, which was without water. A little later some Ishmaelites and Midianites happened to pass; they were going from Gilead to Egypt, leading camels laden with spices, resin and myrrh. Then Judah, one of the accomplices, spoke up: "What shall we gain by killing our brother and hiding his death? It is better to sell him to these Ishmaelites and not defile our hands; for he is our brother and our flesh." This advice prevailed; Joseph was drawn out of the cistern and sold for twenty pieces of silver.

The guilty men dipped Joseph's robe in the blood of a kid and sent it to Jacob with these words: "Here is a robe we have found; see whether it is your son's." Jacob, recognizing it, said: "It is my son's tunic; a cruel beast has devoured him; a beast has devoured Joseph." He tore his garments, covered himself with sackcloth

and wept long for his son. His children gathered to try to soften his grief; but he remained inconsolable and said to them: “I will weep until I join my son in death.” And he went on shedding tears; for Joseph had just been snatched from him, and Benjamin was henceforth the only pledge left him of Rachel’s love.

Meanwhile Joseph was taken to Egypt and sold by the Midianites to Potiphar, one of the king’s chief officers. The young slave had found favour before God, who sends men the trial of a short tribulation only to give them an occasion of virtue and a source of glory; his fine qualities likewise made him pleasing to his master, who entrusted him with the stewardship of his house and left the care of his affairs to him. The Egyptian was not deceived, and God blessed him because of Joseph: his goods increased visibly and success crowned all his undertakings.

Joseph had already for some years been showing, in the obscurity of a thankless service, a superior intelligence and virtue, when his master’s wife cast guilty looks on him and solicited him to sin. The noble captive remained faithful to God and to honour, and answered with as much moderation as firmness. “Behold, my master has entrusted all things to me,” he said, “to the point that he does not even know what he possesses; he has nothing that is not in my power and that he has not put into my hands, keeping back only you, who are his wife. And could I commit such a wickedness and sin against my God!” This answer, instead of discouraging her passion, seemed to inflame it and give it a growing harshness. One day, when Joseph was alone in a room, his master’s wife made a last attempt and seized him by his cloak. When a woman has lost all respect for herself and deserved to lose the esteem of others, she knows nothing else but to stifle under sensual enjoyment the memory of her abolished dignity, and she dares everything to drag down into the complicity of the same crime the one who, from the height of his virtue, threatens to remain for ever her accuser and her judge.

Joseph had the intelligence as much as the courage of duty; he left his cloak in the hands of the shameless woman and fled — the only way to conquer in such a danger; for indeed, if the mind has its convictions and its promptness, the senses have their wavering and their failing. One can imagine the transports of the scorned temptress. Her passion disappointed, her sway disregarded, Potiphar’s wife had something to fear, but above all she had something to avenge: she had to forestall Joseph’s possible complaints; above all, she had to make a slave pay the penalty of his virtue. She called her servants as though to bring her help, and complained with airs of modest pride that this foreigner had dared to carry his guilty boldness as far as herself; she owed her safety only to her cries, and she had been able to tear away this garment as evidence against Joseph. Then, when her husband returned, she traced back to him the origin of all this misfortune and fraudulently involved him in the charge, so that, having to clear himself of the suspicion of imprudence, he would think all the less of accusing her of infidelity. “This slave whom you brought,” she said, “came to insult me, and when he heard me cry out he left this cloak in my hands and fled.”

The calumny succeeded very well; Potiphar was not shrewd enough to escape his wife’s artifices and to detect the truth under the studied appearances with which the imposture covered itself. Without reflecting that a man hardly prepares himself for great crimes by ten years of virtue and devoted service, and that the violence might as well have come from her who had torn away the cloak as from him who had let it be taken, he flew into an extreme rage against his steward and had him thrown into prison. But the Lord was with Joseph; for in imposing the labour God gives the strength to bear it, and by His grace there are no trials so hard that a generous courage cannot overcome them.

The Lord moreover allowed Joseph to win the good graces of the keeper of the prison. He, taking pity on the young captive and seeing nothing in him that betrayed a base and criminal soul, gave him his confidence and left to him in part the care of the other prisoners. Now one morning Joseph saw two of his companions more downcast than usual; dreams had cast them into this sadness. He listened to the account of these dreams, gave their interpretation, and foretold to one of the condemned men that he would be crucified in three days, and to the other that in three days likewise he would be set free and restored to his former office; then he begged

the latter not to forget him in the time of his good fortune. The event bore out this interpretation: at the end of three days one of the prisoners was crucified, the other set free and restored to his former office; only he forgot Joseph, for prosperity takes away the memory of services received. God allowed it so on this occasion, so that His elect might count on the help of heaven and not on that of earth, and that, destined to command men, he might learn to know them.

About two years having passed, the king of Egypt had two dreams that frightened him. It was one of the superstitions of ancient paganism always to look for mystery in dreams, and God, who governs men while mercifully taking account even of their errors and weaknesses, sometimes gave a profound meaning to what was commonly only a play of the bodily organs or a caprice of the imagination. These dreams of the king of Egypt entered into the plan of heavenly wisdom; that is why they were a true figure of the future; they were to prepare Joseph's triumph; that is why their explanation was reserved to him. In vain all the ordinary interpreters were called; the king was disheartened by the ignorance of his soothsayers. Then the master's sadness brought Joseph's name back to the lips of the courtier, who had learned it in misfortune and had no longer remembered it in prosperity. Joseph was taken out of prison: he appeared before the king; the king related his two dreams, and Joseph, explaining both in the same sense, announced that seven years of plenty would be followed by seven years of barrenness. He therefore proposed that a wise and able man be set over the whole of Egypt who, during the years of fertility, would put by part of the grain, so that, when the famine came, the people would not be without resources.

The king rightly believed that no one would know better how to remedy the ills of the future than the man to whom God thus revealed them in advance. He therefore subjected the whole of Egypt to Joseph, keeping above the young favourite only the greatness of the throne. He clothed him in a robe of fine linen, gave him a gold collar, the mark of his new dignity, and put the royal ring on his finger. He made him mount a triumphal chariot, ordering a herald to cry that all the people should acknowledge Joseph's authority and bend the knee as he passed. Then, changing his name of Joseph, he called him by an Egyptian word meaning *saviour of the world*. Finally, to crown all these flattering distinctions, he gave him in marriage the daughter of a priest of Heliopolis, thus allying him with the noblest and most powerful class of his States. So ended Joseph's misfortunes; they were as it were the fruitful seed of the prosperity and glory that filled the rest of his life.

His prophetic words were fulfilled: seven years of plenty were followed by seven years of barrenness. The scourge had struck the neighbouring countries too. Jacob, hard pressed by the famine, sent his sons towards Egypt, of whose resources he had heard; Benjamin alone stayed with him. Grain was sold only on Joseph's order; his brothers were therefore presented to him and worshipped him, prostrating themselves before him after the manner of the Orientals. He recognized them without difficulty, but he was not recognized by them, because manhood and perhaps misfortune had changed the features of his youth.

At the sight of his brothers bowed before him, Joseph remembered his dreams of long ago. He spoke harshly and seemed to believe that these strangers had come as enemies. He kept them three days in prison; then, learning that they had another brother, he sent them away with orders to bring him back, and kept one of them as a hostage. They, thinking they were not understood by the Egyptian minister, who had so far spoken to them through an interpreter, reproached one another for their old fratricide. Then Joseph, overcome by tenderness, withdrew for a moment to weep; then he came back, declaring his will to keep Simeon, one of the strangers, as a hostage. The others returned sadly to the land of Canaan. Their father fell into deep affliction when he was told of Simeon's captivity and of the formal order to bring Benjamin to Egypt; it was long before he consented to expose this son also, the dear and last fruit of his old age.

However, as the famine went on raging, Jacob was forced to yield to the pressure of circumstances, and he sent his sons to Egypt, entrusting Benjamin to them with regret, Judah answering for him with his own head. Joseph, seeing them arrive with his young brother, ordered them to be brought into his palace and a feast prepared for them. They were waiting in the dining hall when at last Joseph appeared. All bowed before him.

He welcomed them kindly and asked them about their old father. Then, raising his eyes, he saw Benjamin and said: “Is this your young brother of whom you spoke to me? My son,” he added, “may God be gracious to you!” And he hurried out; for at the sight of his brother his heart was moved and he could not hold back his tears. When he had wept freely he came back and, making an effort to master his emotion, he took the meal in the company of his brothers, but at another table, the Egyptians regarding strangers as profane. He served them himself; Benjamin was treated more honourably than the others, which astonished them. For the rest, the feast passed off in joy.

The next day the brothers were to leave. Joseph had his silver cup hidden among Benjamin’s provisions, and scarcely had they set out again than he sent his men after them. They were overtaken and accused of theft; they denied it, but the cup was found among Benjamin’s provisions. Joseph threatened to keep him as a slave. Then Judah made known all the reluctance Jacob had felt at letting Benjamin go, and the terrible blow the captivity of this tenderly loved son would deal to his great age. At the name of his father Joseph could restrain himself no longer: he sent away the Egyptians who surrounded him and cried out, shedding tears: “I am Joseph. Is my father still alive?” But his brothers could not answer him, so seized were they with fear. “Come near me,” he said to them gently; “I am Joseph, your brother, whom you sold.” He reassured them, saying that God had permitted all things for a greater good; he bade them inform his father of all they saw and bring him back with them to Egypt, where they would all be fed during the five years that the famine was still to last. And falling on the neck of Benjamin his brother to embrace him, he wept, and Benjamin wept too as he received him in his arms. Joseph then gave all his brothers the same marks of tenderness, and, recovering little by little from their mute terror, they dared to speak to him.

At this happy news, brought him by his sons, Jacob seemed to wake from a deep sleep and for some time refused to believe their word. At last, coming to himself, he said: “If my son Joseph is still alive, it is enough; I will go and see him before I die.” And indeed he set out for Egypt with all his people and his goods. Joseph came to meet him and, catching sight of him, ran to him and embraced him closely with many tears. “I shall die with joy now,” his father said to him, “since I have seen your face and leave you after me.” Jacob was also presented to the king, and obtained leave to settle with his sons in the land of Goshen, the most fertile part of Egypt and the most suitable for a shepherd people. Seventeen years later he died, prophesying the magnificent destinies of his race. He adopted among his children Manasseh and Ephraim, the sons of Joseph, and asked that his ashes be one day reunited with the ashes of his fathers.

Joseph saw the sons of his grandsons. When near death he asked that his bones be carried into the Promised Land; then he expired at the age of a hundred and ten. His body was embalmed and put into a coffin which the Israelites, at their departure from Egypt, carried to the land of Canaan.

Such was Joseph, a famous example of the difficulties that await virtue, of the courage it must employ and of the triumph it may obtain. Ancient times saw no more perfect image of that Just One who, betrayed by His brethren and misunderstood in His works, was condemned as a criminal, and came forth from the captivity of the tomb to feed the whole earth with the bread of Gospel truth and to win, by all the gifts of His divine charity, the glorious title of Saviour of the world.

Joseph the patriarch is represented: 1° at the moment when he is sold by his brothers; they are then receiving from the Midianite merchants the price of the sale, while the boy is handed over to the caravan of the buyers to be taken to Egypt; 2° with a plain indication of the dream in which his future greatness was shown him, under the form of a sheaf standing upright amid eleven others that bow before it; 3° let down into a well or cistern by his brothers, then drawn out of this well to be sold; 4° explaining Pharaoh’s dreams. — Let us add that his chaste resistance to Potiphar’s wife, and his meeting with his brothers and his father, can furnish artists with fine subjects for composition.

Les Femmes de la Bible, by the late Mgr Darboy; Caractéristiques des Saints, *by the Rev. Father Cahier*.

ST. FUSCIAN, ST. VICTORICUS AND ST. GENTIAN, MARTYRS AT AMIENS (303)

Pope: St. Marcellinus. — Roman emperor: Diocletian. The souls of the just are in the hand of God, and the torment of death shall not touch them. — Wisdom iii, 1.

St. Fuscian[1] and St. Victoricus[2] were both born at Rome in the course of the 3rd century. By their courageous efforts they resisted the seductions of every kind that the queen of cities then offered. Fired with the desire of spreading the light of the Gospel far afield, they distributed all their goods to the poor and came into Gaul with St. Quentin, St. Lucian, St. Crispin, St. Crispinian, St. Piat, St. Rieul, St. Marcellus, St. Eugene, St. Rufinus and St. Valerius. Having arrived at Lutetia, they each chose, under the inspiration of grace, the countries they were to evangelize, and separated, while remaining united by the bonds of one charity. God gave them that power of miracles which lends the word of the Apostles an invincible authority. By a simple sign of the cross they healed the deaf, the blind, the dumb and the paralysed. Their whole life, consecrated to fasting, vigils, prayer and preaching, appeared in the eyes of the people as a permanent miracle, which was to win numerous conquests for the new faith.

While St. Quentin, the head of this mission, went to Amiens, Crispin and Crispinian to Soissons, Piat to Tournai, etc., Fuscian and Victoricus made their way towards the land of the Morini, the region that Virgil regarded as placed at the end of the world.[3] Folcuin, abbot of Lobbes, described in the 10th century the country evangelized by our two apostles in these terms: “It was a nation that kept no rule in its morals, more inclined to resort to arms than to receive counsel, and which, as one of the ancients said, put more abundance than wisdom into its speech. Its untamable barbarity and violent inclination to evil could be repressed and overcome only by the prudence and perspicacity of men of eminent holiness.”

The two apostles made numerous conversions at Thérouanne, in spite of the hostility of the Romans and the Gauls. Yet they did not dare, in the city where the Roman authorities protected the cult of the god Mars,[4] to raise a temple to the true God. It was outside the walls of the city, where the village of Helfaut[5] stands today, that St. Fuscian built a chapel under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin; near this sanctuary the zealous missionary proclaimed the word of God in the open air to those of the inhabitants of

Thérouanne and the neighbouring country who came to ask for the grace of baptism. “While I was carefully exploring the territory of Helfaut,” says Malbrancq, “the lord of the place showed me an acre of land situated a quarter of a league from the church, to the right of the Thérouanne road; he told me that this field had never been put under the plough because, according to tradition, it had belonged to the two holy apostles. I have supposed that, because of the smallness of his church, the apostle gathered the multitude in this field, that he received strangers there and that he had founded houses of hospitality there. Indeed, ancient documents tell us that after devoting himself to preaching he busied himself with healing the sick, particularly the paralysed.”[6]

Victoricus had separated from Fuscian to evangelize the Boulonnais, whose importance had grown remarkably since the Roman dominion had established four ports there, *Portus ulterior*, *Portus Itius*, *Portus citerior* and *Gessoriacum*. Meeting with lively resistance on the part of the authorities, he could only build a small chapel to the west of the town, towards the mouth of the river Liane. It was there that the new Christians of the Boulonnais and even of Ponthieu came. The generous efforts of our two Saints were not to leave lasting traces in the land of the Morini, where the Christian faith had almost entirely disappeared when, a century later, St. Victricius evangelized these same regions. The Morini, carried away by the fickleness of their character, were even to fall back a second time into idolatry after the mission of the bishop of Rouen, and to attach themselves definitively to Christianity only in the 7th century, under the long and glorious episcopate of St. Omer.

Fuscian and Victoricus left Thérouanne to go in search of their companion Quentin and give him an account of the success of their mission. Informed of the road this apostle had taken, our two Saints made their way towards Paris. Arriving at Amiens and seeing persecution raging there, they hastened to leave it and followed the Roman road to Lutetia. On 11 December, as they were approaching *Sama*, which was one day to bear the name of Sains in honour of their martyrdom, they met an old man, an inhabitant of the place, who was coming to meet them. It was Gentian, one of the richest personages of the district according to the best tradition; a simple innkeeper according to popular belief. Secretly worked upon by grace, he had heard of the miracles of our two Saints, and perhaps he had listened at Amiens to the preaching of St. Quentin; but he had none the less remained in the bonds of paganism. “Sirs,” he said to them, “your accent and your dress make me suppose that you are strangers to these parts. Be pleased to tell me in what country you were born, where you come from, where you are going, and what is the purpose of your journey.” — “Born at Rome, we were brought up there and there sucked the milk of Catholic doctrine. We have come into your parts to teach you the truth and show you the way of eternal salvation. Led astray by the wiles of the devil, you worship vain images, insensible to your prayers, while you do not know the supreme God who, after giving you the perishable life of here below, destines you for an eternal life of glory and happiness. Consider the stars that shine in the firmament, the fruits that come forth from the bosom of the earth, and tell me whether all these masterpieces can owe their existence to your fragile images. No, the supreme God is the author of this order of nature; it is He who hung the heavens in space, who set the earth firm on its foundations and chained the waves of the ocean in their bed of sand. By a single word He created all things, and by the breath of His spirit He has assured the duration of His work. It is His Son, it is Jesus Christ, the author of all things, whom we come to proclaim to you, so that you may not be victims of your errors for all eternity. At this moment,” Fuscian went on, “we are seeking our venerable companion, the most noble Quentin, who, like us and for the same purpose, left his native city.”

Gentian, struck by this language and heaving a deep sigh, answered: “For three days I have felt a mysterious inclination to believe in this God whose power you set before me. As for His servant Quentin, who was evangelizing the people of Amiens, he was imprisoned, tortured by order of the Prefect and finally driven out of the city. Already forty-two days have passed since he was beheaded at Augusta Veromanduorum (Saint-Quentin). The same torments threaten you, who are regarded as the enemies of the gods and of the commonwealth. Soldiers have received the order to arrest you. But I beg you, my lords and fathers, come under my roof to take a mouthful of bread and rest a little.”

At that time Rictiovarus had just arrived at Amiens. Maximian Herculius, associated in the empire by Diocletian, having found in Rictiovarus a worthy rival of his fury against Christianity, had named him prefect — a somewhat vague term that is generally interpreted as praetorian prefect; and it was in this capacity that he had bloodied with his persecutions the dioceses of Reims, Soissons and Noyon. At Trier he had made such a massacre of Christians that the waters of the Moselle had been reddened with the blood of the martyrs. His emissaries went through the towns and countryside, publishing the edicts that ordered the Christians to be arrested and handed over to the Roman courts.

Rictiovarus, having learned that Fuscian and Victoricus had passed through the city of Amiens, set out in search of them and arrived at Sains with a troop of soldiers, right in front of the house where Gentian had offered our two Saints the eager services of hospitality.[7]

The fierce prefect gave orders to arrest them and chain them together. Gentian, moved by sudden indignation, rushed sword in hand at the wicked persecutor, forbidding him entry to his house. “It was not,” says the biographer of our Saints, that he meant to strike the persecutor; “he only wished to bring about for himself the occasion of martyrdom.” — “Whence comes this fury of yours?” cried Rictiovarus. “Why do you wish to pierce me with your sword?” — “You deserve no other fate, since you persecute the servants of that Christ by whom all things were made and whose almighty will rules the laws of the world. To pay Him

homage I do not hesitate to sacrifice my life; for I proclaim that I too am His servant." Rictiovarus, still more irritated by such a profession of faith, ordered Gentian to be beheaded at once in the presence of his two guests.

Rictiovarus, having taken his seat on his chair of pestilence, ordered the judges to assist him, and, surrounded by the crowd of the people, proceeded to the interrogation of the two Christians: "I do not doubt that you are Romans; I see it in your features; but tell me which gods you profess to worship." — "We do not worship the gods of the pagans, whom we regard as vain images or as incarnations of the devil. We are worshippers of God the Father, who alone is eternal, who alone is unchanging in His designs. Without ever varying, He governs all that is variable; without losing His unity, He presides over the diversity of beings: He is everywhere and penetrates all creatures, enfolding them in His omnipotence. Very different from men, He had no beginning and will have no end; no limit can bound the extent of His power. Before the origin of time He begot a coeternal Son, equal to Him in all things. Unfathomable mystery! A God brings forth a God; light comes forth from light, immensity produces immensity, the incomprehensible begets the incomprehensible! This Son, born of the Father before the origin of time, willed to be born of a mortal mother; like amber,[8] one in two natures and composed of a double nature, He remained God with the Father, and for our salvation He became man in the womb of Mary, whom the Holy Spirit overshadowed with His mysterious shadow, so that she might keep her virginity." — "You are mad," interrupted Rictiovarus. "Renounce these aberrations and sacrifice to the gods, or I hand you over to torture." — "We do not fear it," answered the Saints; "we shall even be happy to suffer and die for the name of Christ. We shall gladly exchange this earthly dwelling for the eternal city of which God is the architect. Listen to our counsel; abandon your vain superstitions; be converted to the true God, who will forgive you your sins and give you endless happiness; whereas the metal statues you worship are powerless of themselves and will be the cause of the devil dragging you into the eternal flames."

Rictiovarus, carried away by a mad fury, ordered the two Christians to be loaded with irons, to be taken to Amiens and shut up in a dark dungeon. The Saints set out, full of a heavenly joy. "Twice on the way," says M. Salmon, "Rictiovarus had them stopped and tortured, according to tradition, without being able to break their constancy, and the two places where he made them undergo these torments are still marked by stone crosses, mutilated by time, one of which is seen near Sains and the other opposite the gate of the former abbey church of Saint-Fuscien."

Having come about a mile from the place where they had been arrested, the two martyrs knelt down and, shedding tears, addressed to God this fervent prayer: "Lord Jesus Christ, essence of all light, You who are and who were before the creation of the world; who measure the heavens with Your fingers, who can hold the universe in the hollow of Your hand, who have the cherubim for Your throne, who search the very depths of the abyss, who unleash the tempests, who give to the good and the wicked the benefits of sun and rain; O Lord, in whom we believe, hope and live, deign to receive our last breath, and forget us not in eternity!"

When they had finished this prayer they said to Rictiovarus: "What joy for us if you were to embrace our faith! But alas! your obstinate soul is running to its ruin. Ah! unhappy man, cease to add to your iniquities, so as to find grace with the Lord." — "You keep threatening me with eternal torments," said Rictiovarus; "very well! it is you who are now going to undergo tortures, if you do not sacrifice to the gods on the spot." The Saints answered: "Cruel to yourself, how could you be kind to others? Not fearing eternal death for yourself, what wonder that you condemn us to temporal death? We are ready to undergo your tortures."

Rictiovarus had iron spits driven into their nostrils and ears, and red-hot awls into their heads; he then ordered their eyes to be torn out and them to be shot through with arrows; he himself, seizing a javelin, hurled it at them. Finally, as the sufferers had not entirely succumbed to these horrible torments, he had their heads cut off.

This martyrdom took place on 11 December, about the year 303, on the very spot where the choir of the abbey church of Saint-Fuscien later rose — a space today enclosed in the garden of the boarding school of the Brothers of St. Joseph.

Towards nightfall some Christians took advantage of the darkness to go to Sains, where the bodies of the three martyrs lay together. They buried them, singing hymns, at the spot where the church of Sains stands today.

Above the old crypt of the church of Sains rises a remarkable tomb dating from the end of the 12th or the beginning of the 13th century. It measures two metres thirty-six centimetres long by one metre eleven centimetres wide, and has as supports six small pillars forty-three centimetres high. The three Saints, life-size, lie on their backs; they wear long beards and the halo. The figure in the middle has his hands joined. At their feet a bas-relief, divided into two scenes, represents, facing Rictiovarus on horseback, the beheading of St. Victoricus and St. Fuscian. Further on, these same two Saints, carrying their heads in their hands, go to join the lifeless body of St. Gentian. Under the tomb there is a hole from which pilgrims are accustomed to take earth that was once in contact with the bodies of those whom the people of the district call “our three holy Martyrs.”

At the Saint-Firmin portal of Notre-Dame of Amiens one sees St. Fuscian and St. Victoricus holding their heads in their hands, and St. Gentian, an old man with a long beard, armed with the sword he drew against Rictiovarus. The support of his statue, a beardless figure holding a cutlass, might well be the prefect Rictiovarus.

Formerly, in the spaces between the columns of the apse of the choir of the church of Saint-Quentin, there were six groups of sculpture devoted to the history of our holy Martyrs, following on the bas-reliefs of St. Firmin and St. John the Baptist. In them one saw St. Gentian giving hospitality to the two Apostles of the Morini; the various tortures of the two missionaries, their beheading, their return to Sains carrying their heads in their hands; finally the discovery and translation of their relics. These groups, executed in 1514 and 1551 at the expense of two canons, were destroyed to make room for the decorative works devised by M. de La Motte.

The statue of St. Victoricus is seen on the “portail amoureux” of the collegiate church of Saint-Quentin.

M. l’abbé Haigneré, in his notice on Notre-Dame of Saint-Sang, mentions the tradition that ascribes the origin of this sanctuary to an oratory built by St. Victoricus, and quotes the following passage from a manuscript of Dubuisson (18th century) preserved in the library of Boulogne-sur-Mer: “On one of the paintings with which this chapel was decorated, and which formed its panelling, appeared an old man seated at the foot of a tree, the Gospel in his hand, surrounded by a crowd of people to whom he was proclaiming the word of God. The upper town was on one side, with the Tour d’Ordre; an angel, come down from heaven, was crowning with flowers the man who preached the wonders of Jesus Christ, and at the foot of the picture was written: *Sanctus Victoricus Christi fidem praedicasse Bononiensibus et aediculam Deo hic erexisse traditur; martyrio coronatus est Ambiani, anno CCCIII*” (St. Victoricus is said to have preached the faith of Christ to the people of Boulogne and to have built a small shrine to God here; he was crowned with martyrdom at Amiens in the year 303).

In a 12th-century Lectionary from the abbey of Corbie, a miniature of fairly good style shows us St. Gentian, an old man with a long beard, leaning on a staff and coming out of his house to offer hospitality to St. Fuscian and St. Victoricus. The two Apostles are barefoot and carry long walking staffs.

Another manuscript of the same provenance, a 15th-century Collectar, shows St. Gentian kneeling, about to receive the sword-stroke of the executioner, while St. Fuscian and St. Victoricus, witnesses of this martyrdom, are each bound to a tree. — A manuscript copy of the *Golden Legend* represents the two holy

Martyrs holding their heads in their hands and arriving at the house of Gentian, who lies dead on his threshold.

VENERATION AND RELICS.

The cult of Sts. Fuscian, Victoricus and Gentian is common to the dioceses of Amiens, Soissons, Arras, Orléans and Paris. It was very widespread in the former dioceses of Thérouanne, Boulogne and Saint-Omer. The feast of the three Saints is entered in almost all the old breviaries that followed the Parisian liturgy. Only in 1776 was their cult introduced into the diocese of Ypres, by Bishop de Wavrans. The three martyrs are especially honoured at Sains, at Saint-Fuscien and at Beaugency.

Bishop Robert de Fouilloy, in August 1318, after a deliberation of the chapter, raised the feast of the three martyrs to a double of the first class and ordered that on 11 December their shrine be carried in procession. In 1666 Fr. Faure suppressed this feast, which had until then been a holiday of obligation with vigil and fast, and transferred it to the third Sunday of Advent. During the terrible plague of 1668, which claimed twenty thousand victims at Amiens, the relics of the three Saints were carried in procession with the other shrines of the cathedral.

The church of Sains was formerly much frequented. Pilgrims coming from Amiens used to stop on the hill called the Montjoie. There they made heaps of stones in which they planted small wooden crosses, rejoicing that from the top of this height they could see three privileged sanctuaries: the church of Sains, Saint-Pierre of Corbie and the cathedral of Amiens.

The introduction of the Roman liturgy has extended to the whole diocese, for the feast of St. Fuscian, the rite of double of the second class, previously reserved to the chapter of the cathedral.

Besides the principal feast, popularly called the feast of the *Saints engelés* (the “frozen Saints”) because it was kept in winter, there was formerly kept on 27 June the summer Saint-Fuscien, that is, the feast of the Finding of the relics by St. Lupicinus. It is found with the rite of a double in the old Breviaries of Amiens and Corbie, and as a semi-double in the Propers of Corbie and Saint-Quentin. In the present liturgy of Amiens no commemoration of this finding is made any longer.

In 1547 an altar was dedicated to St. Victorice (the name still used in the Vermandois) in the collegiate church of Saint-Quentin. St. Victoricus had five special feasts in the old liturgy of Saint-Quentin: 12 January, the Tumulation of St. Quentin, St. Victorice and St. Cassian, anniversary of the day when these three holy bodies were put back in the crypt in the year 900 by Rambert, bishop of Noyon; — 2 May, Elevation of the same Saints, anniversary of the day when they were taken out of the crypt in 1228 to be placed in the nave; — 19 May, Arrival of the relics of St. Firmin, St. Fuscian, St. Victoricus, St. Gentian, St. Honoratus, etc., given in 893 by Otger; — 2 September, second Elevation of St. Quentin, St. Victorice and St. Cassian, commemoration of 2 September 1257, when the shrines of these Saints were placed on the high altar; — 30 October, feast of the Translation of St. Victorice from Amiens to Saint-Quentin, in 895.

The names of Fuscian, Victoricus and Gentian are entered in the old litanies of Amiens and Corbie and in the oldest martyrologies. Contrary to modern usage, which gives a kind of primacy to St. Fuscian, the name of St. Victoricus is placed first in the martyrologies of St. Jerome, Florus, Usuard, Ado and Rabanus Maurus.

St. Fuscian is the patron of Berny-sur-Noye, Grand-Laviers, Saigneville and Wanel (Somme), and of Lottinghen (Pas-de-Calais).

St. Gentian is the patron of Deniécourt (Somme) and of Pluherlin, in the arrondissement of Vannes (Morbihan).

St. Fuscian and St. Gentian are the patrons of Morcourt.

St. Fuscian, St. Victoricus and St. Gentian together are the patrons of Le Mesge, Pissy, Sains, Saleux-Salouel and Saint-Fuscien-aux-Bois (Somme), and of Fléchel [*as printed*] and Frocourt (Oise). Only since the time of the Concordat have they ceased to be secondary patrons of Beaugency. A street in Amiens, as well as a village in the canton of Sains, bears the name of Saint-Fuscien.

We shall group together all that concerns the relics of St. Fuscian from their finding to our own day; we shall also mention those of St. Victoricus and St. Gentian when facts common to the three martyrs are in question; but we shall then speak separately of what concerns St. Victoricus or St. Gentian alone from the 9th century onward.

The burial place of the three martyrs long remained unknown, and was revealed only in 555 by a prodigy. Lupicinus, a priest of the city of Amiens, had just fallen asleep in a field near Amiens after reciting the night office, when an angel appeared to him and said: “Rise and go towards a crypt shaded with trees that I will show you: there you will find the bodies of Gentian, Fuscian and Victoricus.” The venerable priest, waking, armed himself with a hoe, went to the place indicated, dug deep into the earth and discovered the bodies of the three martyrs. At once he gave thanks to God and let his joy burst forth in hymns of gladness. The sound of his singing reached miraculously the ears of St. Honoratus, bishop of Amiens, who was then celebrating the holy sacrifice of the Mass in his cathedral, five miles from Sains. The fervent bishop was looking for Lupicinus when the latter came to find him and told him of the happy discovery he had made. St. Honoratus, followed by a crowd of the faithful, went in procession to the place where the bodies of the holy martyrs lay and from which a sweet fragrance breathed. He offered these relics the tribute of veneration due to them, thanking the Lord for having glorified his episcopate by such a blessing.

The news of this discovery having quickly reached the ears of Childebert I, king of France, he commanded his chaplains to go to Sains and fetch this precious treasure; but they tried in vain to carry out this order; for when they attempted to remove the holy bodies, they became so heavy that it was impossible to move them. Childebert, informed of this, ordered the holy bodies to be buried again at the very spot where they had been discovered, and a church to be built over their tombs. It was on this occasion that the king gave the church of Amiens the land of Le Mesge, in the Amiénois. Numerous miracles took place at this triple tomb, which saw the healing of the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the paralysed, the infirm and the possessed.

At the time when the Normans ravaged the neighbourhood of Amiens, probably about the year 859, the relics of the three Saints were carried for safety into the cathedral of Amiens. It is certain that they were there in 865, since at that time Bishop Hilmerad gave a relic of St. Fuscian to the abbey of Saint-Riquier at the request of Odulf, treasurer of that monastery.

In 1096 Bishop Gervin addressed the following letter to Lambert of Guînes, bishop of Arras: “In the holy church of Amiens, entrusted to our weakness, a shrine of gold, silver and precious stones is being prepared by the care of one of our priests, to receive the relics of St. Fuscian; this ceremony will take place on Michaelmas day. Knowing that you are pleasing to God and to men by your works and your doctrine, we do not hesitate to come and ask your help and your assistance. We are persuaded that, setting aside all business, you will grant our wish, and that thus you will gladden the Church of Amiens, while at the same time securing for yourself the protection of our glorious Martyr before the throne of God.” It is to be believed that Lambert went to this ceremony, which took place on 29 September. A second translation, into a shrine of silver-gilt, took place in 1175 under the episcopate of Theobald. Guillaume de Mâcon opened this shrine in 1288.

In 1628, when the gilded spire of the cathedral of Amiens was repaired, the Chapter had some relics of our three Saints, contained in a heart of gilded bronze, placed in the ball below the cross. This custom of depositing relics at the top of spires to preserve them from lightning goes back at least to the beginning of the 14th century: for in 1302 relics were put in the ball of the spire of Saint-Pierre of Limoges, which had been

struck by lightning.

On 12 July 1651, Bishop Lefebvre de Caumartin gave the left clavicle of St. Fuscian to the abbey of Saint-Fuscien, at the request of the abbot of that monastery, Charles d'Ailly.

On 12 March 1663, Antoine Rogeau, curé of Sains, discovered against the end of the sarcophagus, but on the outside, relics of the three Martyrs enclosed in three boxes, which had no doubt been left there on purpose when the bodies were transferred to the cathedral of Amiens in the 9th century. Mgr Faure made the translation of this precious deposit into a temporary shrine on 27 June 1664. So many people came to Sains from Picardy, Artois and Flanders that the doors of the church stayed open all day long to satisfy the devotion of the pilgrims. On 17 August of the following year these relics were placed in a silver shrine given by Pierre Le Billon, king's counsellor in the court of Amiens. This was the origin of a confraternity of Saint-Fuscien established at Sains, whose statutes were printed in 1665 and to which Pope Alexander VII granted indulgences. In 1667 the Romanesque shrine of the cathedral was restored at the expense of a parishioner of Saint-Firmin-le-Confesseur.

A relic of St. Fuscian which was at Paris, in the church of Sainte-Aubierge near the Observatory, was taken in 1700 to the cathedral of Pamiers. Various old inventories mention relics of our three Saints in the abbeys of Saint-Vaast at Arras and Saint-Bertin at Saint-Omer, at the Charterhouse of Abbeville, at the collegiate church of Saint-Nicolas of Amiens, etc.

The important relics of St. Fuscian formerly kept in the cathedral of Amiens were dispersed during the Revolution: what became of them is unknown. More or less considerable relics of him are kept at the Hôtel-Dieu, at Saint-Jacques and at the convent of the Poor Clares of Amiens; at Berny (Ailly-sur-Noye), at Le Mesge (part of the arm), at Saleux and at Saint-Fuscien. Here is the list of the bones venerated in the church of Sains: three femurs, three cervical vertebrae, an ulna, two small ribs, one side of a jawbone, a radius, an apophysis, some fragments, and a tibia of St. Gentian given in 1868 by M. Douillet, curé-dean of Corbie. The greater part of these relics, which had disappeared at the Revolution, was found again in 1868 by M. Messio under the footpace of the high altar. The authentications of 1664 and 1665 were attached to them.

The abbey of Notre-Dame of Beaugency (Loiret) claimed to possess the heads of our three Saints in three silver busts. A translation of them was made in 1259 by Philippe Berruyer, archbishop of Bourges, and Robert de Courtenay, bishop of Orléans. Having partly escaped the depredations of the Calvinists, these relics, it is said, were saved in '93 by an inhabitant of Beaugency and later restored to the church of Notre-Dame, now a parish church, where they are still today the object of great veneration.

There is evidently a mistake in the attribution of these relics as regards St. Gentian, whose head was kept until the Revolution at the abbey of Corbie, and also as regards St. Victoricus, whose head is still venerated today in the church of Saint-Quentin.

Bishop Otger, in memory of his having been a canon of the collegiate church of Saint-Quentin, gave that church the body of St. Victoricus, though he kept several of its bones. This translation took place on 30 October 895. Three niches were hollowed out in the crypt of the collegiate church; the body of the apostle of the Vermandois was put in the middle one, St. Victoricus on his right and St. Cassian on his left. Herbert, count of Vermandois, gave on this occasion his land of Sinceny with all its dependencies to increase the lights of the altar.

Some years later fear of the Normans had these three holy bodies carried to Laon. About the year 900 they were put back in the crypt by Rambert, bishop of Noyon. It was this memory that was celebrated at Saint-Quentin on 12 January by the feast of the Tumulation of the bodies of St. Quentin, St. Cassian and St. Victoricus.

On 2 May 1228, before work on the choir of the church of Saint-Quentin, the bodies of St. Quentin, St. Victoricus and St. Cassian were taken out of the crypt and placed provisionally in the nave.

On 2 September 1257, when the church was finished, these relics were put into shrines by Thomas I de Beaumetz, archbishop of Reims, assisted by Gérard de Conchy and the other bishops of the province, in the presence of St. Louis and his sons.

In the Middle Ages the people of Saint-Quentin called the relics of our Saint the *char de saint Victoric* (the "chariot" of St. Victoricus), because the body is, so to speak, the vehicle of the soul.

At the Revolution the relics of St. Victoricus were happily rescued from profanation. In November 1793 they were buried, together with a great number of other relics of the church of Saint-Quentin, by two devoted servants of the collegiate church, who had no other means of saving them from the destruction with which they were threatened. In August 1795 they were exhumed and identified at the same time as those of St. Cassian, with which they had been mixed. At present they are kept in two fine shrines of gilded wood above the altar of the Lady chapel. The greater part of the holy Martyr's skull is kept separately in a small square shrine of gilded wood, whose glass panes allow the relic to be seen. On it one reads this inscription: *Remains of the head of St. Victoricus, martyr.* Two particles of this skull have been given to the church of Saint-Fuscien.

In 1651 the monks of Corbie granted some relics of St. Victoricus to the abbey of Saint-Fuscien. Relics of this holy Martyr are venerated at Sains, Saint-Fuscien, Braine and Soissons.

Franco, abbot of Corbie and brother of Hermenfrid, count of Amiens, greatly desired to enrich his monastery with the relics of St. Gentian kept in the cathedral of Amiens. To attain this end he knew how to profit by the friendship Bishop Otger bore him, and asked for the body of St. Gentian as a pledge of their mutual affection. The prelate found that this translation was not without difficulties; but some time afterwards he gave his word and had it ratified by the guardians of the treasury. It was these docile approvers, already won over by Franco, whom the bishop charged with carrying out his promise while he was absent from the city. On the agreed day, 7 May 893, towards evening, Franco arrived at Amiens accompanied by the monks who were to carry the shrine. As a precaution he had left on the road a certain number of inhabitants of Corbie who could lend him a strong hand if need be. The monks slipped stealthily into the church thanks to the connivance of the guardians, seized the treasure so ardently coveted and rejoined the band of the men of Corbie. Meanwhile dawn had just broken and the people of Amiens had learned of the theft that had been carried out. Fired with a holy anger, they armed themselves in haste and ran in pursuit of the robbers. The two bands met and blood was about to flow when God, says an anonymous chronicler, wrapped both parties in a fog so thick that any battle became impossible. The people of Amiens then resigned themselves to the will of the Most High, while the men of Corbie continued their triumphal march, seeing the escort of honour that followed the illustrious relics grow ceaselessly around them. Arriving at Corbie, they went in procession with the whole population to the church of Saint-Pierre, where the shrine was placed with honour.

The head of St. Gentian was set apart in a silver-gilt reliquary in the shape of a ciborium. Every year the curé and churchwardens of Saint-Albin offered it a chaplet of roses. The monks of Corbie, out of gratitude, kept the anniversary of Otger's death on 1 August.

In 1651 the monks of Corbie granted the abbey of Saint-Fuscien a fragment of the radius of St. Gentian. The abbey of Corbie in 1658 gave a rib of St. Gentian and part of his head to the Chapter of Saint-Florent of Roye in exchange for a portion of the head of St. Florentius.

The body of St. Gentian is today kept in the church of Saint-Pierre of Corbie. Some of his relics are venerated at Saint-Vulfran of Abbeville, at Sains (tibia), at Saint-Fuscien, at the convent of the Brothers of St. Joseph in that place, in the church of Saint-Quentin and at Pluherlin (Morbihan).

Extracted from the Hagiographie du diocèse d'Amiens, *by M. l'abbé Corblet.*

ST. DAMASUS OF SPAIN, POPE (384)

Emperor of the East: Theodosius the Great.

Damasus vir egregius et eruditus in Scripturis. Damasus is a distinguished person, well versed in the knowledge of the holy Scriptures. — St. Jerome, Letter to Eustochium.

If St. Jerome was happy to find at Rome St. Damasus, who knew how to recognize his merit and to give him in that city employments suited to his piety and learning, we may also say that it was no small advantage to St. Damasus to receive there this great doctor, who was the admirer of his virtues and the great herald of his praises. It is agreed that he was a Spaniard, although it is not known precisely in what city or province he was born. His father was called Antony; he had a sister, perfectly beautiful and virtuous, named Irene. Having come to Rome with his family, he entered holy orders there and, having made himself by his merits one of the most considerable members of the clergy, he was first made apostolic nuncio to the emperors Valens and Valentinian; then he exercised in the city itself the office of vicar of the sovereign Pontiff. After the death of Liberius he was elected in his place at the age of sixty-two.

Ursinus, or Ursicinus, a deacon, a turbulent man who coveted this high dignity, could not bear that Damasus had been preferred to him. So, having gathered a few factious clerics, he had himself elected antipope and tried to keep by violence a rank that the right of a canonical election did not give him. In this tumult many people were killed, and in a single day as many as a hundred and thirty-seven bodies were found lying in the square, without St. Damasus having contributed to it in any way, for he was of a very gentle spirit and would sooner have renounced the sovereign Pontificate than keep it by arms. The emperor Valentinian, persuaded of the justice of his cause, sent Praetextatus to Rome to drive out Ursicinus and his adherents and to maintain Damasus in the peaceful possession of his see. This peace did not last long; Ursicinus obtained permission to return to the city, and, his malice not diminishing with time, he had a soul black enough to have the holy Pontiff accused of adultery. Concordius and Callistus, deacons, were the instruments of his calumny. They opened their mouths against the Lord's anointed and imputed this crime to him, to have him judged unworthy of the sovereign prelacy he occupied. Damasus was not troubled by this imposture; he assembled at Rome a synod of forty-four bishops, before which he cleared himself so perfectly that his accusers were excommunicated and driven out of the city, and it was decreed that in future those who unjustly accused anyone should be liable to the penalty of retaliation.

The schismatics did not cease to persecute him for all the rest of his Pontificate; but their obstacles did not prevent him from discharging his office worthily and fighting the heretics unceasingly. For this he convoked various councils in the same city: one in 369, in which he had the decrees of the false council of Rimini condemned and Auxentius, bishop of Milan, a great abettor of Arianism, deposed — who nevertheless kept his see to the end through the favour of the emperor Valentinian the Elder, whose mind he had managed to win by flattery; another in 373 against a great number of heresies that were infecting the East, especially that of Apollinaris, which contained an infinity of extravagances, among others that Jesus Christ had no soul, or at least no understanding, but that the Word, united to this body, took the place of these essential parts of man; that His flesh came from heaven and had only passed through the womb of Mary as through a channel; the third in 382, to remedy the schism that had long been afflicting the Church of Antioch.

Furthermore, he had one held at Aquileia in 381 where, in a single session lasting from one o'clock in the afternoon until seven in the evening, Palladius and Secundianus, bishops of Illyria, were convicted of heresy, confounded in the discussion and condemned as guilty of the blasphemies of Arius. He also sent the celebrated St. Zenobius, afterwards bishop of Florence, to Constantinople to console the faithful cruelly persecuted by the emperor Valens, who had declared for Arianism. Finally, it was by his authority that in the

same year 381, and in the same city, the second general council of the Church was held, composed of a hundred and fifty bishops of the East, in which Arius and Macedonius were condemned, and in which the orthodox faith, which the cruelty of that prince seemed to have extinguished and laid in the tomb, was happily raised to life again. Damasus confirmed it and received it, as regards doctrine, as one of the rules of faith: which has given it the name and force of an ecumenical council, although in fact the bishops of the West were not there and only a rather small number of those of the Greek Church attended.

Besides the care and diligence this generous Pontiff brought to banishing heresies from the whole earth, he also applied himself to cutting away the abuses that had crept into the Church. Among the letters attributed to him in the collection of the councils there is one to the bishops of Africa in which, after establishing the primacy of the Holy See, he makes very wise constitutions, chiefly concerning accusations against clerics and bishops, some of which have been inserted into the body of canon law. There is another to the bishops of Numidia, in which he condemns the usurpation of the chorepiscopi, who, being only simple priests and not having received episcopal consecration, nevertheless took upon themselves the right to ordain priests and ministers, to bless nuns, to consecrate churches, to make the holy Chrism, to confer confirmation and publicly to reconcile penitents — which belongs only to true bishops.[1]

He also regulated the psalmody and had the psalms of David sung in the West according to the correction of the Septuagint that St. Jerome had made by his order. He also introduced the custom of saying *Alleluia* in church outside Eastertide, whereas before it was said at Rome only in that season of extraordinary rejoicing. He built two churches in the city: one of St. Lawrence, near the theatre of Pompey, the other on the Via Ardeatina. He adorned the place where the blessed apostles St. Peter and St. Paul had long rested, which was called the *Platonia*. He found several holy bodies and had them put in honourable tombs, around which he had verses engraved recalling their triumphs. He also had a magnificent baptistery built, of which the poet Prudentius gives a rich description in the eighth of his hymns.

In five ordinations which he held according to custom in the month of December, he made thirty-one priests, two deacons and sixty-two bishops. At last, after governing the Church holily amid so many tribulations for eighteen years, two months and ten days, he was called to heaven to receive the reward of his labours, on 11 December 384. God made him illustrious by several miracles; for at his invocation the sick were healed and the possessed delivered from the devils that held them. During his life he had also restored sight to a blind man who had lost it thirteen years before.

The Fathers of the Church have given him great praise. St. Ambrose says that he was elected by a stroke from heaven. St. Jerome testifies that he had remained a virgin — which shows still more the malice of the schismatics, who did not fear to accuse him of adultery. Theodoret assures us that he had deserved the name of an admirable man. Finally the same St. Jerome, who had served him as secretary, places him among the ecclesiastical writers.

His body was first laid near the tomb of his mother and sister, in the basilica he had built on the Via Ardeatina. Later, about the time of Adrian I (772–795), his relics were translated to that of San Lorenzo in Damaso, inside the city. They still rest there today under the high altar, except for the head of the blessed Pope, which is kept at St. Peter’s in Rome.

St. Damasus is represented: 1° holding a writing on which are read the words *Gloria Patri et Filio*, etc., because he established in the Church the custom of ending every psalm with this doxology; 2° having near him the doorway of a church, which he points to as though taking possession of it, or to show that he is its founder.

POPE ST. DAMASUS AND THE CATACOMBS.

Until our own times, of St. Damasus's solicitude and devotion for the relics of the martyrs nothing was known except the *Carmina* or *Inscriptiones* attributed to this Pope and collected, to the number of thirty-seven, probably by pilgrims of the 5th or 6th century, who transcribed them from the monuments of the catacombs to satisfy their personal piety. We must add, moreover, that criticism was rather hard to satisfy as to their authenticity. But in our day the study of the catacombs has singularly changed the question. "The works of St. Damasus in our Christian hypogea," says M. de Rossi, "were not merely partial and were not confined to one particular spot; they extended to the whole of subterranean Rome. His name is found again in each of the catacombs, on the tomb of all the illustrious martyrs. The constructions for ornament or for strength, the marble staircases contrived in each notable crypt, all bear the imprint of his pious hand." It is to his high intelligence that we owe the preservation of the Christian hypogea, for it was he who had abandoned the faulty system adopted for building the Constantinian basilicas. This system consisted in razing the superimposed storeys of a catacomb until one reached the level of the lowest crypt, where the burial of the most illustrious martyrs was usually found. A principal tomb was thus cleared, over which a sumptuous building rose; but an immense number of other *loculi* had had to be sacrificed to arrive at this result. Damasus understood that, if the relics of the martyrs have a right to our veneration, the tomb of simple believers must also be the object of inviolable respect. From then on he extended his pontifical solicitude to the whole body of Christian monuments of the heroic age. The treasures which the piety of the Roman matrons put at his disposal, and with which the pagan jealousy of Ammianus Marcellinus reproached him, he devoted not to the satisfaction of personal luxury but to the adornment of the places sanctified by the presence of the martyrs. St. Damasus's luxury is known to us today. It shines before our eyes in the magnificence of the palaeographic characters that bear his name. "Damasus," M. de Rossi says again, "did not confine himself to composing the eulogies and funeral inscriptions of the catacombs. He wished the beauty of the calligraphy to answer to the splendour of the language." Archaeologists had long since remarked that this Pope's poems are cut in the marble in admirable characters, known today by the special name of *Damasine*. M. de Rossi has rediscovered the name of the lapidary calligrapher who executed these masterpieces under the orders of the holy Pope. The humble and skilful carver has revealed to us his now glorious identity by a signature in small letters arranged, or rather concealed, in the margin of a monumental inscription. It runs thus:

SCRIBSIT FVRIVS DIONYSIVS FILOCALVS DAMASI SVI PAPAE CVLTOR ATQVE AMATOR.

(Furius Dionysius Filocalus, devotee and lover of his Damasus, wrote this.)

The name of Furius Dionysius Philocalus, thus restored to history, will henceforth be inseparable from that of Damasus, whom the pious artist calls his Pope and for whom he proclaims so high a veneration. On another count, too, the 4th-century calligrapher interests us. M. de Rossi has in fact obtained proof that Philocalus drew up the catalogue of the sovereign Pontiffs known until now as the *Liberian*, because it stops at the mention of Pope Liberius. This important discovery confirms on the one hand the authenticity of the notices of the *Liber Pontificalis*; on the other, it corroborates the tradition that ascribed to St. Damasus a life, now lost, of the Popes his predecessors. "It is therefore with good reason," adds M. de Rossi, "that the name of Damasus dominates the whole monumental history of the Roman Church during the first age of peace. His pontificate really closes the era of the catacombs." It is known that, from a feeling of admirable humility, this great Pontiff would not choose his burial place among the tombs of the martyrs whose monuments he had so religiously had decorated. "I confess it," he says, "I would ardently have wished for this happiness; but I feared to profane the august place where the Saints rest." After such a scruple, so modestly expressed by a great Pope, a wonder-worker and a Saint, one understands that burials in the catacombs became very rare. They were no longer authorized except in exceptional circumstances.

We have revised and completed Father Giry's account with the Histoire de l'Église *of the abbé Darras.*

ST. DANIEL OF MARATHA, STYLITE AT CONSTANTINOPLE (489)

Pope: St. Felix III. — Emperor of the East: Zeno.

Si nosmetipsos propria severitate distringimus, sententiam futuri judicii praevenimus. If we chastise ourselves by voluntary austerities, we forestall the sentence of the judgement to come. — St. Caesarius of Arles, Homilies.

Not far from Constantinople and from the court where, towards the end of the 5th century, Greeks and Barbarians betrayed and slaughtered one another to mount the throne or to stay on it, there rose upon a column a new Simeon, a new prodigy of Christian self-denial and penance, as though to condemn from higher up and closer at hand the disorders of the court and the city. This was St. Daniel the Stylite. He was a native of the village of Maratha, near Samosata. At the age of twelve he withdrew into a neighbouring monastery. Long afterwards his abbot, going to Antioch on Church business, told him to accompany him. They passed through the village of Telanissus and went to see St. Simeon on his column. The Saint allowed Daniel to come up beside him, gave him his blessing and foretold that he would suffer much for Jesus Christ. When the abbot died the monks wished to put Daniel in his place; but he fled and went back to Simeon. When he had stayed fourteen days in the monastery near the column, he undertook the pilgrimage to the Holy Land. But Simeon appeared to him on the way and ordered him to go to Constantinople. He obeyed, and spent seven days in the church of St. Michael outside the walls of the city. From there he went to settle in an old temple of idols infested by devils; he drove them out with the sign of the cross and prayer, and remained there nine years. Some clerics of the church of Constantinople tried to trouble him; but he was protected by the bishop Anatolius; and when the bishop fell dangerously ill, Daniel healed him and asked as his only reward the pardon of those who had calumniated him.

St. Simeon Stylites had sent his disciple Sergius to carry his festal garment to the emperor. Unable to gain access to the prince, Sergius went to find Daniel, of whom he had heard great things, and gave him the present he was carrying to the emperor. This circumstance, together with a revelation Sergius had about it, made Daniel resolve to mount a column himself.

At his request Sergius chose for the place of his retreat a solitary mountain not far off, towards the mouth of the Euxine: it was four miles from the sea and seven from Constantinople, on the north side. One of Daniel’s friends had two columns built there, joined together by iron bars so that they formed but one. On top was set another, smaller column, at the summit of which was a kind of tub surrounded by a railing. It was there that he lived. The situation of the country, subject to great winds and very harsh cold, made his penance even more astonishing than St. Simeon’s. There was one winter when the winds almost carried him away; they stripped him of all his clothes, and he remained motionless and frozen with cold. His disciples climbed the column and applied warm water to him with sponges to thaw him. He did not leave his column for all that, and went on living there until the age of eighty.

Without coming down from it he was ordained priest, at the emperor’s request, by Gennadius, bishop of Constantinople, who, having said the prayers below, climbed the column to complete the ceremony and gave him communion. From that time on he celebrated the holy mysteries on his column itself. By his prayers he obtained a son for the emperor Leo, who often visited him and bore him great respect. The Saint profited by this to give him salutary instruction, above all to exhort him to forgive readily and to fight the harshness that was natural to him. This prince had a small monastery built near Daniel’s column for his disciples, and a hospice for those who came to see him, with an oratory to house the relics of St. Simeon, which Daniel had had brought from Antioch.

In the year 465 there was a terrible fire at Constantinople, which consumed eight of its quarters. Daniel had foretold it and had advised the patriarch and the emperor to forestall it by holding public prayers twice a week; but he had not been believed. The event brought it back to mind, and the people ran in great haste to

his column. One complained of having lost his house, another his goods, his friends, his wife, his children. The Saint, touched by their afflictions, melted into tears and advised them to apply themselves to prayer and fasting. He stretched out his hands to heaven and prayed for them; then he sent them away, saying that the fire would end after seven days — which happened. Then the emperor came with the empress to beg him to ask God to forgive them the past and keep them safe for the future.

Gobazes, king of the Lazi in Colchis, having come to renew his alliance with the Romans, the emperor took him to see Daniel as the marvel of his empire. The barbarian king prostrated himself with tears before the column, and the Saint was the arbiter of the treaty between the two princes. When Gobazes had returned home he used to tell of this wonder there, and he never sent to Constantinople without writing to Daniel to commend himself to his prayers. He even had a third, higher column built for him beside the other two, to shelter him a little in stormy weather. Daniel at last yielded to the entreaties of the emperor Leo to let the top of his column be covered with a roof.

This prince had in his service a barbarian lord named Edrane, brought up always in war and carnage, who commanded some troops of his own nation. Seeing him very brave, Leo had given him the office of constable with the title of count. As the emperor sent all persons of consequence to see Daniel and receive his blessing, he sent Edrane too. This barbarian was so touched by the instructions the Saint gave him and by the example of his life that he resolved there and then to leave everything and embrace the monastic state. He had all his men assembled, set before them the vanity of all earthly things and how unworthy it was to see men shed the blood of men; that for his part he was resolved henceforth to serve only Jesus Christ and work only for the salvation of his soul; that he exhorted them all to follow him, but that those who did not wish to could go wherever they pleased. This speech touched two barbarians who had never heard of Jesus Christ. The others were content with the money he gave them and went away. Edrane, thus free of everything, received the monastic habit from Daniel's hands, with the two barbarians who had followed him, and changed his former name to Titus. The emperor was vexed at his resolution and had him reproached for it; but nothing could shake him. Soon the emperor even came to esteem what he had at first condemned, and when he visited Daniel he would also go to see Titus and receive his instructions with joy. Daniel on his column was thus a continual sermon both to the Greeks and to the Barbarians.

St. Daniel the Stylite died on his column on 11 December, about the year 489, after working many miracles and foretelling several political revolutions which were fulfilled in his time.

As for St. Simeon and St. Walfroy, the column is the characteristic attribute of St. Daniel the Stylite.

Rohrbacher, Vie des Saints; *Father Cahier,* Caractéristiques des Saints.

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[1] Barsabas (or Barsabias) was an abbot in Persia, and he had under his direction ten monks whom he led carefully in the ways of perfection. Arrested at the beginning of the great persecution of Sapor II (310– 380), he was cited before the governor of the province and accused of wishing to abolish the religion of the Magi in Persia. His ten monks were arrested at the same time: they were loaded with chains and taken to the town of Astrahaia, near the ruins of Persepolis, where the governor resided. The judge had their knees crushed, their legs broken, their arms, sides and ears cut off; they were then struck hard on the eyes and face. At last the governor, furious at seeing himself vanquished by their courage, condemned them to be beheaded. — Godescard, on 20 October.

[2] At Grenoble in the 15th and 16th centuries it was believed that the body of St. Avre had been carried to the collegiate church of Saint-André in that city. That diocese kept the Saint's office until 1783. At that time it was suppressed in the new Breviary of Vienne, solely because the drafting commission had adopted the principle that each diocese could impose no more than four proper offices on the common breviary. The Revolution did not allow anyone to attend to the supplement in which it might have been placed. Nevertheless the parishes of La Terrasse and Saint-Aupre (Isère, arrondissement of Grenoble, canton of Voiron), of which our Saint is the patron, continue to celebrate his feast every year. In Maurienne the office of St. Avre is nowhere found before the year 1760, when it appears printed with the approval of Pierre-François Arthaud, vicar general, and fixed on 4 December. A decree of the Sacred Congregation of Rites has very recently restored this feast to the diocese of Maurienne; it will henceforth be celebrated on 25 October. Some years ago the inhabitants of Saint-Avre rebuilt their church and placed in it a painting representing St. Avre catechizing the poor. Of the Saint's cell, hospice and chapel no trace remains. — M. l'abbé Truchet, *Histoire hagiologique du diocèse de Maurienne*.

[3] *Fuscianus, Fussianus, Fucianus, Fulcianus*; Fussien, Fussen, Fusien, Fuxian, Fuscian. — *Fuscianus* is no doubt a derivative of *Fuscus*, brown, dark.

[4] *Victoricus, Victorius*; Victorix, Victorice, Victorisse, Victoris, Victorique, Victory.

[5] *Extremique hominum Morini.* Aeneid, book VIII, line 727.

[6] The temple consecrated to him stood to the west of the town. — Dom Grenier, *Introduction à l'histoire de Picardie*, p. 196.

[7] Tradition relates that St. Fuscian had made his dwelling a short distance from the cemetery, at the spot where a farm has since been built. — Parenty, *Légendaire de la Morinie*.

[8] The sacred field can still be recognized at Helfaut, says M. l'abbé Parenty. It is an enclosed plot of ground bounded by several roads. In the middle of this untilled soil stands an age-old lime tree, commonly called *l'arbre Maran*. An image of the Blessed Virgin used to be seen there, which disappeared some years ago. — *Légendaire de la Morinie*.

[9] The site of this house is still shown at Sains; it is the first on the right on the old road to Paris. The so-called house of Saint-Gentien, destroyed at the end of the 18th century, served as a lodging for the monks of Saint-Fuscien who came to say Mass on feast days. Pilgrims went there to kiss, in the cellar, the rings to which, according to tradition, the martyrs had been tied.

[10] The ancients believed that amber was composed of wax and honey, modified and reduced to that state by the combined action of the sun's rays and sea salt.

[11] In the library of the Sorbonne in Paris there was a fine manuscript entitled *Collectio Canonum*, copied in 1009 by order of Haimo, bishop of Verdun. In it is found the catalogue of the books of holy Scripture published by Pope Damasus. Here is what one reads there: *CONCILIUM URBIS ROMAE SUB DAMASO. Nunc vero de Scripturis divinis agendum est, quid universalis Ecclesia catholica recipiat vel quid vitare debeat.* (Now we must treat of the divine Scriptures: what the universal Catholic Church receives and what she must shun.) *Genesis l. I*, etc. — *Salomonis l. III: Proverbiorum l. I, Ecclesiastes l. I, Cantica Canticorum l. I. Item Sapientiae l. I, Ecclesiasticus l. I. Prophetarum*, etc. — *Historiarum: Job l. I, Tobiae l. I, Esdrae l. II, Esther l. I, Judith l. I, Machabaeorum l. II.* — *Item ordo Scripturarum Novi Testamenti quas sancta catholica suscipit et veneratur Ecclesia* (Likewise the order of the Scriptures of the New Testament which the holy Catholic Church receives and venerates): *S. Pauli epistolae XIV … Jacobi apostoli ep. I … Alterius Joannis presbyteri ep. II, Judae Zelotis epistola I*, etc. — One sees by this decree of Damasus that the deuterocanonical books were received by the Roman Church and by the universal Church, although particular churches still had doubts about some of these books. In the same manuscript are 1° the canon of Innocent III [*as printed; Innocent I is meant*], which gives the same catalogue of the canonical books and which was copied by the Council of Trent; 2° the canon of the Council of Carthage, which places among the books of holy Scripture Daniel, Tobit, Esther, two books of Esdras, two epistles of St. Peter, three epistles of St. John.

12 December

Martyrologies

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY.

At Rome, St. Synesius, martyr, who, having been ordained lector in the time of Pope St. Sixtus, was accused before the emperor Aurelian because he had converted a great number of unbelievers, and perished by the sword. 270. — At Alexandria, the holy martyrs Epimachus and Alexander, who, after being long in chains under the emperor Decius, were tried by other torments without their firmness and constancy in the faith being shaken, and were at last given to the flames. 250. — In the same place, St. Ammonaria, virgin, and the holy women Mercuria, Dionysia and another Ammonaria: the first went through unheard-of torments, which she overcame by her courage, after which she ended her life happily by the sword; as for the other three, the judge, ashamed to see himself vanquished by women and fearing that, if he used the same tortures against them as against the first, they would again triumph over him by their constancy, had them beheaded on the spot. 250. — The same day, the holy martyrs Hermogenes, Donatus and twenty-two others. — At Trier, the holy martyrs Maxentius, Constantius, Crescentius, Justin and their companions, who suffered during the persecution of Diocletian under the governor Rictiovarus. 4th c.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED.

In the diocese of Amiens, St. Damasus, pope and confessor, whose life we gave on the preceding day. 384. — In the same diocese, St. Valery (*Walaricus*), monk of Luxeuil and first abbot of Leuconaus, whose life we gave on 1 April.[1] 619. — In the diocese of Arras, Sts. Fuscian, Victoricus and Gentian, martyrs, whose life we gave on the preceding day. 303. — In the dioceses of Cahors and Saint-Flour, St. Gausbert, bishop of the

former see and confessor, whose death is noted in the martyrology of France of the 10th of this month. About 950. — In the dioceses of Carcassonne and Nice, St. Melchiades or Miltiades, pope and martyr, whose life we gave on 10 December. 314. — In the diocese of

Limoges, feast of the translation of the house of the Blessed Virgin Mary from Nazareth to Dalmatia and from Dalmatia to Loreto. We gave the history of this translation on 10 December. 1294. — In the dioceses of Nantes, Quimper, Rennes and Saint-Brieuc, St. Corentin, first bishop of Quimper, and confessor. 460. — In the diocese of Perpignan, St. Paul-Sergius, first bishop of Narbonne, whose life we gave on 22 March. 1st c. — In the diocese of Poitiers, St. Abra, virgin, daughter of the great St. Hilary, bishop of that see. About 400. — In the diocese of Strasbourg, St. Adelaide, widow, empress of Germany. 999. — In the diocese of Tarbes, St. Valeria, virgin and martyr at Limoges, whose life we gave on the 9th of this month. 46. — In Franche-Comté, Blessed Callistus II, pope. 1124.

MARTYROLOGIES OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS.

Martyrology of the Congregation of Vallombrosa. — St. Damasus, pope and confessor, who is mentioned on 11 December.[2] 384.

Martyrology of the three Orders of St. Francis. — At Assisi, in Umbria, the Finding of our seraphic Father St. Francis, in the time of Pope Pius VII.[3] 1818.

Martyrology of the Order of Friars Minor. — The same as above.

Martyrology of the Order of the Servites of the Blessed Virgin Mary. — At Sant'Angelo in Vado (*Tifernum Metaurense*), in Italy, Blessed Jerome Ranucci, confessor, of the Order of the Servites of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Having been formed in the science of the Saints in solitude and silence, he flew away to the Lord, dear to men and to God.[4] 1455.

Martyrology of the Capuchin Friars Minor of St. Francis. — The same as among the Friars Minor.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS.

Among the Friars Preachers, Blessed Samuel of Ethiopia, confessor, of the Order of St. Dominic. After living forty years in the desert like the ancient solitaries, he devoted himself to the ministry of souls at the warning of his guardian angel, and founded a convent of the Order. The holy angels attended his death and led his soul to heaven. 14th c. — In Ireland, St. Finnian of Leinster, bishop of Cluain-Iraird or Clonard (county of Westmeath). He owed his knowledge of the Christian religion to the disciples of St. Patrick. Fired with an ardent desire to make greater progress in virtue, he went over to Wales, where he had the happiness of living with St. David, St. Gildas and St. Cuthmael [*as printed*]. He returned to his homeland thirty years later (about 520). His virtues and learning enabled him to revive among his countrymen the spirit of piety, which was growing weaker day by day. Taking the most effective means to assure the success of his apostolic labours, he established monasteries and schools in various places, from which came a great number of Saints commendable for their learning. Finnian was afterwards consecrated bishop of Clonard; taking the Basils and Chrysostoms for his models, he loved his flock tenderly and worked with untiring zeal for the salvation of the souls entrusted to him. He lived only on bread and herbs and drank only water; he slept on the bare ground and had only a stone for a pillow. Full of days and merits, he fell asleep in the Lord, mourned by all his people. 552. — At Mexico City, capital of Mexico (America), feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

ST. ABRA, VIRGIN AT POITIERS

About 400. — Pope: St. Anastasius. — Emperor of the West: Honorius.

Ideo plus amat virgines Christus, quia sponte tribuunt quod sibi non fuerat imperatum. Jesus Christ loves virgins all the more because they freely grant Him what He had not commanded of them. — St. Jerome.

The only daughter of St. Hilary, St. Abra — still very young — had been born about ten years before that great man was called to the episcopate, that is, about the year 343. Her education corresponded to the sentiments of a pious mother, whom her husband had perhaps brought back with himself from the false beliefs of paganism to the light of the Christian faith. Nor can it be doubted, from the proofs of tender solicitude he gave for the salvation of this beloved daughter, that the excellent father concerned himself with that education, so precious to Christian parents. When the factions, triumphant for a moment, had opened to the great adversary of Arianism the gates of his glorious exile, the young girl remained at Poitiers under the protection of her worthy mother, who continued to develop her happy dispositions, forming her more and more for the service of God.

There are in the designs of Providence over certain souls, and sometimes over whole families, ineffable complacencies which reveal themselves by wonderful prodigies. St. Hilary and his household are an example of those adorable predilections which drive the Saints out of the common ways, by which it would be impossible to explain their most astonishing actions. The governor of Poitiers had a son whom the young girl had pleased, and whose high rank and great riches seemed to promise that he could please her equally. Besides, her outward advantages, the modest graces of her age, and all the young man knew of her explained this preference well enough. He opened his mind to the mother, who apparently did not regard such a project as one that could yet be treated, whether considering her daughter's great youth or counting on the still uncertain time of her husband's return. However that may be, mother and daughter, having been able to write to the illustrious exile soon afterwards, said nothing to him of this matter; but there the designs of God began to unveil themselves. A revelation of that good Master taught Hilary what was in question for this child, whose remembrance came back to him in all his prayers. His thought, which had always been to give his daughter to the Lord by the consecration of holy virginity, was stirred by a prospect so contrary to his hopes, and he answered this kindly communication of the divine Spirit by prostrating himself face to the ground, begging Him with tears to take his dear daughter Himself for His Spouse, giving her the precious pearl and the robe of purity promised by the Saviour to the virgins of the Gospel: this alliance was, in the great Confessor's eyes, the only earthly reward he asked for the pains and labours of his exile.

Soon, having found an occasion of sending news to Poitiers, he wished, in answering Abra, to second with all his means of persuasion the action of the Providence he had invoked; and in that letter, which St. Fortunatus had read and whose charm and ingenious turn he praises, he urged her to choose no other Spouse than Jesus Christ. It is indeed a charming allegory, which a father like St. Hilary could not address to so young a daughter without being sure he would be understood, and which for that very reason shows the precocious intelligence and enlightened faith of the holy child. After telling her of that revelation in which he had asked for her, of an all-powerful Spouse, the most beautiful of pearls and the wedding garment of eternal innocence, he tells her that his prayer has been granted and, being now in possession of this double treasure which he can offer her, he implores her not to refuse it, but to accept it, appreciating its true worth; and that, once rich with these fair pledges of the only love he wishes to propose to her, she should think no more of wearing any livery of worldly vanities.

"For the rest," he continues, "I call to witness the God of heaven and earth that nothing is more precious than this beautiful garment and this magnificent jewel: it depends on you, my daughter, whether they become yours. If, then, someone henceforth brings you a robe of silk, of purple or of gold, answer the one who offers it: I am waiting for another, for which my father has gone so far, and which I could not have if I accepted yours. I am content with the wool of my little sheep, with a stuff without luxury and of its plain colour; in short, the robe I prefer is the one of which I am told that it could never be taken from me, and that I shall never see torn or worn out. If someone else wished to give you a pearl to adorn your neck or your hand, you will say: No, I will not burden myself with these useless and coarse stones; I am waiting for another, the most precious, the most beautiful and the most useful of all. I rely on my father, who has relied in turn on Him

who promised it to him; I await and desire only the one which is to be the pledge of my salvation and of my eternity."

The great genius who thus played with his wit in an image as apt as it is poetic wished to see whether his dear child had understood it well. He exhorted her to answer him, to tell him whether she accepted the Spouse proposed, and His beautiful ornaments, and His mysterious pearl; he promised to reveal to her afterwards the name of this glorious Suitor, a name he hoped to go and tell her on his return; and, by a last touch which seems to indicate further that he is not the only father she must love, he addresses to her in closing this wish full of touching tenderness: "May the God who gave you life keep you for eternity, dear daughter whom I so long to see again!"

To this letter, which he advised her to have explained by her mother if she found any obscurity in it, Hilary added two hymns, one for the morning, the other for the evening: touching and beautiful prayers which Abra was to say every day "so as to remember him always," and of which only the first has come down to us: the Church of Poitiers sings it at Lauds on the feast of the holy Doctor.

The docile virgin understood the meaning of so many holy things, of which she doubtless talked with her mother. These pious conversations must have softened for her the length of an exile which lasted three or four years more: at any rate, when the hero of Catholicism came back to her in 360, he found his daughter full of the dispositions most worthy of him; she had renounced every earthly union, and there again the Doctor's word had conquered. One more triumph remained for him to win, however, the consequence of so many others which faith had secured in him over nature; and God, who had guided everything until then, was to complete this miraculous work: the fruit was ripe; the divine hand was about to pluck it.

St. Hilary, then, conversing one day with the lovable child, saw her wholly transported with love for the heavenly glory, and asked her, himself inspired, whether she ardently desired at last to possess that Spouse whom her father's solicitude had sought for her. The answer was not long in coming. It was the expression of a soul wholly full of God, and an eager protestation of perpetual virginity. She begged him to make haste, to unite her for ever to the chaste Spouse of virgins… The generous father, assured of this consent, then sets himself to prayer. He offers his only daughter to Him who had claimed her and, a new Abraham, does not rise until he has seen her, in his presence, without any agony, without the least sign of any illness, breathe forth her pure soul towards Jesus Christ, miraculously withdrawn from the seductions of mortal life. "Is not such a death," says St. Fortunatus, whom we follow here, "more wonderful than a resurrection?"

Yes, doubtless; and yet another death was to follow, no less heroic, no less worthy of these accomplished hearts. The young Saint's mother had just witnessed her departure for heaven. Maternal love and faith unite in her to beg the same favour. She implores her husband to open to her the same road to the happiness of eternity, if God does not judge her unworthy of it. And the Pontiff prays… and, like her daughter whom she follows there, the mother goes to wait in heaven for him whom heaven thus deigned to obey. The courageous athlete, who knew how to prefer God to himself even to the sacrifice of such pure and dear affections, wished to bury with his own hands the two Saints, who at once became the object of public veneration. He laid them in a crypt built for the purpose, over which he soon had a small church raised which was the origin of the basilica of Saint-Hilaire at Poitiers.

Lives of the Saints of the Church of Poitiers, by the Abbé Auber, canon.

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

Table of Contents

ST. CORENTIN, FIRST BISHOP OF QUIMPER

460. — Pope: St. Leo I, the Great. — King of France: Childeric I.

Ita praeemineas merito, sicut et gradu. Surpass others in merit as you surpass them in rank. — St. Isidore of Spain.

This blessed prelate did not come from Britain into Brittany, like most of the first Saints of that province; he was of Brittany itself, of the province of Cornouaille.[1] His birth is placed in 375, when the faith of Jesus Christ, having become mistress of the Roman empire, had already penetrated into the most barbarous countries of the West and the North. Brought up in piety, he embraced the ecclesiastical state and was promoted to sacred Orders; then he withdrew to a hermitage in the parish of Plomodiern, where God worked great miracles for his nourishment. He formed a close friendship with St. Primaël, who was also a solitary of very great piety, and he made a spring gush forth at his hermitage, to spare himself going to fetch water from a very distant place. Often he fed guests who had come to see him by supernatural multiplications, even finding fish where there had been none before. Among others, he gave a feast to a prince named Grallon and to the huntsmen of his company with a piece of fish that would not have sufficed to satisfy one of those hungry men. The prince, in gratitude, gave him a large tract of land, where he built a monastery that was soon filled with very holy religious. Children of rank were also received there to be formed in human learning and in piety, so that it served greatly for the good education of the young nobility of Cornouaille and of Brittany.

The lords of the country, charmed by Corentin's prudence and holiness, begged Prince Grallon to establish a bishopric in his county and to have Corentin named its first bishop. Grallon consented; and having summoned the holy abbot, he sent him to St. Martin, archbishop of Tours, whose jurisdiction extended over all Brittany, to receive episcopal consecration from him. Corentin took with him to Tours two excellent religious, Vennolé and Tugdin, to be blessed as abbots of two new monasteries the prince wished to found; but St. Martin, having consecrated him, told him that the blessing of the abbots of his diocese was his own task, and so sent him to govern the people whom divine Providence had committed to him. A very magnificent entry was made for him into Quimper, and he was given the means to found a Chapter of canons for his new cathedral.[2]

As he did not forget in the episcopate that he was a religious, so the exercises of the solitary life, which he always continued to practise, did not make him forget that he was a bishop. He visited his whole diocese and ordained good clerics to distribute them among the parishes; he corrected the abuses that had crept in among the faithful, fought the remains of paganism, and acquitted himself of all the other obligations of a good pastor.[3] At last God withdrew him from this world to give him the crown of immortality.

His body was buried with great honour in his cathedral church, before the high altar, and his funeral was made illustrious by several signal miracles. A great many have been worked since at his tomb. A woman had promised to present wax to his church in thanksgiving for a signal favour she had received through his intercession: she did bring some, but as she was about to offer it she drew back her hand out of avarice and did not offer it. Then that same hand closed so tightly that it was impossible for her to open it, until the Saint, having regard to her tears, appeared to her twice and healed her of the ill she had brought on herself by her cupidity. He also appeared to a poor man whom malefactors had shut up in a chest to starve him to death, and delivered him from that horrible prison by lifting the lock that held it shut.

His episcopal city has taken his name and is called Quimper-Corentin.

He is represented: 1° making a spring gush forth; 2° lying in a solitary place and discovered by a prince out hunting.

VENERATION AND RELICS.

The relics of St. Corentin were kept with respect in his cathedral until the time of the Northmen. The fear that they might be profaned by those barbarians led the clergy of Quimper, in 878, to remove them from the place

where they were enclosed. Later they were entrusted to Salvator, bishop of Aleth, who, because of the war with which the province was threatened, was taking refuge in France, carrying with him the bodies of the principal Saints of Brittany. The prelate arrived in Paris in 963 and placed his deposit in the hands of Hugh Capet, then count of Paris, who received it with respect and had it laid in the church of Saint-Barthélemi in the Cité. These holy relics having afterwards been divided among various churches, those of St. Corentin were given to the celebrated abbey of Marmoutier; but some portion remained in Paris, for the abbey of Saint-Victor possessed one until the Revolution. It was from Marmoutier that the Church of Quimper obtained, in 1643, an arm of its holy patron, which was honourably placed in the cathedral and became the object of the particular veneration of the faithful of the country. The Revolution caused the loss of this precious deposit, as well as of the rest of St. Corentin's body. In 1809 there remained at Tours only a small bone, which was given at that time to M. de Dombidau de Crouseilhes, then bishop of Quimper; and that prelate had it placed in his cathedral church, where this relic is now kept.

The name of St. Corentin is found in the English litanies of the 7th century which Father Mabillon published. Besides the cathedral church of Quimper, which has him for patron and where his memory is held in very great veneration, the Churches of Léon and of Saint-Brieuc have always paid this holy bishop religious honour with an office of nine lessons on 12 December. The Church of Nantes, in its old breviary, had the feast of St. Corentin on the 11th, also with an office of nine lessons. An old manuscript breviary of the Church of Le Mans marks it on 12 December, with nine proper lessons. He now has only a simple commemoration in the present breviary of that Church; but he is honoured with an office in the dioceses of Rennes and Nantes. In the former diocese of Chartres, near Mantes, there was an abbey of Benedictine nuns, founded about the year 1201 by Philip Augustus, which bore the name of Saint-Corentin. Queen Blanche, mother of St. Louis, was fond of this house, and her heart was kept there.

We have completed and corrected this biography with the *Lives of the Saints of Brittany* by Dom Lobineau.

ST. ADELAIDE, EMPRESS OF GERMANY, WIDOW

999. — Pope: Silvester II. — Emperor of Germany: Otto III.

Ille ad caelos opulentissimus pergit qui a se pompam temporalis vanitatis exclusit. The soul that has forbidden itself the pomp of the world's vanity flies to heaven full of riches. — St. Valerian, *Homilies*.

Adelaide, daughter of Rudolf II, king of Burgundy, and of Bertha, daughter of Conrad, duke of Swabia, was born in 931. Her mother, a woman of uncommon virtue, inspired in her from the tenderest age the love of the Lord, and made her suck in, so to speak with her milk, the taste for piety, the source of so many graces. Brought up in a sumptuous palace, her education in no way felt that softness which so often enervates the faculties and gives them no time to develop. A wise and firm direction taught her early to bend to the will of others, to form her character to obedience, and to practise the humility without which there is no virtue.

These precious seeds of salvation, laid in a heart that the breath of sin had not yet tarnished, soon produced happy fruits. Adelaide did not yet know the world, and already she was initiated into the secrets of heaven. Grace and nature poured out all their treasures on her as if in rivalry. A blooming youth, an illustrious birth, a beauty whose brilliance the Lord seemed to heighten, drew all eyes to this child of benediction, who, like the lily of the valley, displayed without knowing it the modest charms of her rare qualities. Faithful to grace, she knew how to stifle the cry of nature in her soul and to impose silence on the murmur of the passions. She understood that the fairest endowment of youth is innocence; that beauty is but a fleeting flash; riches, a lure to draw to evil; the passions, a devouring fire; pleasures, an abyss that swallows up everything. From then on her choice was no longer doubtful. Retirement, flight from the world, prayer, frequenting the sacraments, reading the holy Scriptures, distributing alms, visiting the church, work — such were the occupations of the young princess. Instructed in the emptiness of earthly enjoyments, she knew how to withdraw from the eager

attentions of a court of which she was the ornament, like a soul undeceived about its illusions that seeks solitude as the refuge of its innocence.

The brilliance of her youth and beauty, joined to that of her virtue and piety, had made her name famous. The king of Italy, Hugh, sent an embassy to Rudolf and solemnly asked Adelaide's hand for his son Lothair. Rudolf granted his wishes. Adelaide, having given her consent to this union, prepared herself for the sacrament of marriage by prayer, almsgiving and the practice of good works. Far from priding herself on this flattering distinction which raised her so high, she only sighed at the thought of the obligations she was about to contract. The preparations for the festivities, the luxury of the finery destined for her, the eagerness of the Italians to serve her could not distract her from her grave meditations on her duties as a wife. Grace dwelt in her and taught her to despise the vanities of earth and to sigh after nobler goods. Piety and virtue were to be her true adornment. Thus adorned with the charms of modesty and enriched with spiritual gifts, she presented herself before the altar of the Lord to receive the nuptial blessing. The ceremony took place with pomp at Pavia in the year 947, amid the rejoicing of the peoples, struck with admiration at the sight of the young queen's candour.

Clothed in the armour of faith, the young queen regards the splendour surrounding her as vain smoke and does not attach her heart to it. Sobriety, modesty, humility, piety and a wise reserve direct all her steps and are the soul of her life. She finds her God everywhere, and her conduct, even in the smallest circumstances, portrays the handmaid of Jesus Christ. The regularity of her palace offered the image of a devout community. Licence and scandal did not dare to raise their heads there. Her husband, won over by her amiability and by the force of her example, strove to imitate her, and also found in pious practices a relaxation from his many occupations and a counterweight to the affairs of the world. Her servants, drawn by the fragrance of her virtues, blushed to be less pious than their mistress and walked like her in the way of perfection. The care she gave to the business of her salvation did not prevent her from attending to her other duties. She had set hours for going to pray in her oratory, to weep over the sins of the peoples which it was not possible for her to remedy, and then devoted herself zealously to the management of her household. Her piety was great and enlightened; it had its source in self-denial: it raised her mind, ennobled her heart and strengthened her courage. The true Christian is capable of every virtue as soon as he has learned to subject nature to faith.

She vied in zeal with her husband for the relief of every kind of misfortune, and she did not think it beneath her rank to stoop to render them the humblest services, remembering those beautiful words of Jesus Christ: "What you do to the least of Mine, you do to Me." She showed herself above all more eager to help those among the unfortunate whose poverty put them out of a position to repay her services, consoling them with gentle words as much as by her bounty, and making them feel that their misery was in her eyes a title that made them dearer still to her. She thought herself happy to have as intercessors with God the suffering members of the flock of Jesus Christ: this was, she said, the voice of the dove that moans before the Lord and that drew the most abundant blessings upon her. She suffered with them, sharing their pains; her treasures were almost always open to fly promptly to their help, and hardness never closed her heart to the cries and needs of her people. If her lofty piety earned her the name of saint, public opinion soon added that of mother of the poor.

Adelaide, so happy and so worthy to be so, suddenly saw her happiness troubled. She had just given birth to a princess whom she intended one day to bring up according to the same maxims to which she owed her own felicity, when, after a union of three years, her virtue was put to the cruellest test. Berengar II, marquis of Ivrea, swooped suddenly on Italy and seized Lombardy almost without striking a blow. Lothair tried to resist his enemy; but the Italians, seduced by Berengar's promises, did not support their king. Lothair, abandoned by his father, who had withdrawn to Constantinople with his treasures, appealed to the Eastern emperor, Constantine VIII, for help. That prince granted Lothair's request and threatened Berengar with war. It seems that this step proved fatal to Lothair, for he died suddenly on 22 November 950, at Turin, in the prime of life.

Berengar was suspected of having had him killed. In a single day Adelaide lost her husband and her States. A widow at nineteen, without protectors and without resources, she falls from the summit of glory into the deepest distress. Yet not a sigh escapes her lips; calm and resigned, she cries out with the patriarch Job: “The Lord gave me everything, He has taken everything away; blessed be His holy name!” Prayer is her only resource in the dangers that surround her. Far from rising against the judgments of God, she adores them in silence; she bows her brow in the dust before the supreme Arbiter of human destinies and kisses with respect the hand that strikes her. She does not cease to repeat with the same patriarch: “If we have received good things at the hand of the Lord, why should we not receive chastisements also?” Like the rock beaten by the waves of the storm, around which the angry billows roar in vain, so Adelaide, a prey to the most poignant sorrows, keeps her tranquillity and does not let herself be cast down by misfortune.

Full of confidence, she throws herself with her daughter Emma into the arms of her heavenly Father, abandoning herself without reserve to His tenderness. She renounces all her claims to the crown of Italy, desiring only one thing: to keep the city of Pavia, which her father had given her as dowry. But Berengar, who had foreseen this wish of the devout widow, made his solemn entry into Pavia and put a large garrison there. The loss of this city overturned Adelaide’s hopes from top to bottom: she saw herself thus abandoned, and in the cruellest position, having to fear for her safety, for her virtue, and even for her life; for she knew Berengar’s character and dreaded that ambitious, voluptuous and brutal man.

Berengar first sought to win Adelaide over by flattery, but did not succeed; then he resorted to threats and met the same resistance. He had all her jewels and all the ornaments of her dignity taken from her, and even deprived her of all communication with her daughter. Not content with this first essay in cruelty, he shut her up in a fortress near Lake Garda, leaving her only one woman to serve her, named Ingonde. Adelaide had to endure the most horrible treatment during this captivity, which lasted several months. Plunged into a gloomy dungeon, with hardly a wretched pallet on which to rest her delicate limbs, dressed like a beggar, and receiving, rather in mockery than in pity, a few scraps of insufficient food, she is condemned to drink from the chalice of tribulation, with heaven alone as witness of her sufferings. In vain do her tormentors exhaust all their rage against her; in vain do they add new humiliations every day to her ever-growing pains: they do not succeed in troubling that candid soul; they will tire of tormenting her sooner than she will tire of suffering. Adelaide knows that the Christian’s life must resemble that of Jesus Christ, “who suffered for us, leaving us His example and inviting us to walk in His footsteps.”

Offering her sufferings thus to Jesus Christ, the unhappy victim looks on her pains only with the eyes of faith, bears them with heroic constancy and in a spirit of penance to expiate her faults. Her confidence in God and her courage grow in the midst of persecution, and as men give her gall and bitterness to drink, like the eagle that renews its youth she takes her swift flight towards heaven and goes from virtue to virtue. Berengar, struck with amazement at the sight of such heroism, wears himself out in vain efforts to shake her resolve; he spares neither promises nor threats; his wife seconds him in his fury; but all their darts fall powerless at the feet of Adelaide, who sees in these persons, led astray by passion, only the instruments of Providence, and in the punishments she suffers only an occasion of securing her salvation. She prays for her persecutors and begs the Lord to pour out His benefits on them and to forgive them their blindness. And so the God of mercies did not abandon His handmaid. He filled her with His graces and raised her above herself.

Adelaide succeeded in escaping from her prison and took refuge in the fortress of Canossa, which was a fief of the domains of Bishop Adelard of Reggio. On arriving at this fortress, the devout widow went to the church, threw herself at the foot of the altar and offered God her lively gratitude for the deliverance He had just granted her. She drew the veil of oblivion over the ill-treatment she had suffered from Berengar and Willa, and sought only to appease the Lord’s anger by mortifications, alms and prayers. Fame had published everywhere the misfortunes and the virtues of Adelaide. The Italians, cheated of their hopes, bore Berengar’s yoke only with regret and secretly urged the princess to take back the reins of government. But she had

neither treasure nor army to use in reconquering her kingdom; she scarcely enjoyed a phantom of liberty in the castle of Canossa, from which she dared not go far for fear of falling into some trap. She therefore had recourse to the only means left to her, that of asking help from the emperor Otto I. He let her know that, yielding to her wishes, he was about to set out with a large army to deliver the Italians from Berengar's yoke, and that the wishes of Pope Agapetus likewise called him, to restore peace to that kingdom. Adelaide, greatly gladdened by this news, gave herself up to joy. But this happiness was short-lived. Berengar, who had learned of Otto's plan, suddenly came and laid siege to Canossa, hoping to take the fortress and Adelaide before the arrival of the German emperor, and to hold the princess as a hostage to obtain less harsh terms. Otto, informed in time of this enterprise, hastened the march of his troops, and while Berengar's soldiers were wearing themselves out in vain efforts to carry Canossa, Otto fell upon them and cut them to pieces.

Adelaide, freed from the pursuit of her cowardly oppressor, thanked her generous deliverer and at the same time showed her lively gratitude to the Lord. She then thought of means to make her people happy; but this wish was to be realized otherwise. Otto, who had taken the city of Pavia, where he had been recognized as king, had been a widower for six years. As Adelaide was then the lawful sovereign of the kingdom of Italy, and possessed every quality for governing a State well, Otto thought he would open a wider field to her zeal by placing her on the throne of Germany, and asked her hand in marriage. Adelaide was singularly troubled by this proposal. She turned with lively confidence to God to beg Him to enlighten her in this grave circumstance, not wishing to oppose His holy will. Pope Agapetus, who knew the devout widow's sentiments, wrote to her to decide her in this choice. After some days spent in fasting and prayer, she announced that she was ready to yield to the emperor's wishes. This news caused the liveliest joy. She was at once conducted to Pavia, where she was received with universal acclamation and with all the honours due to her rank. Otto then ordered the preparations for the ceremony of his marriage, which was celebrated at Milan about Christmas, with extraordinary pomp, in the year 951.

Adelaide, raised once more to the summit of greatness, remained like herself and displayed the highest virtues. Patient in adversity, she showed herself great and generous in prosperity, above all towards her enemies. Providence soon gave her an occasion of this too memorable not to be related here. Berengar had not yet been able to move Otto, and saw himself exposed to losing his kingdom and to undergoing the deepest humiliations. He therefore tried to gain the emperor's good graces, and proposed to use for this purpose the credit of that very Adelaide whom he had once treated so barbarously, but whose lofty sentiments he knew. His wife Willa and his two daughters had been taken prisoner by Otto; and Adelaide had given secret orders that their captivity should be made as mild as possible. One day Willa asked for an audience with the empress, having a petition for the emperor to hand her. Adelaide at once granted this favour to the captive. Willa appeared in the empress's apartments in the posture of a suppliant, covered with shame, her face bathed in tears. She did not dare to raise her eyes to her whom she had pursued with her furious hatred, and was about to throw herself at the princess's feet, hardly finding strength to utter a few words on behalf of her two daughters. Adelaide, touched with compassion, rose from her seat, ran to meet her, held out her hand to her and reassured her. The sight of so much misfortune drew tears from her; without addressing the least reproach to her former persecutor, she told her that the past had long been forgotten and forgiven, and promised to intercede for her with her husband to secure her happiness and that of her family.

Otto, surprised and disarmed by such charity, was not insensible to Adelaide's pressing entreaties; he at once summoned Berengar and told him that he restored to him the kingdom of Italy, on condition, however, that he administered those States only as a fief held of the crown of Germany. This conduct, so noble and so disinterested, completed the winning of all hearts to the devout empress. The peoples of Germany above all were delighted to possess a princess so distinguished by her virtues, and waited impatiently for the moment of seeing her among them. Otto and his wife at last left Italy in the spring of the year 952, carrying with them the regrets and esteem of all the Italians. Their journey was like a triumph; they were everywhere received

with an enthusiasm difficult to describe. Adelaide's gentleness, amiability and tenderness towards the poor became the subject of every conversation and were celebrated as the omen of a happy reign.

Adelaide found in her husband's very palace a model well able to strengthen her in good. St. Matilda, mother of the emperor Otto, was then giving the court the example of those virtues so difficult to practise, when one considers the obstacles the great meet in fulfilling their duties. Under Matilda's eyes Adelaide advanced still more rapidly in the way of evangelical perfection. She began by establishing perfect order in her palace and kept a close watch over all the persons attached to her service, showing herself accessible to everyone, gentle and affable to the rich as to the poor; yet she avoided useless conversation as far as possible, the better to preserve the interior spirit. As her fortune grew, she increased her alms, and regularly supplied a large sum every month for the unfortunate, the widows and the orphans. She was accustomed to say that it belonged above all to the rich to be merciful to the poor, so as to remember their common origin and their equality before God, since Jesus Christ died for emperors as for beggars.

The same reserve she showed in her words she showed in all her conduct. She banished from her court luxury in dress and that display which she could have covered with the pretext of propriety. She would never wear precious stones or gold chains, preferring to shine by her virtues rather than by the borrowed brilliance of finery. The money her husband destined for her toilette she applied to adorning churches, paying the debts of the unfortunate, having clothes distributed to the needy, procuring them more convenient lodgings and healthier and more abundant food. She wore costly garments only on the great solemnities of religion and when her husband required it of her.

At home she was always dressed very modestly and in the most seemly manner. She trembled at the thought of the least scandal she might have given. The crown of thorns with which the brow of Jesus Christ was adorned at the time of His passion constantly inspired grave thoughts in her and dispelled the glamour of vanity. She would have blushed to idolize her body, destined one day to be reduced to dust, and thereby to neglect the salvation of her immortal soul. To increase these happy dispositions in herself, she prayed often. Her first thought each day was for God. She regularly heard one or several Masses, as her occupations allowed, often approached the tribunal of penance, and received the Bread of angels at first every eight days, and later several times a week. On the eve of her communions she kept silence as strictly as possible, had dealings with the world only so far as pressing duties required, and avoided every subject of distraction. On the days when she had had the happiness of approaching the holy table, she likewise shut herself in her room, then spent several hours in church and avoided all useless conversation. The same modesty reigned in her apartments: there one saw neither sumptuous furniture nor superfluous ornaments. Pictures representing Jesus Christ in the various stages of His passion, relics of Saints set in gold, a few books of piety — these were her treasures, these the objects of her predilection. She sought God in all things and everywhere, and found Him everywhere. She made even the occasions that might have distracted her serve her spiritual advancement, the handmaid of Jesus Christ always prevailing over the empress.

The mark of true greatness is that its merit does not vanish but withstands injustice and the attacks of malice. Adelaide's life was irreproachable, and yet there were base souls who dared to disparage such pure virtues and to make a crime of her piety, on the pretext that a person who displayed so severe a regularity would be better placed behind the bolts of the cloister than on a throne. Adelaide was happy to have incurred such reproaches. She knew that everything is poisoned in the hands of jealousy, and that the most sincere piety is, in the eyes of certain people, only refined hypocrisy; but strong in her intentions and in the purity of her motives, she despised the clamour of a few intriguers and took her revenge on them by kindnesses. It was enough for her to have God as witness of her actions, and it mattered little to her whether the world approved or blamed her. This elevation of sentiment, this indifference to the judgments of men, this detachment from the earth earned her those abundant graces which made her triumph more and more over herself.

Self-denial was the foundation of Adelaide's conduct. According to the Apostle's counsel, she knew how to crucify her flesh by sacrificing its desires and affections. It was only to meet the needs of nature that she took food, simple and without much preparation; she likewise used sleep very sparingly, never consented to take any pleasure in which she might have lost the presence of God, and was always occupied. She kept her senses in the greatest subjection, not allowing them to stray, and remembering that the body must be under the rule of the soul and reduced to servitude. These continual combats procured her great freedom of spirit and assured her complete victory over herself. Virtue was a need for her; and far from regretting that she had given herself to God, she constantly varied the means of pleasing Him, and by a holy cunning knew how to hide them from the eyes of men. Human life was in her eyes only a raging sea in which each of us is exposed at every moment to being swallowed up by the waves.

The pious practices Adelaide had imposed on herself did not prevent her from fulfilling all her duties as wife and mother; on the contrary, it was in the liveliness of her faith that she drew the strength needed to acquit herself of them worthily. She first gave birth to two young princes, Henry and Bruno, who died in infancy. In 955 a third son was born to her, named Otto like his father, who later succeeded him in the government of his States. As she had learned by her own experience how important it was to instil early in children the principles of solid piety, she directed all her attention to this point. Otto was barely two months old when the holy empress one day took him in her arms, carried him to the chapel, offered him to the Lord, begging Him to pour out His graces upon him, and uttering with tears in her eyes those words so beautiful on the lips of a Christian mother, that "she would willingly consent to the death of her son, if she knew that he was later to become the victim of sin and of the seduction of the world." As the young prince's understanding developed, Adelaide impressed on him the idea of the duties he would one day have to fulfil as a Christian, as a prince and as father of his people. She would build the edifice of his education on no other foundation than that of piety and virtue.

The emperor, who professed the deepest esteem for her, never thwarted her, and approved all the measures she took to succeed in this great undertaking. The devout princess's plan of education also found its critics. It was claimed that, on the pretext of watching over his innocence, Adelaide was softening her son's courage; that by constraining his inclinations so much she was exposing him to giving them a freer course later; and that so rigorous a virtue suited the solitary of a desert, but not a prince. Yet Adelaide did not yield. She knew too well the abuses of a worldly education to draw back before chimerical difficulties. She took as her associates St. Bruno, archbishop of Cologne and brother of Otto I, and the abbot Gerbert. Helped by the lights of such men, one of whom enjoyed the highest reputation for learning and the other the lustre of his holiness, Adelaide continued the work she had so happily begun. Night and day she sent up to heaven the incense of her prayers for this child so dear to her tenderness, and begged the Lord to make of him a king after His own heart. She hardly ever lost sight of him, shutting herself up with him while he was at his studies and imposing painful privations on herself for this purpose; but nothing was too costly for her maternal love; she thought of the good that was one day to result for the peoples from so wise a direction. To the lessons of the skilled masters she added her own reflections, and above all inspired in the young Otto the greatest submission to the Catholic Church, often reminding him of her heavenly origin, her triumphs over the errors of paganism, the immense services she had rendered the world and was still rendering it every day. She often took him with her when she visited the poor, not only to make him attentive to the miseries of his neighbour but to awaken in his soul sentiments of gratitude towards the Lord, who loaded him with so many benefits.

Adelaide also seized every occasion to incline her son to good, to inspire in him the fear of God and the hatred of sin; she knew how to make allowance for his age without ever legitimizing the outbursts of her child's temper by a weak indulgence. "The tree must be bent while it is young," she often said; "later it would be too late." She never followed her first impulse in inflicting a punishment on Otto, postponing the correction until she was calmer; but then she showed severity, remembering those words of Solomon: "A

father who spares the rod for his unruly son hates his child; but he who loves him chastises him." Regarding Otto's education as her principal duty, she had recourse to every means prudence suggested to her, giving him praise, but with great reserve, when he deserved it, yet never flattering him, for fear of feeding his pride. When she met with some grave difficulty in this laborious enterprise, she imposed extraordinary penances on herself, expecting from heaven alone the help needed to overcome it. She had organized her household so well that her son found no one anywhere to approve him when he had committed a serious fault; everyone then showed him a stern face, every eye avoided him and seemed to reproach him with his guilt. Thus the devout mother devoted herself for several years, with the most touching solicitude, to the so meritorious work of her son's education, without her zeal ever flagging for a moment; and if her pains were not crowned with all the success she might have expected, at least she had nothing to reproach herself with.

St. Adelaide had experienced very severe opposition in Italy; Providence permitted that she should be no more spared in Germany. As stepmother she was to give the example of that generosity which is so rare because it is so difficult to practise. The emperor Otto had had by his first wife Editha a son named Liudolf, whom Adelaide was obliged to take charge of. Liudolf had a violent and proud character; his pride and ambition grew with age. His father named him duke of Swabia and of the Rhineland. The birth of the young Otto, and the fear of one day being deprived of his right of succession to the empire, wounded so keenly that heart ravaged by passion that Editha's son revolted against his father together with Arnulf, duke of Bavaria, and Conrad, duke of Lorraine. In vain had Otto sought to inspire Liudolf with respect and love for Adelaide by making known to him the great qualities of that most estimable woman, qualities which Italy and Germany were then praising in rivalry. In vain had the empress herself undertaken to win this rebellious son by her amiability and her kindnesses: all was useless; Liudolf could not bring himself to love his stepmother, and did not blush to league himself against his father in an attempt to dethrone him. But the emperor was not the man to suffer such an outrage; he assembled his army and marched against the ungrateful and rebellious son.

At this terrible news Adelaide used every means to prevent the war; but the emperor remained inflexible. She had offered to renounce the throne and to shut herself up in a monastery, hoping by these concessions to remove all difficulties. Seeing at last that all her efforts were useless, she bade farewell to her husband with tears in her eyes, and on leaving him recommended him to spare Liudolf. Liudolf was taken prisoner at Ratisbon; but the emperor, not wishing to decide the young prince's fate himself, assembled a council of war to pronounce on the punishment he deserved.

No sooner had Adelaide learned what was in question than she addressed a petition to her husband, begging him to pardon Liudolf. This grace was not granted her. Without losing courage, she interested in the matter several men distinguished by their merit, among others St. Ulric, bishop of Augsburg, who went to Otto with Hartbert, bishop of Chur, and asked for Liudolf's pardon. The emperor received the prelates kindly but would hear nothing. Adelaide was not content with interceding for him with Otto; she even sent him help in secret. She went further: one day she threw herself at the emperor's feet and offered to bear the guilty young prince's punishment herself. This generosity moved Otto to tears; he raised his wife and loaded her with praise, but did not yield to her pressing entreaties. Adelaide did not let herself be discouraged, and begged St. Ulric to make a last effort to bring about this so much desired reconciliation between father and son. She redoubled her prayers and good works, omitted nothing that might soften the emperor's anger, and had the happiness of seeing them reconciled some time later. Adelaide regarded that day as one of the most beautiful of her life; she did not cease to thank the Lord for having restored peace to her family. She showed the same generosity to Alassia, who, during the widowhood of her father, the emperor Otto, had fallen into deplorable errors, had fled from her father's house and taken refuge in Liguria, where she had hidden. Otto, informed of her flight, had given strict orders for her arrest; but she had taken her measures so well that it was impossible to discover the place of her retreat. Some time afterwards Alassia recognized her wrongs and came to herself.

She would have wished to recover her father's favour and return to the palace, but did not dare to address herself directly to Otto, whom she had so cruelly offended. Counting on the goodness of Adelaide, whom she had never seen but whose virtue everyone proclaimed, she had a respectful petition conveyed to the empress, begging her to take up her defence with the emperor and to obtain for her, by her influence, her return to her family. Adelaide, who had learned in the school of our holy Scriptures that one must not quench the smoking flax nor break the reed bending under the violence of the wind, went at once to her husband's apartments and told him, with a smile on her lips, that she had a very pleasant piece of news for him: that a strayed sheep was asking to return to the fold and, like another prodigal, to throw herself into the arms of paternal mercy, to confess her faults and say to him: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you, and am no longer worthy to be called your daughter." Adelaide accompanied this step with so many demonstrations of love, and put such candour into the request, that she disarmed the emperor's wrath, obtained Alassia's recall, and had the consolation of seeing her stepdaughter expiate in the tears of sincere repentance faults that had been only too fatal. The devout empress carried her generosity further and induced Otto to cede to his daughter the marquisate of Montferrat with all the rights and domains belonging to it.

After Liudolf's death Adelaide applied herself with new zeal to making her son Otto a prince worthy one day to rule over peoples. Her husband, who knew her wisdom and the breadth of her views, entrusted her with part of the administration and associated her with the labours of the empire. He even named her regent during a new campaign he was obliged to undertake in Italy. Adelaide founded several religious establishments, especially at Magdeburg. In 777 she showed her generosity to the priory of Saint-Pierre at Colmar, in Alsace, whose revenues she considerably increased and which she subjected to the abbey of Payerne, in the Pays de Vaud. The monastery of Payerne had been founded by Bertha, her mother. But another monument of her pious munificence towards Alsace was the erection of a noble monastery at Selz, on the frontiers of that province near the Rhine, which she richly endowed and gave in 987 to the Order of St. Benedict. This monastery was dedicated to the holy apostles Peter and Paul, and later acquired such fame that the abbot became a prince of the empire.

Adelaide had chosen as director of her conscience St. Adalbert, who was made first archbishop of Magdeburg about the year 970. Under such a guide Adelaide must have made rapid progress in perfection. She lived only for God, and quickened all her actions more and more by piety. The emperor Otto, obliged to return to Italy, associated his son Otto II in the government of his States. Adelaide was to accompany him. Before leaving, the holy empress called the young prince to her apartments, presented the crucifix to him and set out to him once more the duties of a monarch towards his peoples. She reminded him of the terrible responsibility that would weigh on him if he had the misfortune to act against justice and against the interests of the nations entrusted to his father's sceptre. Berengar was defeated in a bloody battle, taken prisoner with his wife and his two daughters, Gisela and Gerberga, and sent into exile at Bamberg. Adelaide carried her generosity so far as to call to court the two daughters of her former persecutor: there she loaded them with kindness and lightened by a thousand attentions the weight of the affliction that crushed them. Moreover, she applied herself with all her strength to repairing the public calamities. She made immense gifts to churches, and above all did not forget Monte Cassino, where the fervent disciples of St. Benedict were then giving the example of the highest virtues. Her faith found ample nourishment at the sight of the monuments that Italy presents so proudly to the admiration of the faithful. Her passage was marked everywhere by the many benefits she scattered.

Adelaide lived with her husband in the most perfect union, fulfilling all the duties of a

Christian wife. She was tenderly submissive to the emperor and never undertook anything important without consulting him and obtaining his consent. By her attentions she knew how to relieve him, and often succeeded, by her affability and great gentleness, in recalling in him that serenity which grave occupations and pride sometimes efface from the brow of the great. She was far from believing that a tender and

compassionate heart dishonours rank and birth, or that one must be harsh and capricious in order to command well. Goodness in her eyes was the inseparable character of greatness. She made herself more worthy of respect every day by bearing only with difficulty the respect due to her. She was not afraid to let herself be seen at close quarters; only mediocrity hides itself. She kept of her rank only what was needed to make herself still more amiable and thereby to reassure respect and timidity. Those who often approached her felt keen pleasure each time in her talk, and never ceased to praise the charm of her conversation and the gentleness of her soul. The throne was in her eyes only the refuge of the unfortunate who come to implore justice and clemency; and having no further distinction to gain on the side of rank, she wished at least to redeem her elevation by her condescension and humility. The death of Otto, which occurred in 993, caused Adelaide keen grief. Yet she did not murmur against the decrees of Providence and submitted with resignation to the will of heaven. She was not content to distribute alms and to have the holy sacrifice offered for the repose of her husband's soul; she appealed to all the devout persons of the empire to ask their prayers for her husband. She then asked the Lord for the graces needed to live holily in widowhood, firmly resolved not to contract new engagements, though she was only forty-two years old and her fine qualities might still have made her sought after. She wept for her husband, yet without giving herself up to excessive grief, because faith had taught her that he would one day rise again. The sacrifice of her submission was all the more heroic because she was not without anxiety about her future. Humble and resigned, the holy widow passed through the trials of this life to take a swifter flight towards heaven, her true country, where sorrow no longer falls upon the faithful soul, where there are no more adversities to bear, no more tears to wipe away, no more infidelities, no more persecutions to fear.

The emperor Otto II, who had succeeded his father, had recognized Adelaide's great qualities and had promised himself to follow her advice in everything and to associate her with the cares of the empire. His age, his inexperience, filial love and the memory of his father made it a duty for him, and at first he showed himself very docile towards her. Adelaide composed his council of devoted, capable and upright men; she herself often attended the deliberations and gave affairs that firm and wise impulse which turned wholly to the good of the State. The peoples applauded and hoped to see the continuation of the reign of Otto I, whose memory still lived in every heart. But these hopes soon vanished. Some courtiers, jealous of Adelaide's authority, undertook to break the union that reigned between mother and son, and gave the young monarch to understand that Adelaide was squandering the goods of the State by her prodigality to the poor and to the churches, and that it was urgent to put an end to ruinous expenses. At the head of the malcontents was Theophano, the wife of the young Otto. This woman, whose pride was wounded by Adelaide's preponderance and influence, persuaded her husband that he was wrong to let himself be governed by his mother; that it was in his interest to take the helm of affairs himself; that the peoples would respect him only when he was emperor in fact and not merely in name; and that he must at last set bounds to Adelaide's authority to show himself worthy to command.

Otto lent an ear to his wife's suggestions, and, eager to seize back that power which had been painted to him in such seductive colours, he first showed indifference to his mother, no longer called her to the council and no longer spoke to her of affairs. Little by little he forgot both the counsels of his dying father and the so wise lessons of his worthy mother; and, opening his heart to the calumnies his wife and the courtiers never ceased to repeat against Adelaide, he seemed to tolerate her in his palace only with reluctance, and heaped vexations on her. Soon everything changed for the holy widow, who was ill-treated in every way, without her being able to account for what had brought on her misfortune. She felt this ill-treatment all the more keenly because she loved her son tenderly and feared that he might let himself be drawn into evil and follow the inclinations of his heart. Had she been the only victim this storm could reach, she would willingly have submitted to still harder trials; but the fate of the peoples touched her too keenly for her not to be moved at the thought of the consequences of such an aberration. In this painful circumstance she did what every Christian mother should do: she turned to Him who holds the hearts of kings in His hands and directs them as

He pleases. She sent up fervent prayers to heaven for this ungrateful and fickle son, bore her ills in patience, and by her conduct avoided giving her enemies the least pretext for molesting her.

Meanwhile Theophano, furious to see Adelaide oppose only silence and disdain to her clamours, no longer restrained herself and openly persecuted her mother-in-law. Several faithful servants, touched by the fate of the widow of their former master, sought to lighten the weight of her sorrows by their attentions; but this was a very slight alleviation for a heart broken by the most violent griefs. Adelaide showed them her gratitude and went on suffering for God. She blamed only herself and attributed to her sins the persecutions she endured. Redoubling her austerities, she hoped thereby to soften the Lord's anger; but the moment of her triumph had not yet come. Seeing that her presence displeased the court, and that her son, far from protecting her, only too often joined her adversaries, she resolved to withdraw and to leave the States of the German empire. She asked Otto for an audience; he received her with cold politeness; she told him of her intention and bade him the most touching farewell. The young monarch did not oppose her departure, and saw without regret the departure of her who had given him life and brought him up with such wisdom. But Germany put on mourning and wept for Adelaide as for a mother and as the firmest support of the empire. She went to her brother Conrad, king of Burgundy, who came to meet her as far as the frontiers of his kingdom. Adelaide settled at the castle of Orbe, in the Pays de Vaud, where she had occasion to see St. Odilo, abbot of Cluny. In this retreat she lived in peace. She never complained of the ingratitude of her son, on whom she had lavished so much care; God alone knew her pains. Christian watchfulness, fasting, prayer, mortifications and good works of every kind were her occupations and procured her powerful consolations.

The holy princess's enemies triumphed at Otto's court and congratulated themselves on Adelaide's departure; but the harm her absence caused was soon perceived. Intrigue succeeded justice, the most sacred rights were trampled underfoot, the poor neglected, the revenues of the State squandered on frivolities. Germany uttered cries of despair and called back her who had made it so happy. Otto himself saw only too clearly that if God has promised prosperity and long life to those who honour their parents on earth, He withdraws His blessing, on the contrary, from those who fail to fulfil this great precept, and that sooner or later He knows how to avenge Himself on disobedient and ungrateful children. Sad experience came to teach him what a grave fault he had committed in dismissing his mother so brutally. Nothing he undertook succeeded; every day the state of affairs grew more complicated; disorder crept into every part of the administration. The young monarch plunged from fault to fault, and, deprived as he was of wise and prudent counsellors, he acted without measure or rule, often substituting his humour for the laws and braving everything to make himself obeyed. Meanwhile the evil went on increasing; the peoples murmured at the vexations they suffered. Everyone pointed out the proper remedy to calm the ferment; Otto alone, beset by his flatterers and subjugated by his imperious wife, was unaware of the danger threatening his throne.

Adelaide learned in the depths of her retreat all the misfortunes weighing on Germany as a result of her son's blindness. The reports reaching her from all sides on the state of the country made her tears flow and caused her real grief. With what fervour she prayed the Lord to have pity on the emperor and to put an end to these ills! The holy princess's prayers were at last answered. Otto opened his eyes, recognized the origin and cause of the general unease, and asked to be reconciled with his mother. To succeed the better, he chose St. Majolus of Cluny, in whom he had great confidence and whom he regarded as the man best able to persuade Adelaide to return to Germany.

No sooner did Adelaide learn of this change in her son's conduct than, full of gratitude, she went to throw herself at the feet of Jesus Christ to thank Him for having touched the young prince's heart. Anyone but a Saint would have made conditions before thinking of returning to a country where she had had to suffer such cruel persecutions; but Adelaide's soul was too great to stop at such suggestions of self-love. She would have sullied her triumph by demanding the dismissal of her enemies; she was a Christian, she knew how to forgive. Thus trampling underfoot all resentment and all memory of her former misfortunes, she replied to

St. Majolus that she was ready to yield to her son's wishes and to resume her place at the head of the administration of the empire. Her brother Conrad, who had been able to appreciate all the qualities of this valiant woman, was keenly grieved at this resolution and pressed her to stay with him; but Adelaide, who owed herself to her son rather than to her brother, set out with Majolus to go to Otto, then in Italy. At the sight of his holy mother, whom he had so cruelly offended, Otto threw himself on his knees and, with tears in his eyes, made her the most touching apologies, begging her to forget the past and grant him her friendship. Adelaide embraced him, assuring him that no feeling of hatred had ever stifled in her heart the love she bore him, and that all had long been forgotten. From that moment the devout widow never uttered a word that could recall her former disgraces.

The emperor Otto was preparing to make a descent on Sicily when a violent illness surprised him at Rome and carried him out of this world at the age of twenty-nine. This sudden death plunged Adelaide into mourning; she found alleviation for her grief only in religion. Her son Otto III was recognized by the Estates of Germany; but as his age did not yet allow him to govern, Adelaide thought it her duty to lend him her support, though she foresaw the annoyances that this share in affairs would bring upon her. And in fact Theophano, who had surrounded herself with several courtiers she had brought from Constantinople, raised some difficulty for her every day, to disgust her and make her leave; but the devout princess, docile to the voice of God, who warned her not to abandon the young monarch, preferred to suffer rather than give way. In the midst of her pains she said: "The hand of God strikes me to cure me of my weaknesses, above all of my self-love and of the vanity of the world." Our Saint's life was a perpetual martyrdom; for anyone who knows what a jealous, ambitious woman, guided by her pride and dominated by the spirit of the world, is capable of, will easily form an idea of the torments that pursued at every step her whose motto was: "To suffer and be silent." But the more men seemed to pour disdain and ingratitude upon her, the more the Lord compensated her by His favours for the injustice of the world. After prayer and the frequenting of the sacraments, Adelaide had recourse, as in the past, to the reading of our holy books, to steel herself against the persecutions of which she was the object. At last God put an end to her sufferings by taking her persecutor out of this world, and all Germany saw a punishment of heaven in that premature death.

The death of Theophano had delivered Adelaide from her cruellest enemy; but far from rejoicing at this catastrophe, the holy princess shed sincere tears for her. She would have needed rest, and was even thinking seriously of withdrawing from affairs to attend solely to her salvation; but the empire needed her help more than ever. She therefore decided to remain at court, thus giving an example to those whose state calls them into the midst of the world, that one can sanctify oneself in every social position as soon as one wishes to live there as a Christian, and not lose sight of the heavenly country while devoting oneself to the good of one's earthly country. Otto III, her grandson, had not yet reached the age to direct the government of his vast States by himself. He begged his holy grandmother not to abandon him and to assist him with her lights and her experience. The great men and the princes laid aside their prejudices against her and solicited her help and her participation in affairs. Adelaide could not remain insensible to wishes so generally expressed, and bowed her head under the yoke that necessity laid upon her. She stood there like an unshakable rock around which the waves of human passions beat in vain; she had seen three thrones, and recalled to the Germans the flourishing state of the empire under Otto I, her husband. The knowledge she had acquired of men and events gave her the means of repairing the faults committed by Theophano; she began her new political career by various changes she introduced in the different branches of the administration. Though she then had the power to take revenge on her enemies, she did quite the contrary and granted them her protection, acting, as St. Odilo, her historian, relates, according to the maxims of the Gospel and returning good for evil.

Adelaide had again become more powerful than ever, but she regarded her elevation only as a burden. She used to say that the life of the great was only a continual agitation, a mixture of fears, hopes, terrors and disgrace, and that the felicity it promises is only an illusion. Penetrated with the importance of her duties, she

applied herself to rendering prompt and good justice to everyone, without distinction of rank or condition. When she was obliged to show severity, she always tempered her orders with every mitigation in her power; she used forbearance for a long time before proceeding to execution. Those very persons whom the sword of justice struck acknowledged the goodness of her soul and proclaimed her impartiality and clemency. She entrusted the direction of the provinces only to men of integrity, with whom she often corresponded. She often pictured to herself the terrible account she would one day render to the supreme Judge, and devoted several days each month to examining her public and private conduct. She often attended the instructions of the Church and received holy communion among the other faithful, whom her example singularly edified. In her moments of leisure she made priestly vestments, which she then distributed to monasteries and poor parishes. The city of Magdeburg owed several institutions to her; she likewise had the choir of the cathedral of Augsburg, which St. Ulric had left unfinished, embellished. The conversion of the infidel peoples was always the object of her solicitude, and she shrank from no expense to bring into the fold of Jesus Christ those whom error still kept far from the truth.

The emperor Otto III, having come of age, also showed some hostile dispositions towards his holy grandmother; but he did not go so far as to persecute her openly. This coolness and other circumstances determined Adelaide to leave her grandson's court for ever and to withdraw into Burgundy to live there in solitude. Otto at first would not consent to her departure, but at last yielded to his grandmother's repeated entreaties. Adelaide gave him advice and made him feel, at their last interview, how important it was for him to treat the peoples gently, so as not to expose himself to seeing renewed the scenes of desolation that had so violently shaken the country under Otto II. The prince promised her to follow counsels whose wisdom he acknowledged, made her considerable presents and let her go.

Our Saint's journey was like a triumph. The peoples had so great a veneration for her that they thronged everywhere along her way, thinking themselves happy when they could touch her hand or have something that had belonged to her. She visited all the monasteries she came across, leaving everywhere marks of her generosity and giving the most touching examples of piety. The abbey of Cluny was not forgotten, and the princess spent moments delightful to her soul there in conversation with St. Odilo, who thus came to know more particularly the lofty virtues of this humble handmaid of God. But Adelaide preferred to stay in religious communities of women, which she called her inns. She constantly refused the honours people wished to pay her, saying that she should no longer remember what she had been in the world except to lament her imperfections and her many infidelities. She envied more than ever the happiness of the chaste spouses of Jesus Christ, who passed their days in retirement and peace, while her own life had been like a stormy sea. The princes of the countries she crossed sought in vain under a thousand pretexts to detain her; Adelaide knew how to slip away delicately from their attentions and continued her devout pilgrimage. When she arrived at the frontiers of France, her daughter Emma, accompanied by King Louis her son, came to meet her and pressed her to settle in Paris; but she wished first to acquit herself of another duty. She went to Geneva, where the faithful then venerated the tomb of the martyr St. Victor. There she made her devotions and left rich presents. From Geneva she went to the abbey of Saint-Maurice in the Valais to venerate the relics of that generous athlete who suffered martyrdom in that country with the Theban legion. She placed her grandson Otto III under the special protection of St. Maurice, and after distributing alms to the poor and making magnificent gifts to that celebrated church founded by St. Sigismund, king of Burgundy, she took away with her some earth from the tombs of the martyrs, in order to honour the memory of those great men and to have a larger share in their favours.

The king of Burgundy, Rudolf III, and his brother Boso, Adelaide's nephews, had been unable to agree on the division of their States and were on the point of settling their quarrel by the fortune of arms. The devout princess, who trembled at the idea of even the most just war, had no sooner learned that the two brothers were preparing to fight each other than she went to them to address severe reprimands to them. She depicted

with such warmth the scandal they were about to give the world, and set before them with such energy the evils war brings in its train, making them responsible for them, that she succeeded in chaining their fury. The ascendancy of her virtues and the reputation for holiness she enjoyed made more impression than the reasons of sound policy she might have invoked. This triumph, which she won over two men who had sworn implacable hatred to each other, turned wholly to her glory and added still more to the high opinion people had of her. Thus Adelaide never ceased to do good, and showed to her last moment the tenderest attachment to the cause of religion and of humanity.

The pains Adelaide had suffered imperceptibly undermined her health and led her slowly to the grave. St. Odilo had told her, at his last interview with her, that the end of her pilgrimage was not far off. Adelaide received this prediction as a warning from heaven and prepared herself with still greater fervour to appear before the Lord. “I burn with the desire to see the bonds of my body broken, so as to be united to Jesus Christ,” she sometimes exclaimed. “Death may strike; the victim is ready.” Animated with the liveliest confidence in the mercies of God, she went into Alsace. On her way she visited the priory of Colmar, and from there went to Selz, where she settled in a house outside the enclosure of the cloister buildings inhabited by the Benedictines. She was soon the edification of the fervent disciples of St. Benedict. But she did not long enjoy the tranquillity she had found in that devout solitude: after a short stay an acute illness confined her to her bed. Every human means was employed to prolong the life of one so dear to every heart; people even flattered themselves with some hope of keeping her; but Adelaide had no illusions: she recognized in this grave infirmity the call of the Lord and, submissive to His will, awaited the day of His promises. Even at the height of her illness she relaxed nothing of her austerities; her sacrifice was to be perfect.

After sharing among the poor the little that still remained to her, she made several donations in favour of the monasteries of Cluny and of Saint-Benoît-sur-Loire and of the metropolitan church of Saint-Martin of Tours, to obtain after her death the help of the prayers of the fervent religious and priests of those churches. She then received the holy Viaticum and Extreme Unction with angelic piety and commended her soul to God; then, pressing the image of Jesus Christ to her heart, she did not cease to invoke Him. She said to those present: “Ah! I have lived a long time when I count the years of my life; but when I count the virtues I have practised, I have lived only an instant. It is a miracle of God’s mercy to have suffered so long on earth a useless plant like me. The Lord has taken away a great number in their youth who, had they lived, would have borne abundant fruit, whereas I am only a barren tree. I ought to give eternal thanks to Jesus Christ for the countless benefits with which He has loaded me; I thank Him above all for having preserved me from the danger of the pleasures of the world, to which my rank seemed to invite me. Where would my soul be if I had sought to satisfy all my desires? Chains of iron were needed to hold back my heart; and so I die more peacefully than I dared hope, I die more content than I thought. I once believed I should die in a desert, and here I find myself as in a palace. How many of those who desired my death have died before me! May the Lord forgive them as I forgive them myself, and then we shall all meet again together in heaven. I leave the world with pleasure, for I separated myself from it long ago.”

Seeing her last moment approach, she blessed her faithful servants and had word sent to her grandson Otto III that she gave him her blessing too. She then asked the abbot of the monastery to recite with her the Penitential Psalms and the Litany of All Saints. It was in the midst of these prayers that her beautiful soul flew to heaven during the night of 16–17 December in the year 999, at the age of sixty-nine. Her body was laid with solemnity in the church of the monastery of Selz; part of her relics is kept in a magnificent shrine in the treasury of Hanover.

Striking miracles attested the holiness of this illustrious princess: the blind recovered their sight, paralytics the use of their limbs, the sick a perfect cure at her tomb. St. Odilo, agreeing on this point with the secular historians, proclaimed Adelaide a great Saint; the cult paid to her in Alsace and in several regions of Germany is very ancient.

She is represented: 1° standing, having bread distributed to the poor while she prays before a crucifix; 2° escaping by boat from the fortress where she had been imprisoned; 3° with a crown at her feet, to show that she knew how to despise the greatness of the world; 4° with a church on her hand, as foundress of religious establishments.

Extracted from the *Life of St. Adelaide* by the Abbé Hunckler. — Cf. *History of the Saints of Alsace*, by the same.

BLESSED GUY OF BURGUNDY, POPE UNDER THE NAME OF CALLISTUS II

1124. — King of France: Louis VI, the Fat.

Dabo vobis os et sapientiam cui non poterunt resistere et contradicere omnes adversarii vestri. I will put on your lips words of so lofty a wisdom that the compact mass of your enemies shall founder in its powerlessness to contradict you. — Luke XXI, 15.

One of the most eminent men whose birthplace Franche-Comté is honoured to have been was Guy of Burgundy, known in history as Pope Callistus II and honoured in the Church with the title of Blessed. Son of William the Great, called Tête-Hardie, count palatine of Burgundy, and of Étiennette, countess of Vienne, he was born about the middle of the 11th century at the castle of Quingey. This castle, situated between Besançon and Salins at the end of a pleasant and fertile plain, bordered on one side by the clear waters of the Loue and touching on the other the immense forest of Chaux, was one of the best fortified and most considerable in the country. William the Great held his court there in the fine season, and it is even probable that he made it his usual residence; for Besançon was then an imperial city, the castles of Gy and Gray belonged to the archbishop, and that of Dole dates only from the following century.

Before bringing the young prince into the world, Countess Étiennette had been forewarned, by a sort of revelation, of the high destiny God reserved for her son. Docile to the warnings of heaven, she vowed her newborn child to the service of the Lord and gave him the name of Guy at the baptismal font. This name given to the child seemed a happy omen, because it was already that of his uncle, who had just left the pomps of the earth to bury himself at Cluny in the austerities of penance. Guy justified from his earliest years the great hopes placed in him: he learned with pleasure all that he was taught and retained without effort all that he had learned. So precocious an intelligence, far from making him proud, made his piety livelier and his modesty more touching. The education he received developed these happy qualities still further. His parents placed him in the school which Archbishop Hugh I had founded at Besançon under the patronage of the chapter of Saint-Étienne, and which maintained, not without lustre, the double reputation for learning and virtue with which that great man had endowed it. Guy profited so well from the examples and lessons of his masters that he was raised to the priesthood before reaching the age fixed by the canons. Dignities were soon heaped on his head: in a short time he became canon of the cathedral of Saint-Jean and chamberlain of the archbishop; at last his merit, even more than his birth, caused him to be raised to the archbishopric of Vienne in Dauphiné.

In accepting the government of this Church, Guy took rank, despite his youth, among the most illustrious and influential prelates of his age. His virtues, his character, his great name and his family’s alliances combined to draw the eyes of his contemporaries to him. He was a near relative of the emperor of Germany and of the king of England; one of his sisters had married Humbert II, count of Maurienne, and their daughter Adelaide became queen of France by her marriage with Louis the Fat. All that nobility, fortune, genius and piety can give that is most glorious was not too much to avert, by these means combined, the perils threatening Europe. The quarrel of investitures had long divided the priesthood and the empire; St. Gregory VII had ceased to live, and the successors of that Pope, who had upheld the rights of the Church with such zeal, had already

several times been victims of the injustice and violence of the emperors of Germany. Paschal II, who then occupied the chair of St. Peter, had become the prisoner of Henry V. Deceived by that monarch's lying promises rather than shaken by his threats and ill-treatment, he had just granted him the privilege of investitures. This act, extorted by force, caused as much surprise as grief in the Church. The archbishop of Vienne at once assembled a Council in his metropolis. It was decided there that it was a heresy to believe that one may receive from the hands of a layman the investiture of abbeys, bishoprics and the other dignities of the Church; the privilege the emperor had wrested from the Pope was declared null, and Henry solemnly excommunicated, because, in spite of the oaths he had sworn to the sovereign Pontiff, and after kissing his feet, his mouth and his face, he had betrayed him like another Judas, had treated him shamefully and had extracted a detestable document from him.

The stroke was all the bolder because the see of Vienne was a fief of the empire, as a dependency of the old kingdom of Burgundy, and because Henry's ambassadors, present at the Council, were showing letters from the Pope to their master to make it believed that His Holiness was pleased with him. The archbishop sent the decrees of the assembly to Paschal, begging him to confirm them; the sovereign Pontiff did what the bishops asked; but he died without the consolation of restoring peace between the Church and the empire, and Gelasius II, his successor, soon found himself in turn the target of the ill-treatment of the emperor and his partisans. Henry V, who, in the expression of a contemporary, regarded the Roman Church as a fief held at his royal whim, marched on Rome to seize Gelasius, and had an antipope elected in the person of Maurice Bourdin, archbishop of Prague. This persecution obliged Gelasius to leave Italy; he set out for Gaul and stopped for some time at Vienne, where the archbishop received him with as much magnificence as respect. The Pope then went to Cluny, where he intended to fix his residence. He planned to assemble a great Council to end the dispute that had lasted so many years between the priesthood and the empire. But Providence ordained otherwise. Gelasius, overtaken by illness, was in a few days brought to the gates of the grave; after receiving the last sacraments with sentiments of the liveliest faith, he called the cardinals who had followed him and proposed to them to elect in his place Conon [Cuno], bishop of Palestrina. Conon excused himself, saying: "If you will follow my advice, we shall elect the archbishop of Vienne; he joins power to piety and secular nobility to prudence; let us hope that he will deliver the Holy See from tyranny and oppression." The Pope approved this advice and died on 29 January 1119.

Meanwhile the funeral of Gelasius had drawn a great concourse of lords and prelates to Cluny. After rendering the last duties to the deceased Pope, the cardinals and bishops proceeded without delay to the election of a new Pontiff. Guy of Burgundy, archbishop of Vienne, united all the votes and was elected Pope under the name of Callistus II. The holy prelate did not see without dread the charge laid upon him. He wrote to Adalbert, archbishop of Mainz: "Pope Gelasius, of happy memory, on leaving Vienne ordered me to rejoin him at Cluny. Wishing to fulfil this obligation, I left Vienne a few days later; but I learned on the way that Gelasius was dead. Nevertheless, to console our brethren who had come with him, I went to Cluny, touched with keen grief. While I was thinking only of sharing their sorrow, they laid on me a burden beyond my strength; for the bishops, the cardinals, the clergy and the Roman laity took me, by unanimous consent and in spite of my resistance, to govern the Church under the name of Callistus II."

The cardinals who were at Cluny made known the death of Gelasius and the appointment of his successor to Peter, bishop of Porto, whom the late Pope had left as his vicar in the city of Rome. As soon as he had received the letters addressed to him, he went up to the Capitol and had them read in the presence of the people. The whole assembly approved the election of Callistus, praising God for having given the Church a pontiff of such great merit. The bishop of Porto then sent the news to Cardinal Hugh, archbishop of Benevento and legate of the Holy See; it was received at Benevento, as at Rome, with unanimous acclamation, and the citizens swore fidelity to the new Pope in the hands of the legate. When Callistus II had been informed of these facts, he consented to take the red cope, the emblem of the papacy. Lambert, bishop

of Ostia, solemnly crowned him at Vienne on Quinquagesima Sunday, 9 February 1119; his election was published at the diet of Tibur, and the bishops gathered in that city swore fidelity to him; finally he summoned a general Council at Reims for 18 October; the bishops approved it, and the emperor himself promised to attend.

While awaiting the opening of this assembly, Callistus II held, on 13 June, a provincial Council at Toulouse, and there condemned, in the presence of a number of bishops, the errors and extravagances of the Manichaeans, which were beginning to spread in the southern provinces. From there he went to Paris, where he stayed for some time, and, to prepare the great treaty he was planning with the emperor, he sent to him William of Champeaux, bishop of Châlons-sur-Marne, and Pons, abbot of Cluny. Henry V, whom they found at Strasbourg, asked their advice. “Sire,” the bishop said to him, “if you wish to have a true peace, you must renounce the investiture of bishoprics and abbeys; and to assure yourself that your royal authority will suffer no diminution from it, know that I received nothing from the king’s hand either before or after my consecration, and I serve him as faithfully as your bishops serve you in your kingdom by virtue of the investiture which has brought this discord into the Church and the anathema upon your royal person.” — “Very well, so be it,” answered the emperor; “I ask no more.” Then he took an oath in the bishop’s hands to observe what should be decided. When the articles of this agreement had been drawn up, the envoys returned to Reims, where the Pope had already arrived.

On Monday, 20 October 1119, Callistus opened the Council in the cathedral. There were present bishops of Italy, Germany, France, England and all the provinces of the West. Fifteen metropolitans were counted, more than two hundred bishops and as many abbots. Everyone having taken his place and the prayers of the Councils having been recited, the Pope delivered in Latin a very eloquent discourse on the perils of the Church. He compared them to the storms that toss ships on the sea; but God commands the winds and calms them when He sees fit. “You know,” he then said, “how long the Church has fought against heresies, and how Simon the Magician perished by the judgment of the Holy Spirit and the ministry of blessed Peter. The same Peter has not ceased down to our own day, through those who hold his place, to root out of the Church the followers of Simon. And I, who am his vicar, though unworthy, ardently desire, with God’s help, to drive out of His holy Church the heresy of Simon, which has been renewed chiefly by investitures. To inform you of the state of this matter, hear the report of our brethren who have carried words of peace to the king of Germany, and give us counsel on what we should do, since our cause is common.” The bishop of Ostia then gave a report in Latin of what had passed with the emperor, and the bishop of Châlons repeated it in French for the benefit of the laity.

Several persons of the highest distinction had come to Reims to submit grave political or religious affairs to the Council’s decision. The Pope could not hear their petitions, and announced that he was going to Mouzon to make peace with the emperor. During Callistus’s absence the Fathers of the Council offered prayers and sacrifices to God and went in procession, barefoot and candle in hand, to the church of Saint-Remi. Meanwhile the Pope, after waiting some days for the emperor at Mouzon, learned that his dispositions had changed: Henry was seeking to evade the execution of his promises and, by calculated delays and clever shuffling, was thinking of seizing the person of the sovereign Pontiff. Callistus saw through the trap, returned to Reims in all haste, and closed the sessions of the Council on Thursday, 30 October. Five canons were drawn up, some relating to traffic in holy things and others to the administration of the sacraments. The Pope spoke with such eloquence that they were unanimously accepted, despite the express condemnation they pronounced against simony, then so common and so unhappily sanctioned by the emperors. Then four hundred and twenty-seven lighted candles were brought and distributed to the bishops and to the abbots bearing the crozier. All these prelates standing, candle in hand, the Pope solemnly excommunicated the enemies of God and the Church, whose names he read. The first two were the perjured emperor and the antipope Bourdin. The sovereign Pontiff, by virtue of his apostolic authority, released Henry’s subjects from

their oath of fidelity, unless he should come to his senses and make satisfaction to the Church. Then he gave absolution and his blessing to the whole assembly and allowed everyone to return home. So ended the Council of Reims.

From Reims Callistus went to Gisors to confer with the king of England, his godson and kinsman, about his quarrels with the king of France. The king of England received him with every kind of honour, prostrating himself humbly at his feet; but the Pope raised him tenderly and blessed him, and they embraced each other with great joy. The differences that had arisen between this prince and Louis the Fat were settled through Callistus's mediation. The castles taken on both sides, whether by fraud or by force, were restored to their lords; the prisoners were set free and returned joyfully to their families.

After the conference at Gisors, Callistus made his way towards Italy, settling several affairs on his route. King Louis the Fat and Queen Adelaide, his niece, accompanied him as a mark of honour from Paris to Corbeil, with most of the lords of their court. In Burgundy, at the request of St. Stephen, abbot of Cîteaux, he confirmed the regulations of that Order by a bull of 23 December 1119. Two days later he celebrated the feast of Christmas at Autun, and there received a visit from Bruno, archbishop of Trier, who obtained from him, by a letter of 3 January, the remission of his sins and the renewal of the privileges of his Church. The Pope, wishing also to distinguish by some favour the Church of Vienne, which had been his first see, gave it the title of primatial church with jurisdiction over the provinces of Vienne, Bourges, Bordeaux, Auch, Narbonne, Aix and Embrun. He crossed the Alps and then entered Lombardy and Tuscany. The clergy and people, crowding along his way, could not see enough of him. At Lucca the militia came to meet him and conducted him in procession to the bishop's palace. At Pisa he solemnly consecrated the great church that had just been built in that city. The news of his arrival, reaching Rome, roused the greatest joy in the city. The citizens came out in arms to meet him as far as three days' journey. The children, carrying branches of trees and strewing flowers in his path, received him with acclamations of praise. He entered Rome with the tiara on his head and passed like a conqueror through the streets and squares, hung with rich tapestries. Greeks and Latins sang together around him; even the Jews applauded his coming. The processions were so numerous that they lasted from morning till evening. At last, amid these songs of gladness, the Pope was conducted and installed by the magistrates in the Lateran palace.

In spite of these demonstrations, Callistus soon perceived that he was not safe in Rome, because of the intrigues of his rival. He went first to Monte Cassino, where the abbot of that monastery provided magnificently for the costs of his journey and stay; then at Benevento he received the homage of William of Normandy, duke of Apulia and Calabria. This prince, having obtained from the Pope the investiture of all the country he occupied, offered him his help to free himself from his enemies. Bourdin had withdrawn with his partisans into the fortress of Sutri; from there he persecuted those who visited the sovereign Pontiff, and sometimes even had them put to death. Callistus, wishing to put an end to these acts of brigandage, returned to Rome to celebrate the feast of Easter, and as soon as it was over he charged Cardinal John of Crema with besieging the antipope in his fortress. The expedition was completely successful. As soon as the inhabitants of Sutri saw their walls battered, they seized the schismatic and handed him over to Callistus's soldiers.

The fall of the antipope strengthened Callistus's authority and added further to the high reputation for courage and virtue this Pontiff had acquired. He was consulted from all sides in important affairs, and, whether by his direct intervention or by the ministry of his legates, he ended with rare good fortune the wars that divided princes, as well as the less grave but no less thorny difficulties that sometimes arose in churches or monasteries. But the quarrel of investitures was not yet settled; the Pope lamented it, and the emperor himself was beginning to feel the whole weight of the anathemas of the Holy See. Henry, on the advice given him in an assembly of the German nation held at Würzburg, sent to Rome Bruno, bishop of Speyer, and Arnulf, abbot of Fulda. These two envoys brought back to Germany three cardinals, Lambert, bishop of Ostia, Saxo, priest, and Gregory, deacon, whom the Pope had invested with the powers of legate. The

plenipotentiaries opened a diet at Worms and at last concluded peace between the Church and the empire after twelve days of conferences. The great difficulty was to reconcile the rights and customs of the empire with the rights and liberty of the Church. The princes regarded it as a hereditary right to give investiture by the crozier and the ring; but for a long time they had been abusing this ceremony to confiscate the freedom of elections to their own profit and to traffic in holy things. A middle course was found. The emperor renounced investiture by crozier and ring and left elections free; but the bishop or abbot, freely elected and consecrated, was, in his capacity as temporal prince, to receive from the emperor the investiture of the regalia or royal rights by the sceptre, which is the emblem of human power. The agreement was made on these terms, in the hope that the Pope would ratify it. Two documents were drawn up, which were read and exchanged between the parties on 23 October 1122, in a plain on the banks of the Rhine where a countless people had gathered. The bishop of Ostia celebrated Mass and gave the emperor the kiss of peace; the legates granted a general absolution to the people and the army, and the assembly dispersed, manifesting by striking demonstrations the joy that animated it. In the following December Callistus wrote to the emperor to congratulate him on his submission to the Church. He rejoiced in it particularly because of the kinship that united them, thanked him for his presents, and asked him to send back the legates as soon as possible because of the council, whose time was near.

Peace having been restored, the Pope did in fact hold a council at Rome during Lent of 1123. It is the First Lateran and the ninth that deserves the title of ecumenical. Nearly a thousand prelates attended, with laymen without number of every rank and condition; Suger, abbot of Saint-Denis, attended in the name of Louis the Fat. Callistus there published and solemnly ratified the peace he had made with Henry. He also promulgated twenty-two canons on various points of morals and discipline.

The city of Rome could at last enjoy, thanks to the care of Callistus, a peace it had long ceased to know. He had had the fortresses raised in the neighbourhood by Cencio Frangipane and some other petty tyrants destroyed, subdued the counts who plundered the goods of the Church, and purged his States of the brigands with which they were infested. The roads leading to the holy city became free; strangers going there were no longer insulted, and during their stay they had nothing more to fear from the greed or insolence of the inhabitants. Callistus thus brought abundance and splendour back to Rome, restored the ancient monuments to honour, and built aqueducts for the convenience of the various quarters of the city. The offerings brought to the church of St. Peter, instead of being plundered with impunity as before, were returned to their purpose and used for the benefit of the Church. The Pope devoted them to the restoration of that basilica; he furnished it with magnificent ornaments, and every time he celebrated the holy sacrifice there he left marks of his munificence. The private life of Callistus was, like his public life, a model of wisdom and regularity. His morals were so pure that, despite the corruption of the age, no suspicion could touch them. His contemporaries praise without reservation his piety, his zeal, his patience and his disinterestedness. St. Norbert, founder of the Premonstratensian order, St. Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, St. Oldegar, archbishop of Tarragona, Peter the Venerable and Abbot Suger — so famous, the one in the annals of Cluny, the other in the history of France — kept up frequent relations with him and showed as much esteem for his person as veneration for his dignity. With such auxiliaries there was nothing so great a Pope could not undertake and achieve for the good of the world. And in fact, in less than six years of pontificate he had pacified the world, restored the authority of the chair of St. Peter and all the splendour of the hierarchical order, and made his name known and blessed in every part of the globe.

Why must so fine a life have been cut short prematurely? Everything might have been expected of a pope in whom genius was united with courage, and the liveliest piety with the purest zeal. But God is sometimes content to show the Saints to the earth; they pass by doing good and accomplish in a short time works that common virtue could scarcely sketch out in a great number of years. Towards the end of 1124 Callistus was attacked by a violent fever, which carried him off after a few days. He died on 12 December, amid the tears

of his clergy and people. His death was regarded throughout Europe as a calamity; princes paid their regrets to his memory, and, although he never received the honours of a public cult, his name was inscribed with the title of Blessed in several documents. The martyrology of the Benedictines and that of Cîteaux mark his feast for 12 December.

Extracted from the *Saints of Franche-Comté*, by the professors of the college of Saint-François-Xavier at Besançon.

ST. GAUSBERT, BISHOP OF CAHORS, AND THE CHAPEL OF THE RECLUSE (about 950)

Gausbert, who flourished in the 10th century and was made bishop of Cahors by the wish and to the applause of all the people, was a man of eminent learning, admirably endowed with every kind of virtue, and so affable with everyone that one may say of him, as of the Apostle, that he made himself all things to all men. His prayer ceased neither by day nor by night. He prepared himself continually for death as if he were to die that very day. St. Gausbert was closely bound in friendship with St. Gerald, count of Aurillac in Auvergne. When Gerald made known to our Saint and to other distinguished persons the distaste he had conceived for the world and the plan he had formed of taking the religious habit, making the journey to Rome and bequeathing his goods by will to Saint Peter, St. Gausbert, viewing things from a higher standpoint, persuaded him to live as a religious under the secular habit for the salvation of his fellow countrymen, whom his example would edify, while remaining free, if he wished, to give his goods to Saint Peter. A father of the poor, he fed them from the revenues of his church, contenting himself with a very simple manner of life. His cult is very ancient in the cathedral church of Cahors, where there is a chapel dedicated under his name.

The chapel of the Recluse [Chapelle du Reclus], in the diocese of Saint-Flour (canton of Montsalvy), is a place of pilgrimage where the faithful often come to pray to the Blessed Virgin as refuge of sinners. This is its origin. A religious had been condemned to death for the crime of sorcery. Brought back to repentance and to Christian sentiments by St. Gausbert, he had been led to the place of execution, accompanied by St. Gausbert himself, who had vainly begged for his pardon with prayers and tears. The executioner having fled, and no one being found to take his place, the multitude gathered to watch the execution, moved at the sight of the condemned man, touched by his repentance and carried away by Gausbert’s devotion, asked for his pardon with one voice. This pardon was granted only on condition that he should do penance all his life in a secluded place. Gausbert, accepting the condition, took him to Montsalvy and had a cell built for him near the town, where the poor religious spent his whole life in the austerities of penance, which he crowned with a death precious in the sight of God. On the site of his cell a chapel was built which was called the chapel of the Recluse, and bore at first the dedication of St. Mary Magdalen, model of penitents, then that of the Immaculate Conception. The Congregants of Mary [Children of Mary sodality] have for this reason adopted it as their chapel, and people often come to pray within its walls.

Local notes; *Notre-Dame de France*, by the curé of Saint-Sulpice.

OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE, NEAR MEXICO CITY, IN AMERICA (1531)

Guadalupe is for America what Loreto is for Europe; we therefore cannot resist the pleasure of telling the faithful about the origin of this venerated sanctuary.

Among the Indians converted to Christianity in Mexico there was, in 1531, Juan Diego of Quauhtitlan, so called from the place of his birth, eight miles from Mexico City. He was poor, but he feared the Lord, lived content with his condition, and showed himself a fervent Christian in everything.

On Saturday, 9 December in the year 1531, at sunrise, the devout Diego was going to Mexico City to satisfy his devotion. He had reached the foot of the hill that rose between the city and his dwelling when he heard a

melodious concert, which he at first took for the singing of birds. The concert continues and piques his curiosity. He turns aside and sees a light cloud, resplendent with brightness and bordered with a rainbow in which the liveliest colours were painted. Filled with joy, he stops and gazes eagerly at this spectacle. The harmony ceases, and he hears himself called by his name. He makes out a voice coming from within the cloud. He climbs the hill and sees a majestic throne on which was seated a virgin of incomparable beauty. Her face was bright as the sun; from her garments sprang rays of a light so vivid and so abundant that the rocks round about seemed transformed into precious stones. Diego is at first plunged into a kind of stupor. But She whose presence ravished all his senses draws him out of it by saying to him: "Where are you going?" — "I am going," he answered, "to hear Mass in honour of the Virgin." — "Your devotion is pleasing to me," the unknown lady replies; "your humility pleases me. I am that Virgin, the Mother of God. I wish a temple to be built for me here, where I shall pour out my kindnesses and where I shall show myself your Mother, the Mother of your fellow citizens and of those who invoke my name with confidence. Go on my behalf to the bishop and inform him of my desire."

The Blessed Virgin had inspired the Indian with an assurance that raised him above fear. He runs to the prelate and gives him an account of what had happened to him. The prelate, Juan de Zumárraga, a Franciscan religious endowed with great virtues and, among others, with rare prudence, listens attentively to his story. Diego's ingenuousness and the tone of conviction and truth that animated him gave a kind of guarantee to his words; but this was not enough to settle his judgment. Before undertaking anything, he demands surer testimonies of the will of heaven. Abashed, Diego withdraws in silence; he satisfies his devotion in Mexico City and, to regain his home, takes the hill road again. Mary appears to him once more: she was eager to grant the sign requested. "Go up on the height," she says to Diego, "and gather there a bunch of flowers which you will carry to the bishop of Mexico." Mary's order was of a kind to astonish any reasoning mind: it was not the season for flowers. Besides, the place was covered with thorns and brushwood. But Diego had a simple and upright soul, and persuasion flowed from the lips of the immaculate Virgin. Diego knew only how to obey her voice; he climbs the hill and finds there an enchanted garden. There the freshest and most brilliant flowers astonish his eyes; he chooses at will among the multitude and comes to present to Mary what he has gathered. Mary makes a bunch of them and charges her devout servant to carry it to the bishop. Diego, proud of this precious charge, sets out for Mexico City. The message entrusted to him absorbs all his thoughts and pours an ineffable contentment into his soul.

Meanwhile the flowers he kept hidden under his cloak spread the sweetest perfume far and wide. This perfume betrays him. On his arrival the prelate's servants, drawn by the scent of the flowers, stop him and half open the cloak. The sight of these flowers fills them with astonishment. One of them tries to put his hand on them, and perceives that they are painted flowers. The bishop is told everything. The villager appears before him and opens the cloak, which he had closed again. Then, to the great surprise of all present and of Diego himself, the image of Mary is seen imprinted on this cloak. No sooner have the prelate and the persons of his household cast their eyes on this image than they fall on their knees and remain for some time mute and motionless, able only to admire the superhuman beauty of Her whose features they contemplated. Then the prelate rises, takes the cloak from the devout Mexican's shoulders and exposes it in his chapel, until a sanctuary should be raised to enshrine it. The whole city flocked to the bishop's house to honour the miraculous image.

Meanwhile the prelate, followed by a great concourse of people, goes the next day, 13 December, to the hill. He questions Diego in detail; he wishes to know in what spot the Virgin showed herself to him. Diego did not think he could determine it with exact precision. A new prodigy came to relieve him of his embarrassment. A spring suddenly gushed forth and marked the place of the apparition. It has not ceased to flow since. Its waters have worked several cures.

As the throng of people continued and even increased every day, the bishop transferred the holy image to the cathedral until the sanctuary intended for it should be finished. Haste was made to raise it on the spot designated. When the building was finished, the image was carried there; and many miracles proved more and more the truth of the facts on which the cult paid to Mary in this image was founded.

But at last, as this new sanctuary could no longer hold the crowd that gathered round the Mother of God, it was decided about the year 1695 to build another. The archbishop of Mexico, Francisco de Aguiar y Seijas, laid its first stone. This is the superb church admired today. On 1 May 1709 the holy image was transferred to it and placed on a throne of silver. As gifts multiplied from day to day, rich altars of fine marble were built and the treasury enriched with precious vessels. A viceroy of Mexico, Don Antonio María Bucareli, surrounded the image with a cornice of solid gold and enriched the altar with twelve golden candlesticks. In 1749 a Chapter was founded to serve this sanctuary. Mexico solemnly consecrated itself to Our Lady of Guadalupe, and a holiday of obligation was established for 12 December, with the rite of the first class and a privileged octave.

Dictionary of Religious Pilgrimages, published by the Abbé Migne.

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[1] 1 April is the day of St. Valery's death: the Roman martyrology names him on that same day. But his feast is celebrated with the rite of the first class in the diocese of Amiens on 12 December. Since the Concordat the solemnity has been transferred to the third Sunday of Advent when the feast does not fall on that day. — Cf. the article Veneration and Relics in our life of St. Valery, on 1 April (vol. IV, p. 109).

[2] We gave the life of Pope St. Damasus on 11 December.

[3] On this Finding of the body of St. Francis of Assisi see the details we gave in his life, on 4 October, in the article Veneration and Relics (vol. XII, p. 40).

[4] Blessed Jerome Ranucci, of a noble family of Sant'Angelo in Vado, a town of the duchy of Urbino, left the world in his youth and became a Servite religious. After his profession he went to study at the university of Bologna, where he attained the degree of doctor. He was then charged with teaching theology; then he became prior of his convent. Among other virtues, his charity towards everyone was especially remarked, his kindness in receiving in the confessional and elsewhere those who had recourse to his lights, and his eagerness to help them. He was commonly called *the angel of good counsel*. Frederick of "Peltre" [*as printed; Federico da Montefeltro*], duke of Urbino, held him in great esteem. Jerome gave up his soul to God on 12 December 1455. Pope Pius VI approved his cult on 1 April 1775; and he is honoured in his Order on the day of his death. — Local notes.

[5] But it is probable that his father was a Breton lord, one of those who had passed from Great Britain into Armorica.

[6] Grallon gave him his palace, which was called Quimper, to make a church of it. The word *Quimper* means confluence. The cathedral, situated between two rivers, therefore probably stands on the site of Grallon's palace. This opinion is confirmed by old French verses, engraved in the year 1424, which could still be seen at the Revolution under the equestrian statue of this prince at the great portal of the nave. They have been effaced.

[7] He attended the council of Angers of the year 453, where he is named Chariaton.

13 December

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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Martyrologies

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY.

At Syracuse, in Sicily, the heavenly birthday of St. Lucy, virgin and martyr, who, during the persecution of Diocletian, was handed over by order of Paschasius, a man of consular rank, to libertines who wished to take her to a place where the people might insult her chastity; but she remained so firm and immovable that they could not move her either with ropes or with several yoke of oxen. They then tried to burn her with boiling pitch, resin and oil, but she received no harm from it. Then, struck in the throat with a sword, she completed the course of her martyrdom. 303. — In Armenia, the passion of the holy martyrs Eustratius, Auxentius,

Eugenius, Mardarius and Orestes, put to death during the persecution of Diocletian. Eustratius, at first alone under the governor Lysias, then at Sebaste with Orestes, endured most cruel torments under the governor Agricolaus, who at last had him thrown into a furnace, where he gave up the ghost, while Orestes, stretched on a red-hot iron bed, flew away to the Lord. The others, who had remained among the Arabraci, there accomplished their martyrdom by divers kinds of torment. Their bodies were afterwards carried to Rome and laid with honour in the church of Sant'Apollinare. — In the island of Solta, near Sardinia, St. Antiochus, martyr, under the emperor Hadrian. 2nd c. — At Cambrai, St. Aubert, bishop and confessor. 669. — In Ponthieu, St. Josse, confessor. 669. — In the diocese of Strasbourg, St. Odile, virgin. 8th c. — At Moulins, the death of St. Jane Frances Frémyot de Chantal, foundress of the Order of the Visitation of Holy Mary; illustrious for her nobility, for the holiness of her life, which was constantly perfect in four different states, and for the gift of miracles, she was canonized by Clement XIII. Her body was carried to Annecy and buried with pomp in the first church of her Order. Her feast is kept, by order of Clement XIV, on 21 August. 1641.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED.

In the dioceses of Amiens, Arras, Autun, Beauvais, Carcassonne, Meaux, Pamiers, Paris and Verdun, St. Lucy, virgin and martyr at Syracuse, in Sicily, cited in the Roman Martyrology of this day. 303. — In the dioceses of Amiens and Beauvais, St. Josse (*Judocius*), hermit in Ponthieu, cited today in the same martyrology. 669. — In the diocese of Cambrai, St. Aubert (*Autbertus*), bishop of that see and confessor, cited today from the same source. 669. — In the dioceses of Mainz and Strasbourg, St. Odile, virgin, abbess of Hohenbourg, patroness of all Alsace, cited on this day in the Roman Martyrology. 8th c. — In the diocese of Meaux, St. Elizabeth-Rose, nun of Chelles, near Paris, then foundress and first abbess of the monastery of Sainte-Marie du Rozoy. 1130. — At Anzy (Saône-et-Loire, arrondissement of Charolles, canton of Marcigny), in the diocese of Autun, the translation (1001) of the relics of Bl. Hugh of Poitiers, founder of the priory of Anzy-le-Duc.[1] 928. — At Belley, Bl. Ponce de Balmey, bishop of that see and confessor. 1140. — At Nevers, the dedication of the church of Saint-Étienne of that city.[2] 1097. — At Angoulême, Bl. Jean Chauveneau, martyr, of the Order of St. Dominic. The Calvinists put him in prison for the faith, and he died there after much suffering. 1568. — In Auvergne, St. Vitalina or Vitaline, virgin, recluse at Artonne (Puy-de-Dôme, arrondissement of Riom, canton of Aigueperse), in the diocese of Clermont. St. Gregory of Tours praised her, and God has been pleased to honour her tomb with frequent miracles. 4th c. — At Cahors, the death of St. Ursisius (*Ursisius*), bishop of that see and confessor.[3] About 590.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS.

At Naples, the death of Bl. John Marinoni, Theatine. 1562. — At Uppsala, a city of Sweden on the Fyris, St. Henry, archbishop of that see and martyr. An Englishman by birth, he went to preach the faith to the peoples of the North with Nicholas Breakspear, his fellow-countryman, who is regarded as the apostle of Norway, and who was cardinal-legate of the Holy See, then pope in 1154 under the name of Adrian IV. It was this Nicholas Breakspear who consecrated our holy archbishop of Uppsala in 1148. The new pastor, having holily regulated all that concerned his Church and procured the conversion of several provinces, went to carry the light of the faith into Finland, newly conquered by Eric, king of Sweden. His evangelical labours, which God crowned with blessings, have earned him the title of apostle of that country; but he could not continue them long: he was stoned at the instigation of a murderer whom he had tried in vain to bring back to his duty. His tomb was always in great veneration at Uppsala until the sixteenth century, when the heretics scattered his relics.[4] 1151.

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SAINT JOSSE OR JUDOCUS, KING OF BRITTANY, HERMIT IN PONTHIEU[5]

669. — Pope: Vitalian. — King of France: Clotaire III.

Optimus quisque in coelestes honores terrenos honores transfert.

A wise man knows how to give up an earthly kingdom at the right moment in order to obtain admission into the kingdom of heaven. — *St. Eucherius of Lyons.*

Josse, having been called to succeed his brother Judicael in his States of Brittany — because that prince, weary of the cares of government, had resolved to return to the cloister which he had left to mount his father's throne — asked for eight days as if to deliberate on his brother's proposal; but he used this delay only to flee the honours which Judicael wished to lay upon him. This he carried out by joining some pilgrims who were going to Rome and whom he saw as they passed before the door of the monastery of Saint-Maëlmon, where he happened to be at that moment. These pilgrims willingly admitted him into their company and took him with them.

St. Josse, having thus renounced royalty to attach himself to the service of the Lord, went to Chartres with his eleven companions, and from there followed them to Paris, capital of the French monarchy, where he stayed some time with them.[1] From Paris, the companions of St. Josse, instead of setting out for Rome, where they had at first meant to go, took the opposite road and went to the city of Amiens in Picardy. The holy prince still followed them, for he had no particular design, and aspired only to serve God with all his heart in whatever place it might be, provided he was unknown there. Leaving Amiens, the pilgrims went on as far as the river Authie, crossed it, and came to a place called *Villa Sancti Petri*, where the duke or count of the country of Ponthieu, named Haymon, usually lived, a lord of great virtue. He received the twelve pilgrims and entertained them for three days with much charity.

He easily distinguished our Saint, because he bore on his face an air of greatness which the others had not, and his actions and words showed the splendour of his birth and of the royal education he had received; besides, he had an angelic modesty and gentleness which, joined to the majestic bearing nature had given him, made him altogether lovable and won him the esteem and respect of all who looked on him. The prince therefore begged him not to leave him, and, having obtained this favour, he let the eleven other pilgrims continue their journey; he gave Josse an apartment in his palace, had him receive sacred Orders, and named him priest of his chapel; then, to show still more the esteem he had for his virtue, he obliged him to hold at the baptismal font one of his sons, whom he named Ursin, in memory of St. Ursinus, archbishop of Bourges.

It was hardly St. Josse's inclination to remain at this court; for, though holy and very well ordered, it did not fail to distract him; and so, after spending seven years there, he besought Haymon to allow him to withdraw into a solitude where he might occupy himself more quietly in the contemplation of eternal truths. Not only did the duke not oppose it, but, wishing to favour with all his power the desire of so holy a priest, he led him to a desert place on the river Authie, which the ancients called Brahic and which is now named Raye, where he gave him ground enough to build an oratory and a hermitage. The building finished, Josse shut himself up there with a single disciple who had followed him from Brittany, named Wurmar or Wulmar, and began to lead there a wholly heavenly life, with no other occupation than to celebrate the holy mysteries, to sing the praises of God, to meditate the words of the Gospel and to converse with the angels and the saints. His conduct and innocence were soon shown by miracles; for it is said that the birds and fishes grew as familiar with him as they would have done with Adam in the earthly paradise, and came to take their food from his hand with the same confidence as chicks take theirs from their mothers' beaks.

He was also extremely merciful towards the poor, and could not refuse them alms as long as there was a morsel of bread in his cell. One day, when he was at prayer in his chapel, he heard the voice of a poor man

begging for charity: he asked his disciple whether he still had any provision. “I have only one loaf left,” he said, “which can serve only for our food for today.” — “Go,” replied Josse, “cut it in pieces and give a quarter of it to this unfortunate man.” Scarcely had he done so when another poor man came to set forth his misery and ask for something to relieve his hunger. The Saint would not send him away either; he told Wurmar to take another quarter of the loaf and carry it to him. The disciple obeyed this new order only with grumbling, fearing he would not have enough to feed his master and himself. Meanwhile a third poor man, as needy as the two before, arrived shortly afterwards; Josse saw him and, almost without waiting for him to open his mouth, ordered Wurmar to give him one of the two pieces that remained. “What then do you want us to live on?” replied the disciple; “must we die of hunger to feed these beggars, who can go and beg elsewhere?” — “Do not be troubled, my child,” the Saint said to him; “only do what I command you, and God will take care of us.” As soon as he had obeyed and the poor man had gone, a fourth was heard ringing at the door and asking alms with still more insistence and importunity than the others. What will Josse do? The piece left to him is too small to be shared between himself, his disciple and this poor man; will he give it all? Then he will have nothing left to live on, and must pass the day and the following night without food. Will he keep it back? Charity again prevailed over his own need; and, unable to let this beggar go without help, he had the rest of the bread given to him. Wurmar renewed his complaints, but Josse again made him accept this arrangement, and it was soon followed by an ample reward; for immediately afterwards divine Providence brought to the bank by their hermitage four boats laden with everything necessary for life. This leads to the belief that the four poor men who had presented themselves one after another to Josse for alms were Jesus Christ himself, who had taken these four different forms to test the charity of his servant.[2]

He remained eight years in this solitude; but, finding himself extraordinarily tormented by the demons, who ceaselessly laid snares for him, he resolved at last to withdraw elsewhere. He made his intention known to Duke Haymon, who visited him from time to time, and, having obtained from him another place, called Runiac or Rimac, on the little river Canche, he built there an oratory in honour of St. Martin and spent thirteen more years there.[3] However, as the evil spirit did not cease to pursue him, he again had recourse to the good duke for another retreat. “Let us go together,” Haymon said to him, “and we will look for a place that suits you.” On this journey St. Josse made a spring gush forth in a dry place by driving his staff into the ground, to relieve the thirst of his benefactor; this spring has since given water in abundance and served for the healing of many sick people. The place they chose for this new hermitage was in a thick forest between Étaples and Montreuil, in a spot lying between the river Authie and the Canche. It seemed to them very convenient in that it was watered by a stream coming from two springs, one called the Bretons’ spring and the other the spring of the Gard. The duke had it cleared, and the Saint at once built there with his own hands, and of wood only, two oratories: one in honour of St. Peter, prince of the Apostles, the other in honour of St. Paul, doctor of the Gentiles.

Some time afterwards he wished to make the pilgrimage to Rome, to visit the tombs of the holy Apostles and bring back relics. Having obtained the duke’s consent, he made the whole journey on foot, staff in hand and begging alms. The Pope received him very honourably, gave him his apostolic blessing and enriched him with several relics of martyrs.

On his return, as he was on the hill of Bavémont, a league from his hermitage, a young girl named Juyule, blind from birth, had a revelation that she would obtain her sight if she washed with water in which the holy priest had washed his hands. She lived with her father at the castle of Airon, only half a league from Saint-Josse; she told him of it, and her father, not wishing to neglect so advantageous an opportunity, at once took her to the hill where the Saint had arrived. The girl took the water he had used and washed her face with it, and by this remedy she obtained on the instant very beautiful eyes and the use of sight. The inhabitants of the place had a cross set up where this signal miracle had been wrought, and for that reason the spot was always called *la Croix*, until this commemorative monument was moved elsewhere.[4]

As soon as Duke Haymon learned of the return of the servant of God, he went out to meet him and received him with new marks of respect and friendship. In his absence he had had a stone church built near his cell, under the invocation of St. Martin. It was blessed, and St. Josse deposited in it the relics he had brought from Rome. The ceremony of this translation took place on 11 June; and while he was celebrating Mass, in the presence of the same duke and of a great throng of lords and people, a heavenly hand appeared visibly over the altar, blessing the holy Chalice and the Oblations, and at the same time a voice was heard saying to him: "Because you have despised the riches of the earth and refused your father's kingdom, to lead in this solitude a poor and hidden life, far from the dwelling of sinners, I have prepared for you an immortal crown in the company of the Angels; I will be the guardian and perpetual defender of this place; you will die here, and those who invoke you with reverence will receive here the effect of their petitions." And indeed the Saint spent the rest of his days there in a manner more angelic than human, and died on 13 December 669.

His virginal body was buried in his own hermitage; but it was covered neither with earth nor with stone, because it bore no mark of corruption; on the contrary, the hair, beard and nails grew as if he were still alive, so that Winoc and Arnoc, his nephews, who succeeded him in possession of his cell and had the key of his coffin, were obliged to cut them from time to time, as one does for a living man.

St. Josse is most usually represented in pilgrim's dress, a pilgrim's staff in his hand and two crossed keys on his hat, to indicate his journey to Rome. The sceptre and crown lying at his feet recall the royalty he refused. Sometimes he carries, hung from a scarf, the pouch of relics which the sovereign Pontiff gave him. This detail, misunderstood by some painters, has more than once been disfigured: the scarf has turned into a baldric, and the casket into an alms-purse. He is also represented making a spring gush forth with his staff, or sharing his bread with a poor man. It is wrong to give him a mitre, as is sometimes done, since he was never an abbot.

In the church of Saint-Josse-sur-Mer, recently built, there may be seen, besides a modern window, a statue of the Patron two metres high. The Breton prince, in royal dress, tramples crown and sceptre underfoot.

There are also statues of the holy hermit in the churches of Tortefontaine, of Mouriez (1836), of Saint-Josse-au-Val at Montreuil, and in the chapel of Saint-Josse-au-Bois (1861).

An old image of St. Josse, formerly distributed to pilgrims, shows him returning from Rome on the hill of Bavémont, with a casket of relics hung from a scarf. In the distance is seen the abbey which was to make this region illustrious.

M. Guénebault, in his *Dictionnaire iconographique*, lists the following engravings: 1° St. Josse kneeling before an altar and embracing a crucifix from which spring three lily stems, one from the upper part and the other two from the arms: angels bring him the crown of triumph; 2° the same, refusing the crown which his brother offers him; 3° the same, holding a crucifix.

VENERATION AND RELICS.

The cult of St. Josse was already so famous in the eleventh century that pilgrims came to his sanctuary from every region of France and even from foreign countries. Some historians claim that Charlemagne went there in 793 and that it was then that he conceived the plan of rebuilding a monastic hostelry whose administration he was to give to Alcuin. There already existed numerous Confraternities of Saint-Josse, spread through France and Germany.

Clement X, by a bull dated 1673, granted a plenary indulgence to all who, on the day of St. Josse, should visit his church at Dommartin and receive Holy Communion there.

The village of Parnes (Oise), which believes it possesses relics of St. Josse, pays its patron a very special cult. On 13 December little blessed loaves are distributed to the parishioners, in memory of the loaf that was

shared among four poor men in the hermitage of Brahic.

St. Josse is the patron of Béhen, in the deanery of Moyenneville. He was formerly patron of the two abbeys that bore his name; of Saint-Josse-au-Val and of an old castle chapel at Montreuil; and of the parish of Saint-Josse in Paris.

According to popular belief, the holy hermit was the founder of a number of parishes round Dommartin and of a monastery of which some traces are still shown at Mayocque. We do not know for what reason St. Josse is honoured at Javarin (Austria) and at Ravensburg (Württemberg).

A commune of the arrondissement of Dinan bears the name Saint-Judoce. Saint-Josse is the name of a street at Hesmond and at Dompierre, and of a suburb of Brussels.

The holy hermit's name is entered on 13 December in the Roman Martyrology, in some amplified martyrologies of Usuard's, and in those of Bede and Wandalbert; which proves that in the ninth century, as in our own day, our Saint was invoked during storms. His name also appears in the Amiens litanies of the thirteenth century.

Formerly, five feasts of the patron were kept at the abbey of Saint-Josse-sur-Mer: 11 June, the appearance of the miraculous hand (665) — this feast is still kept today at Saint-Josse-sur-Mer, where it is called Saint-Barnabé because of the coincidence with that Apostle's feast; 25 July, the finding of St. Josse's body (977); Tuesday in Whitsun week, procession to Bavémont (*la Croix*); 25 October, translation of the relics (1195) — it is wrongly marked on 9 January in the English Martyrology; 13 December, deposition of St. Josse — it is wrongly given on 4 August in some old calendars.

On the day of their patronal feast, the inhabitants of the village of Saint-Josse had to give the count of Ponthieu a flayed cow; when the feast fell on a day of abstinence, this due was changed into a hundred eggs and a pound of pepper.

The feast of St. Josse is marked on 25 July in the Amiens breviary of 1528; on 2 December in those of 1746 and 1840; on 13 December in those of Paris and Beauvais and in the present Proper of Arras; on the 14th in that of Saint-Valery; on the 18th in that of Saint-Riquier.

Since the introduction of the Roman liturgy, only a simple commemoration of St. Josse is made, on 13 December, in the dioceses of Amiens and Arras.

In the year 977 the body of St. Josse was discovered at the right side of the altar of St. Martin, raised from the ground and laid on the altar of St. Martin on 25 July. That same year a monastery began to be built on the spot, and Sigebraud became its first abbot. Later this holy body was put back in the ground during troubles that arose in this kingdom, and remained so well hidden that the monks themselves did not know where it was. A simple layman made known, by revelation, the place where it lay, and having been received by the monks, in gratitude for this good service he was made guardian of these holy relics by the abbot then living. But another abbot, who succeeded him, did not show this guardian all the consideration he should have. This conduct made the man resolve to carry off the greater part of the relics of St. Josse and take them into France. Geoffrey, lord of Commercy, received him with honour and gave him the first dignity of the collegiate church of the castle, where there were four canons. Some time afterwards King Henry besieged Commercy, took it and burned it. While the flames were devouring the buildings, a canon carried off the relics of St. Josse and fled with his treasure. He was met on the bridge by Robert Meflebran, a dependant of Raoul de Chauldré, one of the chief knights of the king's army. Robert asked the canon what the bundle he was carrying was. The canon answered that it was church vestments and books. Everything was taken from him, and these precious relics having been found, they were placed in the church of Saint-Martin of Parnes, in the Vexin, quite near Magny. The church has changed its name and taken that of Saint-Josse; the relics (head and arm bones) are exposed there for the veneration of the people every year on Whit Monday: they are enclosed

in a silver bust. The rest is in the parish church of the village of Saint-Josse, at the mouth of the Canche. The abbey having been suppressed some time before the Revolution, the Saint's relics were carried into the parish church. They were there at the time of the Revolution and were then saved from profanation by the zeal of some pious inhabitants of the place, who returned them when tranquillity was restored. They were recognized on 3 May 1805 by the bishop of Arras, in whose diocese the parish of Saint-Josse-sur-Mer now lies. The prelate took from the shrine an arm bone, part of which he granted to the church of Saint-Saulve of Montreuil. From this relic a particle was detached in 1835 to give to the parish church of Yvias, in the diocese of Saint-Brieuc, which is dedicated to St. Josse. The church of Paris also possessed a small bone of the Saint and part of a vertebra, given to it in 1705. These precious remains are now lost. There are still some bones of St. Josse in the cathedral of Arras, in the church of Oignies (Pas-de-Calais), in that of Corbie, etc.

Lives of the Saints of Brittany, by Dom Lobineau; *Hagiographie du diocèse d'Amiens*, by the abbé Corblet.

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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SAINT AUBERT, BISHOP OF CAMBRAI AND ARRAS

669. — Pope: Vitalian. — King of France: Clotaire III.

Diligite lumen sapientiae, omnes qui praeestis populis.

Love the light of wisdom, all you who preside over the destinies of peoples. — *Wisdom vi, 23.*

The episcopate of St. Aubert is one of the finest that the history of the dioceses of Cambrai and Arras presents; it unquestionably places this pontiff among the great bishops who shone in the seventh century in the north of the land of the Franks. By his position and his character he was in contact with illustrious persons, and he prudently made use of their ministry to spread the faith in the vast regions entrusted to his pastoral care.

The first years of St. Aubert are unknown. We do not even know who his parents were, nor in what country he was born. If certain authors are to be believed, it was in the village of Haucourt, or at least in a place fairly close to Cambrai. From his youth he was distinguished by a modest gravity and an early wisdom which won him all hearts. His soul, an enemy of dissimulation, opened itself to every fine feeling and received with a holy eagerness the blessings and graces of heaven. These virtuous inclinations early opened to him the doors of the sanctuary, to which it seemed plain that God was calling him. People were quickly convinced of this when they saw the young cleric, scarcely admitted to the tonsure, walk fervently in the ways of perfection. Some years afterwards he was judged worthy to be promoted to the priesthood, and the church of Cambrai saw with joy go up to the altar the man whom God destined soon to govern it with wisdom.

In fact, when Aldebert or Ablebert died, the votes of the clergy and people went to the humble Aubert, in whom this honour and this burden inspired the keenest fears. Had he consulted the desires of his heart, he would have withdrawn into some solitude to devote his life there to prayer and to meditation on heavenly things; but he had to yield and accept, with the burden of the episcopate, the pains and fatigues which are its inseparable condition. It was on 24 March in the year 633 that St. Aubert received the holy anointing at the hands of Leudegisus, metropolitan of Reims, assisted by Attolus of Laon and St. Acharius of Tournai and Noyon. The grace of ordination seemed to increase still more in him the desire he had to walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ; and so in a short time his reputation for wisdom, learning and virtue spread everywhere. From the most distant towns people came to hear some of his discourses or to ask his advice; and the church of Cambrai contemplated with a legitimate pride this spectacle, which was its glory and attested its happiness. The king of the Franks himself, Dagobert I, visited St. Aubert in his episcopal city, and was as much touched as pleased by the wise words he heard from his mouth. More than once he came back with

lords of his court, to receive the counsels, the exhortations and perhaps the fatherly reproaches of the pious bishop. St. Aubert then spoke to him “of the vigilance, of the solicitude which he ought to bring to the administration of his kingdom. He reminded him of the happiness which God reserves for those who have lived well on earth, of the terrible judgment which will follow death, and of the sweet hopes of eternity which we must keep alive in our souls.” Dagobert, charmed to hear him, felt his joy grow still more when he saw the venerable pontiff raise his hands to heaven to call down on his royal head the blessings of the Lord. As much to satisfy his pious liberality as to give St. Aubert a token of his affection and gratitude, he gave the church of Notre-Dame an estate of the royal domain called Onnaing. He afterwards added Quarouble, a village situated a few leagues from Valenciennes.

In the midst of these honours which his virtue drew upon him, the worthy bishop, always full of humility, faithfully referred to God the homage which he knew was due to Him alone. Nothing could ever turn him from these sentiments: neither the respect with which Dagobert surrounded him, nor the office and dignity with which he was invested, nor the admirable works and miracles he performed. One day, indeed, when the people, struck by a wonder wrought before their eyes, broke out in transports and cries of joy, he tried with touching simplicity to calm them, never ceasing to repeat that it was not to him, but to the power of God alone, that these marvels must be ascribed.

By his works and his virtues St. Aubert had made himself extremely dear to his flock, and all loved to be near him to enjoy his conversation. The most powerful families entrusted their children to him, so that he might inspire in them, together with a taste for learning, the love of God and the practice of good. Among these children is mentioned in particular the young Landelin, born in the village of Vaulx, near Bapaume, whom the Saint had himself held at the baptismal font. The young adolescent grew up in the chaste fear of the Lord under the eyes of St. Aubert, who neglected nothing to develop the seeds of the virtues in his heart. For some time he could hope that success would crown his desires; but one day Landelin imprudently lent his ear to treacherous words which threw him into the way of vice. St. Aubert long wept for this prodigal child who had abandoned him. He addressed the most fervent prayers to heaven that grace might touch his heart and bring him back to God. His prayers were heard; he had the consolation of receiving into his arms this much-loved son, whom remorse for his crime and fear of the judgments of God recalled to virtue. The life of Landelin, who afterwards became a great Saint, tells us how the wise pontiff knew how to turn the misfortune of his disciple’s wanderings to the spiritual advantage of the disciple and of religion. Three journeys to Rome undertaken in a spirit of penance, four celebrated monasteries founded on the banks of the Sambre, numerous missionaries going out from these retreats to evangelize the peoples of the neighbouring regions, virtues which were the admiration of the whole country: such are the works which marked the return to God of St. Aubert’s spiritual son.

This consolation was followed by the one which the visit of St. Ghislain of Athens gave him; a voice from heaven had called Ghislain to these parts, where he too contributed much to spreading the faith and propagating the religious life. Arrived at a place called *Ursidongus*, where the town which bears his name has since grown up, St. Ghislain laid there the foundations of a monastery, intending to go at once and pay his respects to the bishop of the place. But St. Aubert had already been forewarned by certain persons whose zeal did not seem pure in his eyes. At least he profited by the report they made to him to give them a lesson in charity and simplicity. When they told him that a stranger, come, it was said, from a distant country, was settling in his diocese, and that perhaps he was a false apostle, capable of seducing and deceiving the faith of the faithful, the holy bishop said to them with his usual kindness: “It is not for you to judge thus a man who is not known, and you must not dwell on these thoughts before you have tested whether they come from God.” At the same time he sent a trusted man to beg St. Ghislain to come and see him at Cambrai. The pontiff conversed with him and soon conceived for the virtuous stranger a deep respect and a religious affection. He even promised that he would go and bless his church as soon as it was finished. And indeed, at the appointed

time, he went there with St. Amand, his venerable friend, and together they consecrated this new house of prayer in the midst of a multitude of spectators. In the crowd appeared Mauger, since so well known under the name of St. Vincent. This lord was so touched by the exhortations which the two holy bishops addressed to the crowd after the ceremony that he resolved from then on to leave the world and devote himself to the service of God. Some time afterwards, in fact, he went to Cambrai to confer on this important matter with St. Aubert and received the tonsure from his hands; after which he withdrew into a monastery which he had built on the hill of Hautmont.

St. Waudru, his wife, followed his example. She asked the holy bishop for the veil, and then went to live in a humble dwelling at Château-Lieu, where the town of Mons now stands. This was not the last consolation that this noble family gave the Church: Aldegonde, sister of St. Waudru, learning one day that St. Amand and St. Aubert were with other servants of God in the abbey of Hautmont, went there in all haste and begged them with tears to allow her to embrace the religious life like her sister. The two pontiffs, after questioning her carefully, granted her request and gave her the veil of virgins. Shortly afterwards she founded, in a wild and desert place on the banks of the Sambre, a monastery around which the town of Maubeuge grew up.

Thus the venerable Aubert saw religion prosper and Christian institutions multiply in his two dioceses, where all these communities became means of sanctification for the people. He also had the consolation of consecrating the church of the monastery of Marchiennes, to which St. Rictrude had withdrawn with her daughters after the tragic death of her husband Adalbald; that of Maroilles, which St. Humbert built on returning from his second journey to Rome; and, very probably also, that of Notre-Dame de Condé, where St. Wasnon, come from Scotland, was proclaiming the word of God. Moreover, he greatly favoured those colonies of Irish apostles who travelled through the vast dioceses of the north, evangelizing the peoples everywhere and often founding oratories, churches or monasteries even in the most remote lands of Hainaut and Brabant.

But while he sought, by all the holy devices of his zeal, to form new Saints for heaven, St. Aubert also took care to honour the relics of those who already enjoyed glory and whose mortal remains were preserved on earth. One would say that God Himself, on several occasions, was pleased to satisfy these desires of the holy bishop. One night when he was at Arras, where he went at certain times to settle the affairs of that church, while his disciples were taking their rest, he rose, as was his custom, and began to pray until dawn. His prayer was not yet ended when, going out of his dwelling, he went onto the ramparts of the town, as if to breathe the pure morning air there. There a thought suddenly seized his mind. “He asked himself why the blessed Vedast, shut up so long in a humble tomb, did not receive on earth the honour due to him, while in heaven he already shared the joys of the heavenly Jerusalem, where he shone like a star in the firmament.” He at once began to consider to what place he would have this holy body carried, so as to pay it the homage it deserved. His mind was quite filled with these thoughts when, at sunrise, with his face turned towards the East, he saw, beyond the little river called the Crinchon, a man all shining with light. With a rod in his hand he was measuring out the site of a church, like the angel whom Ezekiel, in a prophetic vision, saw measuring the temple of Jerusalem. At this sight St. Aubert understood that it was the will of God that the body of St. Vedast should be translated to that place. He hastened to inform his venerable colleague St. Omer of it, and invited him to the ceremony he was preparing for the translation of these relics. In spite of his great age and his infirmities, the holy bishop of Thérouanne came eagerly to St. Aubert and congratulated him on the happy thought heaven had given him. An immense crowd gathered that day in the town of Arras. When all was ready, the tomb was opened, and to the singing of hymns and canticles the precious treasure was lifted from that place with the deepest respect. Some fairly considerable portions were nevertheless left there, so that this basilica, where St. Vedast had so often celebrated the divine mysteries and taught his people, should not be entirely deprived of his presence. At a given signal they set out, and the procession made its way towards the place pointed out by the angel of the Lord.

St. Aubert again had occasion to satisfy his devotion to the Saints at the translation of the body of St. Fursey, abbot of the monastery of Lagny, into the church of Péronne, which Erchinoald, mayor of the palace, had built. St. Eligius, in whose diocese that town lay, begged him to assist him in performing this pious ministry. The two holy pontiffs edified each other during the days they spent under the same roof, conversing together of the things of God and of the Church; then, after giving each other the fraternal kiss, they parted, to see each other again a little later in heaven.

No other remarkable event is found in the life of St. Aubert before the day of his death, of which we have no details. It must have occurred about the year 669.

St. Aubert is represented with an ass near him laden with two baskets full of loaves, and carrying round its neck a purse meant to receive the price of the delivery. This is because St. Aubert is honoured — we do not suspect why — as patron of bakers in Belgium and in French Flanders.

VENERATION AND RELICS

It is believed that the body of St. Aubert was buried in the church of Saint-Pierre, then situated outside the town and now enclosed within its walls. It rested there until the time of Dodilo, his fourteenth successor. This prelate, seeing the horrible ravages the Normans were making in the country, and noting besides with sorrow that the venerable bishop Aubert no longer received the homage he deserved, transferred his body to his cathedral church of Sainte-Marie in the year 888, the third year of his episcopate. When the emperor Otto the Great, son of Henry the Fowler, mounted the imperial throne and sought to repair the evils of the past wars, he founded in Germany several new bishoprics, among others that of Magdeburg, on the borders of the land of the Saxons and the Slavs. These peoples were then being converted in great numbers at the voice of the missionaries who preached the Gospel there. In order to enrich these churches with relics of the Saints, whose virtues, recalled to the faithful, might make a salutary impression on their minds, he asked several prelates for some, and notably the venerable Fulbert of Cambrai. Otto would have wished to obtain for his town of Magdeburg, which he particularly loved, the bodies of St. Géry and St. Aubert; but, in spite of all the favours the emperor had granted the city of Cambrai, Fulbert did not think he could accede to his wishes. Yet to satisfy him in some measure and give him a proof of goodwill, the pontiff, after seeking the advice of some prudent churchmen, raised from the ground the body of St. Thierry, one of his predecessors, and that of another Saint whose name is not known. He sent them to the emperor Otto the Great, adding a part of the body of St. Aubert, who thus became at once the defender and patron of the cities of Cambrai and Magdeburg. Shortly afterwards Herluin thought of repairing the church of Saint-Pierre in which St. Aubert had been buried; but death overtook him when he had scarcely begun. Gerard I completed his work: he consecrated this church on 1 October 1015 and put the body of St. Aubert back in the place of his burial.

Fulbert of Chartres, ending his Life of St. Aubert, says that in his time miracles were worked through his intercession. Balderic reports the same thing, and Molanus adds that they were especially numerous in 1037, over a period of forty days.

Vies des Saints de Cambrai et d'Arras, by the abbé Destombes.

SAINT ODILE, VIRGIN, FIRST ABBESS OF HOHENBOURG, PATRONESS OF ALSACE

8th century.

Odilia, sus decus et praesidium patriae.

Dear Church of Alsace, call in your days of mourning upon the heroine whom heaven has given you as protectress. — *Proper of Strasbourg.*

In the middle of the seventh century there lived in Alsace a powerful lord named Adalric. He was descended through his father Leudesius from the celebrated Archambaud or Erchinoald, mayor of the palace under Clovis II, and his mother Hultrude was, it is said, the daughter of Sigismund, king of Burgundy. Adalric usually lived in the town of Oberehnheim, situated at the foot of the mountain of Hohenbourg, in Alsace. There he dispensed justice to his vassals; the historians of the time represent him to us as an upright, sincere, liberal man, firm in his resolutions and truly Christian. Adalric had married Bereswinda or Berswinde, niece of St. Leodegar, bishop of Autun. Besides the lustre of her birth, people admired in her a sincere piety which never belied itself. This marriage increased Adalric's credit still further, and the king invested him with the duchy of Alemannia or Alsace on the death of Duke Boniface.

Everything seemed to combine for the happiness of Adalric and his wife. Berswinde, humble amid grandeur, made use of her riches only to pour them into the bosom of the poor. Each day she withdrew into the most secluded part of her palace to devote her leisure to the reading of the holy books and to the exercises of piety. Adalric too loved to slip away from the tumult of affairs to recollect himself in meditation on Christian truths. He keenly desired to possess a residence far from the noise of the world, so as to withdraw there from time to time with his wife. He therefore ordered some of his officers to go through the neighbouring solitudes and choose the one best suited to carrying out his design. Some time afterwards the duke's faithful servants came to tell him that they had discovered, on the very summit of the mountain of Hohenbourg, the vast ruins of ancient buildings, and that the place was very suitable for building there, as he wished, a house and a church.[1]

Adalric went himself to the place indicated. He was charmed with the site of Hohenbourg and at once had two chapels built there. One was dedicated to the holy apostles Peter and Paul, patrons of Oberehnheim, and the other was consecrated by St. Leodegar, bishop of Autun, under the invocation of the holy protectors of Alsace.[2] The duke also had the walls of the old castle raised again and a house of retreat built, where he could live with Berswinde during the summer season and taste, far from the world, the charms of solitude.

One thing alone was lacking to Adalric's happiness. He had no child, and this misfortune grieved him keenly; for all the advantages he enjoyed seemed little to him if he could not hand them on to an heir of his name and fortune. On this account Berswinde joined her prayers to those of her husband, and their ardent vows, their fasts, their alms, at last drew down upon them the blessings of heaven. Berswinde ceased to be barren, and the duke's subjects, sharing in his happiness, waited anxiously for the birth of Adalric's heir.

That longed-for day came at last. But it came too soon for Adalric's peace, says a historian; he had flattered himself that he would have a son, and God gave him only a daughter, and a blind daughter (657). Then the duke's joy changed into a deep sadness, and his hope into despair; the fatherly love he had conceived for this child to come degenerated into a fury that would be hard to understand in so virtuous a man, had not his virtue had something odd and irregular about it.

Adalric poured out his grief in bitter complaints, regarding the birth of this child as a curse of God upon his family. But Berswinde, however afflicted she was by her daughter's misfortune, was still more so by Adalric's words. She tried to calm him, reminding him that God had loaded them with good things until that day, and that they must still bless Him for having given them this child, who would perhaps serve to manifest His works and His power.

These gentle words did not succeed in appeasing Adalric's anger. He kept repeating that if his daughter's birth came to be known, the honour of his race would be darkened by it. So weak is the virtue of man! An unforeseen misfortune disconcerts it and casts it down even in those in whom it seemed most firmly established. At length Berswinde obtained from her husband that their daughter should be secretly carried to an unknown place, where she would be brought up far from her parents' eyes. By leaving this child alive, Adalric thought he fulfilled what the duty of nature required of him, and by removing her from his presence,

he satisfied what the honour of his house seemed to demand. To hide the mystery of this unhappy birth, the rumour was spread that the duchess had miscarried.

Berswinde then remembered a woman who had formerly been in her service and was living at that time at Scherwiller, two leagues from

Sélestat. She thought she could count on the fidelity of this stranger, whom she had loaded with kindnesses, and, having sent for her, she put her daughter into her hands. “Watch over this child,” she said to her; “bring her up secretly as if she were your own daughter, and may the Lord Jesus and the Virgin Mary protect her, and you, every day!” The nurse carried the child away to her home and took care to hide her birth from the inhabitants of the district.

Adalric did not know the place to which his daughter had been taken; for, so as not to anger him, people carefully avoided speaking of her in his presence. The young princess had been mysteriously entrusted to her nurse for nearly a year when the rumour spread through the province that at Scherwiller a little blind girl was being carefully brought up whose parents were unknown, but whose noble air and the care with which she was surrounded indicated plainly enough that she belonged to a great family. Some even observed that the nurse had once been in Berswinde’s service, and that the child’s age corresponded perfectly to the time when it had been given out that the duchess had miscarried. The nurse told Berswinde of all this talk, and she, fearing that these rumours might reach Adalric’s ears, resolved to make a new sacrifice so as not to anger him further. She ordered the nurse to take her daughter to the monastery of Baume-les-Dames, in the county of Burgundy, where she could go on bringing her up. This place seemed more suitable than any other to serve as a refuge for the young princess, because the distance would shelter her from inquiry, and because, moreover, the abbess of Baume was the aunt of Duchess Berswinde.

The young exile was received there with joy, and the abbess surrounded her with all the care that can make up for a mother’s tenderness. Adalric’s daughter grew in age and wisdom in the bosom of this adoptive family. Her soul opened only to know God and to love virtue. She showed, moreover, a great gentleness of character and an astonishing ease in retaining what she was taught, so that from the age of five she was perfectly instructed in the chief duties of a Christian. Deprived of bodily light, she received abundantly that light from on high which enlightens every man coming into the world. We do not know the name by which Adalric’s daughter was then called; for, having reached the age of twelve, she had not yet had the happiness of receiving baptism. This was perhaps a remnant of the custom followed in the sixth century, when the baptism of children was deferred until they had reached the age of reason. However that may be, God seemed to have destined this young girl to enter the way of the elect by a miraculous door, by restoring to her the sight of the body at the same time as that of the soul. At that time Blessed Erhard was bishop of Regensburg, in Bavaria. One day he had a vision in which God told him to go at once to the monastery of Baume. “There you will find,” the voice from on high told him, “a young handmaid of the Lord. She is blind from her birth. You will baptize her, you will give her the name of Odile, and at the moment of her baptism her eyes will open to the light.” St. Erhard set out without delay, and instead of taking the direct road went towards the Vosges. His intention was first to visit the abbey of Moyenmoutier, to which his brother Hidulphus had withdrawn after voluntarily leaving the episcopal see of Trier. Hidulphus, who was leading an angelic life in that place, was delighted to see Erhard again, and when he learned the purpose of his journey he wished to go with him to the monastery of Baume. The two Saints found Adalric’s daughter perfectly instructed in all the dogmas of religion.

St. Erhard began the ceremony. According to the custom of the time he plunged the young blind girl into the sacred waters, and St. Hidulphus having lifted her out, Erhard anointed her eyes with holy chrism, saying: “In the name of Jesus Christ, be henceforth enlightened in the eyes of the body and in the eyes of the soul.” Everyone was waiting for the wonder: not in vain; heaven obeyed the voice of the holy man. St. Erhard gave the new Christian the name of Odile, that is, daughter of light, or God is your sun — a glorious name which

Jesus Christ Himself had indicated, and which was to recall unceasingly to Adalric's daughter the favour heaven had done her. The spectators of this scene, struck with joy and astonishment, blessed the Lord who had just made His mercy and His power shine forth.

Then the holy bishop blessed a veil, which he laid on Odile's head, and made her a present of some holy relics, telling her that God still reserved wonderful graces for her if she showed herself faithful to the favours with which He had loaded her that day. Before leaving he blessed the young neophyte, commended her to the abbess of Baume and to the nuns who had watched over her childhood, and set out with his brother Hidulphus. Adalric could not fail to learn with joy of the miracle God had worked in favour of his daughter, and as the abbey of Moyenmoutier, where Hidulphus lived, was only a short distance from Hohenbourg, Erhard charged his brother to convey so pleasant a piece of news to the duke, which was to inspire in him more favourable feelings towards Odile. Hidulphus went to Duke Adalric, told him all the details of his daughter's baptism, and awakened in his heart that fatherly affection which evil passions can never entirely stifle. Adalric was delighted with St. Hidulphus's account and, to show him his gratitude, gave his monastery of Moyenmoutier the estate of Feldkirch, which that abbey possessed until the last century. "Yet," says the Saint's historian, "he did not call Odile home, either because he feared that the presence of this miraculous daughter would be a continual reproach to him for the harshness he had shown her, or because he thought it would be better to leave her still at Baume with her aunt, so that she might grow strong in virtue."

Odile therefore remained at Baume, where she continued to show herself always devout, always given to study and work. The examples of virtue by which she was surrounded were not lost on her, and in spite of her youth, the ardour of her zeal, the fervour of her devotion and the maturity of her mind raised her to the rank of the most distinguished nuns of the monastery. Though she had not made profession, she scrupulously observed all the prescriptions of the rule and filled, like the others, all the offices assigned to her.

Meanwhile her father's house had been loaded with the blessings of heaven. God had given Adalric four sons and a second daughter, who was named Roswinde. The eldest of the young princes was called Etichon or Etto, the second Adelbert, the third Hugh, and the last Batachon. They were the ornament of their house, the glory of Alsace, and the stock of the illustrious families that reigned over Austria, Lorraine, the land of Baden and other countries. Among all these noble children Hugh seemed to stand out from the others by his eminent qualities. He was a well-made prince, full of wit, heart and generosity, and above all of that confidence which early youth, sustained by a dawning merit, usually inspires in persons who know themselves and feel what they are.

Odile heard his merit praised and loved him, without ever having seen him, with a keen affection. She wrote him letters full of tenderness, which she entrusted to a pilgrim. The young Hugh, touched by this mark of attachment, answered his sister in terms of the most sincere friendship. Odile, charmed by her brother's feelings, resolved to use him as intercessor with Adalric. She therefore begged him to soften their father's mind and to arrange her return to the castle of Hohenbourg. His commission was a delicate one. But Hugh, whose heart was good, readily believed that the duke would be moved by his daughter's request. One day he praised in his presence the qualities of mind and body that were admired in Odile, and ended by beseeching Adalric to call her back into his house, of which she would be the finest ornament.

The duke answered curtly that he had reasons for leaving her still at Baume, and his son did not dare insist. But, persuaded that his sister's presence would be enough to dispel all obstacles, he secretly had a carriage and horses made ready and sent them to her, writing that she could come back to Hohenbourg. Odile, believing that her father consented to her return, at once said goodbye to the abbess and nuns of Baume, promising them to come back soon to consecrate herself with them to the service of God. She set out, a little uneasy and wavering between fear and hope. But prayer sustained her on the road, and after crossing two provinces she arrived safely at the foot of the mountain where Adalric had raised again the ruins of the castle of Hohenbourg.

At that very moment the duke was walking in the countryside, talking familiarly with his son. Suddenly he saw a company advancing towards the mountain and asked what it was. Hugh, informed of his sister's return, answered that it was Odile coming back to her father's house. "Who has been bold enough," cried Adalric, "to call her back without my permission?" Young Hugh, realising then that he had counted too much on his father's tenderness, answered trembling: "It was I who sent her word to come back. Forgive my rashness and the affection I have felt for a sister. If I have deserved your anger, punish me alone, for Odile is not guilty." The duke, carried away by a first impulse of anger, struck the young man roughly. But his wrath subsided, and when Odile, having reached the top of the mountain, came and threw herself at his feet and kissed his hands, nature resumed her sway, and the duke, having embraced her, presented her to her brothers, who welcomed her with joy. Soon Duchess Berswinde, told of her daughter's return, ran to meet her and kissed with reverence her eyes, which God had so miraculously opened to the light of day.

Odile, back in the castle of Hohenbourg, went to the foot of the altars to thank God for having brought her back to her family. Her life at her father's court was always a model of edification. Her piety and gentleness charmed all who surrounded her, and her parents, touched by her obedience, felt their affection for her grow from day to day. Her father alone seemed to bear her less affection than his other children. He would not admit her to his table and had her meals served in a remote part of the castle. One day, however, he met her in the courtyard and said to her in a more affectionate tone than usual: "Where are you going, my daughter?" — "My lord," answered Odile, "I am taking a little food to some poor sick people." The gentleness of her words and her modest air deeply moved the duke. He repented of his coldness towards so lovable a child and said to her: "Do not grieve, my daughter; if you have lived poorly until now, it will be so no more in future." From then on he showed her extreme kindness in every circumstance. Odile, far from taking advantage of it, showed herself only the gentler and more devoted to good works. Her examples had the most salutary influence on her family, and her sister Roswinde resolved to walk in her footsteps, renouncing like her the vanities of the world, to relieve the poor and carry the cross of Jesus Christ.

Adalric then thought of marrying Odile to some powerful lord among his friends. But she had quite other thoughts. The tumultuous life of courts wearied her, and she was thinking of returning to the solitude of Baume. Adalric, to whom she made known her design, opposed it, and in spite of her entreaties and her tears she could not obtain her father's permission. Odile was keenly vexed by this obstacle. She wrote a touching letter to her aunt and the nuns of Baume to express her grief to them. The abbess deeply regretted Odile's absence and, to keep a more tangible remembrance of her, she preserved carefully and with the greatest respect a violet veil, mixed with silk and threads of gold, which the Saint had worked with her own hands and which was venerated in the abbey of Baume until the last century.[3]

Odile was therefore obliged to remain at Hohenbourg against her will. The fame of her eminent qualities soon drew the most distinguished persons there. A duke of Alemannia, enchanted with her merit, asked Adalric for her hand. The duke and duchess saw in this alliance a brilliant future for their daughter. They gave their consent; but when they asked for Odile's, she answered, with as much firmness as respect, that she wished to have no other spouse than Jesus Christ, to whom she had vowed her heart. A few days later, fearing the measures that were to be taken to constrain her liberty, she fled secretly, disguised in the dress of a beggar woman. Her intention was at first to go to Baume; but, reflecting that they would not fail to look for her in that direction, she crossed the Rhine in a boat and resolved to seek an unknown solitude where she could live far from the world (679).

When it was noticed at the castle of Hohenbourg that Odile had disappeared, the duke ordered his sons to set out at once in search of her. He himself went towards the Rhine and took the road to Freiburg im Breisgau. That was precisely the road his daughter was following; yet, in spite of all his searching, Adalric could not find her, and she remained hidden for several months at Freiburg or in its neighbourhood.[4] Adalric, grieved by her absence, had it proclaimed in his States that he solemnly undertook, if Odile returned to Hohenbourg,

to leave her full liberty to embrace the kind of life she desired.

This edict came to Odile's knowledge. She gave thanks to God for it and agreed to return to Hohenbourg (680). The duke kept his promise, and when his daughter had made known to him her desire to establish in Alsace a community of virgins consecrated to God, he welcomed the proposal willingly and wished to contribute generously to the work. At once he ceded to Odile the castle of Hohenbourg itself with all its dependencies, and this ancient fortress, which Adalric had turned into a country house, was destined to become, in the Saint's hands, a refuge open to chosen souls who wished to flee contact with the world.

It was between the years 680 and 690 that the work needed to fit the house of Hohenbourg for its new purpose was done. The duke liberally met all the expenses and often supervised the work himself. When the buildings were finished, Odile took possession of them at the head of a community of a hundred and thirty nuns, who belonged to the best families of the country and had renounced, like her, all the hopes of the world to come to Hohenbourg and place themselves under the guidance of a mistress so skilled in the science of salvation.

This community, so prosperous from its birth, shed a great lustre over the province. The holiness of the abbess and the fervour of the nuns caused the solitude of Hohenbourg to be regarded as the refuge of the purest virtue. St. Odile, animated by the spirit of God, was not content to teach the maxims of the spiritual life by her words; she spurred on her daughters by her examples, which are always the best way of instructing, the shortest and the most effective. Duke Adalric, witnessing this regularity, expressed his joy by new benefactions. He made a perpetual foundation for a hundred girls of quality who might wish to consecrate themselves to the service of God in the monastery of Hohenbourg. He added fourteen benefices for the priests charged with the religious services. A magnificent foundation afterwards led the emperor Frederick Barbarossa to give the title of princesses of the Holy Empire to the abbesses of this rich monastery.[5]

The two chapels which Duke Adalric had had built at Hohenbourg were insufficient for the needs of the new community. Odile obtained from her father all the resources needed to build a fine and spacious church, which was consecrated under the title of Our Lady (690). An oratory, also dedicated to the Virgin, adjoined this church. It was in this sanctuary that Odile loved to withdraw to recollect herself in prayer and satisfy her devotion to the Mother of God. A few steps from the oratory of the Virgin she had yet another chapel built, under the invocation of the Holy Cross, to honour with special devotion the sacred wood on which the mystery of the redemption was accomplished. Finally she raised a third oratory to St. John the Baptist, whom she had particularly honoured since the day she had recovered her sight through baptism. The Saint's contemporary historian relates that this last chapel was miraculously consecrated by St. Peter, who appeared there before Odile's eyes surrounded by a troop of angels; and this wonderful dedication was kept every year under the name of the Consecration of the Angels (696). This miraculous chapel was later called the chapel of St. Odile, because it was there that the Saint was buried and honoured until recent times by the faithful, who came in crowds to offer their prayers and vows there.[6]

Thus did Odile sanctify this solitude of Hohenbourg. She wished everything there to recall the thought of heaven. As she also had a special devotion to the Holy Trinity, to call this august mystery to mind in a tangible way she planted with her own hand three lime trees near the monastery. Two of these ancient trees, which were still standing in 1681, were then destroyed by the fire that consumed the monastery.

Amid the holy works carried on at Hohenbourg, one important thing was lacking to the devout community. The pious girls gathered in that place practised regularity there less by an explicit engagement than by emulation and fervour; in a word, they did not yet have a monastic rule. When Odile had put the finishing touches to the material buildings, she thought of giving her community precise regulations and of reducing to laws what had until then been done by imitation and in a spirit of piety. For this she assembled all her

daughters to take their advice, and asked them what kind of life they would prefer to embrace. All answered that the most austere life seemed to them the most perfect, and that their dearest wish was to walk in the footsteps of their abbess, following by obligation the narrow way they had until then followed voluntarily. This life was hard, for Odile fed only on barley bread and vegetables; she drank only water, except on feast days; she spent part of the nights in prayer and took scarcely a few hours' rest; she had no other bed than a bearskin, and in short granted her body only what was absolutely necessary to sustain its existence.

The zeal she had for the sanctification of souls led her to undertake a new work. The sanctuaries of Hohenbourg were visited by a great number of pilgrims. But those who were infirm could only with difficulty reach the monastery, situated at the top of the mountain. Odile, helped by the pious generosity of her mother Berswinde, had a hospital and a church dedicated to St. Nicholas built for these unfortunates at the foot of the mountain.[7] In spite of the difficulty of the roads she visited these poor people every day, served them with affection and distributed alms to them with her own hands.

The nuns of Hohenbourg admired their abbess's generous devotion. Charmed by her examples, they wished to have a share in her good works and begged her to allow some of them to accompany her in this salutary exercise of charity. Odile consented, and, considering that her community, which had become very numerous, was cramped on the mountain, she resolved to choose those of her nuns who were suited to the service of the poor and to move them to her new establishment, while keeping them under her direction. She therefore had a new church built for them, vast and sumptuous, and the new community took the name of Niedermünster.

The nuns changed their dwelling without changing either their way of life or their abbess. The two houses were like two great trees which appear separate outwardly and yet have the same root and the same principle of life. St. Odile continued to govern them with as much success as wisdom: she was now in one, now in the other; most often in the one where there was most to do and most to suffer. But the house she went to most willingly was the hospital of St. Nicholas: it was as it were her garden of delights, where she refreshed herself each day as far as the government of two numerous communities allowed her. The air one breathed there, foul as it was, seemed sweet to her. Her devout daughters vied with one another in imitating her, and made, like her, the happy experience of the joy one tastes when one deigns to stoop to comfort the poor and the wretched.

Meanwhile Duke Adalric and his wife Berswinde were already far advanced in age. Drawn by their daughter's virtues, they resolved to consecrate their last days to prayer, and let Odile know that they wished to withdraw to her until it should please God to call them to Himself. Odile received this message with joy. She knew all the faith and piety there was in her parents' hearts. Duchess Berswinde had always been distinguished by a spotless virtue, and if the duke had sometimes let himself be carried away by violence, he had long since been able to silence that passion, and public report loudly proclaimed his piety and his justice. Adalric therefore went to Hohenbourg with Berswinde. He lived there a few months in the exercise of good works, and soon died there, in sentiments of the liveliest piety, in his daughter's arms (about the year 700). The devout Berswinde followed him to the grave shortly afterwards.

Odile, after her parents' death, lived many more years in the practice of the most sublime virtues. One day a leper presented himself at the door of the monastery to ask for alms. His body gave off a foul smell, and no one could bring himself to go near him. Odile, told of his presence, came herself to serve him food. But in spite of her heroic courage she at first recoiled at the repulsive appearance of this wretched man. Then, overcoming this first movement of nature, she threw herself on the unfortunate man's neck and embraced him with a generosity that made the witnesses of the scene shudder. Her charity growing through this victory over herself, she served him food with devout affection and, raising her eyes to heaven, she repeated, in a voice broken by sobs, these charitable words: "Lord, either give him health or grant him patience." Her prayer was soon heard; the unfortunate man's leprosy disappeared, and those present praised God, who had

glorified the charity of His servant.

Odile continued to visit every day the hospital of Niedermünster, situated at the bottom of the mountain; but her continual fatigues, joined to her great age, had singularly weakened her strength. Her charity was as ardent as ever, and a contemporary author relates that God rewarded it by an astonishing miracle. “One day,” he says, “when the Saint was returning alone to Hohenbourg, she met a poor man lying in the road and dying of thirst and fatigue. Unable to run fast enough to fetch help for this unfortunate man, she put all her trust in God and, remembering what Moses had once done, she struck the neighbouring rock with her staff. At once a spring came out of it, whose healthful water gave life back to the dying man.” Such is the account repeated in the district a few years after her death; and the miraculous spring, still visited today by a great number of pilgrims, is famous throughout the country for the cures attributed to the virtue of its waters. The

Protestants themselves, as well as the Catholics, have kept for these places the traditional respect of their ancestors.

The poor were Odile’s privileged friends. She wished that compassionate charity should always be shown them, and she had expressly forbidden that alms should ever be refused them. Often she served them with her own hands, and always with the most Christian tenderness. This charity of the abbess sustained the fervour of her nuns, who devoted themselves, after her example, to the care of the poor in the hospital of Niedermünster.

So lived this holy community, in the midst of which Odile remained until a very advanced age, full of merits and virtues. Her name was blessed throughout Alsace, and the faithful flocked to Hohenbourg to admire her devotion and listen to her word as to that of an apostle. When she saw her end approaching, she assembled all her daughters in the chapel of St. John the Baptist, which she had made her private oratory. “Do not be alarmed,” she said to them, “at what I am going to tell you: I feel that the hour of my death is near, and I hope that my soul will soon fly from the prison of my body to go and enjoy the liberty of the children of God.” Then she disclosed to each of them the faults to be corrected and the dangers to be feared, and recommended them above all to remain faithful to the holy practices which had until then kept them in fervour. Odile, then noticing her nieces Eugenia, Gundelina and Attala, who were shedding torrents of tears, said to them: “My dear daughters, your tears will not prolong my days; the hour has come, I must soon depart. Only go to the oratory of the Virgin, recite the Psalter, and ask for me the grace of a good death.” They went to pray, and when they came back to Odile they found her plunged in so deep an ecstasy that, thinking her dead, they again gave way to tears. But the Saint soon awoke as from a deep sleep, and told them that God had carried her away, in the company of St. Lucy, whose feast was being kept that day (13 December), to give her a foretaste of the ineffable goods of heaven. As she ardently desired to receive the holy Viaticum, the historians of her life relate that, to satisfy her holy impatience, heaven was pleased to work a new miracle. An angel surrounded with light came down to her in the presence of the whole assembly, and respectfully presented her a chalice containing the body and precious blood of Jesus Christ. When Odile had received holy communion, the angel disappeared, and the sacred vessel remained in her hands as a witness of the extraordinary favour she had received from heaven.[8]

Odile bade her holy daughters a last farewell, and her eyes, which a miracle had once opened, gently closed to the light on the thirteenth day of December. The Saint lay poorly on the bearskin that served her as a bed, and her chaste body, worn out by fasts and austerities, remained exposed for eight days in the church, giving off an odour of sanctity that perfumed the whole monastery. The last offices were rendered to her with all possible solemnity, and her venerated relics were laid in a tomb which she had had prepared herself in the chapel of St. John the Baptist, afterwards called the chapel of St. Odile.

She is represented: 1° with an open book on which there are two eyes; 2° praying before an altar for the soul of her father. He is sometimes led out of the flames by an angel; or else a ray from heaven makes known to

the Saint that her prayers are heard.

VENERATION AND RELICS. — MONUMENTS

Immediately after Odile's death the inhabitants of the country came in crowds to venerate the tomb of the holy abbess of Hohenbourg. Alsace, of which she had been the ornament, chose her as patroness, and the mountain of Hohenbourg lost its old name to bear that of the mountain of St. Odile (Mont Sainte-Odile), by which it is now known. Placed between the Vosges and Alsace, it overlooks a vast expanse, where the eye discovers twenty towns and more than three hundred villages, separated by plains, forests, fertile vineyards and meadows cut by streams, in the centre of which the Rhine rolls its majestic waters. A shady road leads to the top of this mountain, where the venerated memory of St. Odile has been kept so alive from the seventh century to our days.

The tomb of St. Odile was opened for the first time in 1354 in the presence of the emperor Charles IV. This prince, drawn by the concourse of peoples who went there, had the devotion to go there himself. The body of the Saint was found whole, and the front part of the right arm was detached from it to give to the emperor. This precious relic was deposited in the cathedral church of Prague, where it is still honoured today. The tomb of the holy abbess was closed again in the presence of the emperor and of the bishop of Strasbourg, John of Lichtenberg. At the request of the nuns they had a record drawn up of this first recognition, and forbade, under the gravest penalties, that this precious tomb should ever be opened in future.

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries the Great Companies, the Armagnacs and the Burgundians successively invaded Alsace, sacked Hohenbourg and dispersed its nuns. Amid these desolations the tomb of St. Odile nevertheless escaped destruction, and when the storm had passed the nuns gathered again round this sacred refuge and raised the ruins of their monastery. But the glory of the abbey seemed eclipsed. Fervour weakened there, and in 1546 an accident caused a terrible fire which consumed all the buildings. This time again God saved the tomb of His servant, and the Premonstratensian religious, established half a league from the monastery, did not abandon this sacred monument. All the revenues of the abbeys of Hohenbourg and Niedermünster were annexed to the domain of the bishop of Strasbourg, and an annual pension was assigned for the maintenance of two Premonstratensian canons on the holy mountain (1569). Yet the monastery remained buried under its ruins until it was restored (1607) through the care of Cardinal Charles of Lorraine and the Archduke Leopold. From then on the pilgrimages to Mont Sainte-Odile began again with new fervour. But this prosperity was short. In 1622 the heretics invaded Alsace under the command of Count Mansfeld and the Duke of Brunswick, and the monastery of Hohenbourg was given over to the flames. When the enemy had withdrawn, François Bornius, parish priest of Oberehnheim, sent a deputation up the mountain to examine the ruins of the abbey. The envoys, saddened by the spectacle before their eyes, nevertheless had the consolation of finding the tomb of St. Odile. The marks of the blows the soldiers had struck at it could be seen; but it was still whole and had not been opened.

Meanwhile the Premonstratensian canons, who had left Mont Sainte-Odile at the time of the invasion, soon came back. The church was rebuilt and consecrated in 1630 through the care of Count Paul of Aldringen, suffragan of the diocese, who strove to restore the cult of St. Odile to honour.

The Premonstratensians remained the faithful guardians of St. Odile's tomb. By dint of courage and perseverance they were able to collect some alms to adorn the altars and chapels of the holy mountain. Thanks to their efforts, devotion to St. Odile recovered its former popularity, pilgrims flocked there from the whole province, and in 1655 several princes and bishops attended the solemn procession held for the opening of the Jubilee. This devotion only increased in the following years. But the sanctuary of St. Odile seemed reserved for unceasing trials. In 1681 all the buildings of the holy mountain were again consumed by the flames, except the chapels of the Angels and of the Tears, which their height on the top of a rock preserved from the fire. In this misfortune, however, the religious did not lose courage. Reduced to the most extreme

need, they continued to watch beside the tomb of the holy patroness of Alsace, and saw once more the church of Hohenbourg rise from its ruins; it was finished in 1692 and consecrated in 1696 under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin.

Thus this monastery, whose memories were so dear to the Alsatians, rose for the fifth time from its ruins. In spite of countless calamities and cruel invasions, the tomb of St. Odile has almost never been left without faithful guardians. It has been devoutly visited at all times by the inhabitants of the country, among whom devotion to St. Odile is like a family tradition. The pilgrims went there singing devout hymns, which they interrupted to prostrate themselves at the foot of the crosses placed at intervals on the slope of the mountain. They visited all the chapels with devotion, but particularly that of the Tears, so called, it was said, because St. Odile had there obtained by her weeping the deliverance of her father, condemned for a time to the expiations of purgatory. When the pilgrims stayed on the mountain they spent the night in the church or the chapels, and sang sacred hymns there in the vernacular. The Protestants themselves took part in these devout exercises, and several have found on the holy mountain the graces of conversion.

The monastery of Hohenbourg was inhabited by nuns until the time of the French Revolution. In 1790, the National Assembly having suppressed monastic vows, the convent of Sainte-Odile was evacuated. But the tomb of the holy patroness of Alsace still existed on the mountain. That was enough for the devotion of the people to be drawn to these places even in the worst days. Calmer times followed the revolutionary storms, and the devotion of the Alsatians to their glorious patroness has taken on a new impulse. The church which now stands on Mont Sainte-Odile dates from the year 1692. It is fine and solid, and beside the choir are the two ancient chapels of the Cross and of St. Odile. Near by was the former dwelling of the nuns. Since the Revolution these monuments have passed through the hands of several owners. Some years ago the church was restored to worship.

In 1840 the tomb of St. Odile was opened in the presence of the clergy and of several physicians. The following year her relics were placed in a large and beautiful shrine, to be exposed for the veneration of the faithful on the very altar of the chapel that bears her name. This translation took place on 7 July 1841. A multitude of the faithful, come from Alsace, Lorraine and the Grand Duchy of Baden, had gathered that day on the holy mountain. The old church of Sainte-Odile was decked with fir branches and garlands, and her statue crowned with flowers. The relics of the Saint had been provisionally placed in the conventual house, and on the shrine that contained them could be seen the statue of the Saint, lying on rich cushions, holding in her hand a book of office, with the abbatial crozier at her side, and clothed in the dress in which she is represented on the old monuments. At nine in the morning the procession, made up of eighty priests headed by the parish priest of Oberehnheim, went out of the chapel of St. Odile to fetch the holy relics. They were carried by six priests, and as they passed the crowd bowed respectfully, joining their hands and shedding tears of joy. The shrine was laid in the church amid solemn chants. It remained exposed there for eight days for the veneration of the faithful, and as many as fifteen hundred were counted in one day who came to pay their homage to the august patroness of Alsace.

Thus has God been pleased to glorify down to the present time the holy daughter of Adalric. In spite of revolutions and disasters, her relics have remained on the mountain which Odile perfumed with her virtues, and her name is one of those which the peoples bless for ever. It is inscribed in the martyrologies of the Church, and the diocese of Besançon has faithfully kept the cult of this holy maiden, whose venerated memory the monastery of Baume preserved to the end. Her feast is celebrated in the Besançon breviary with semi-double rite on 14 December (transferred from the 13th).

Taken from the *Saints de Franche-Comté*, by the professors of the Collège Saint-François-Xavier of Besançon. — Cf. *Saints d'Alsace*, by the abbé Hunckler; *Histoire de sainte Odile*, by the vicomte Marie-Théodore de Bussierre.

BLESSED PONTIUS OF BALMEY, BISHOP OF BELLEY

1140. — Pope: Innocent II. — King of France: Louis VII, the Young.

Cui similem toto vidit nec Sequana regno, Nec Rhodanus quantis circuit arva vadis.

In the vast provinces which they water, the Seine and the Rhône have nowhere met another Pontius of Balmey. — *Epitaph of Blessed Pontius.* Blessed Pontius (Ponce) of Balmey was born in the village of that name, now belonging to the parish of Le Vieux-d'Izenave (Ain, arrondissement of Nantua, canton of Brénod), in Bugey. A noble scion of Nortbold, lord of the same place, Pontius enhanced the lustre of his birth by the integrity of his morals and the holiness of his life.

After being carefully educated in all the kinds of learning cultivated in his time, he was received among the canons of Lyons. His merit soon had him promoted to the dignities of penitentiary and scholasticus. His sole occupation in these offices was to win souls for God by his prayers and his instructions. Convinced that examples always preach louder than words, he was the first to practise what he taught others in his sermons. Informed of the edifying life led by the religious of the Grande-Chartreuse, he obtained in 1116 the consent of his brothers Garnier, lord of Balmey, and William, lord of Dorches, to found a charterhouse in the valley of Meyriat, which he owned jointly with them by right of inheritance. In the presence of the chapter of Lyons he made an entire cession of this patrimony, with right of ownership, jurisdiction and dependencies, to Stephen of Bourg, his kinsman, one of the seven companions of St. Bruno, who was sent to Meyriat to preside over the building of this charterhouse and was appointed its first prior.

The building was in progress when Pontius resolved to go to the charterhouse of Grenoble to consecrate himself to the religious life. The venerable Guigo, who was then its prior, welcomed him with affectionate kindness, and scarcely had he made profession when he was sent to Meyriat to take the government of the new religious colony, which owed its establishment to him and had just lost Stephen, its prior, who died on 4 January 1118. Everyone rejoiced to have found again in him the holy man so justly mourned; under his direction the charterhouse of Meyriat flourished.

The noise of Pontius's reputation, together with the sweet odour of his virtues, turned towards him the eyes of the Church of Belley, widowed of its pastor, which asked for him to replace Bishop William, whom death had just taken from it. Our Blessed one, terrified at this news, groaned and wept, and only the voice of authority could draw him from solitude and force him to undergo the burden of the episcopate, in 1121. In this high dignity Pontius not only gave his flock the example of the most sublime virtue, but also knew how to win them over by gentle and affable manners, and above all by his indulgent disposition towards sinners; he received the most hardened with fatherly kindness, and however deplorable their wanderings, he never despaired of their return. In this way he softened for his sheep what was austere in the morality he preached to them. His simple manner contributed not a little to making him loved: an enemy of pomp and all magnificence, insensible to the flattery which often comes creeping to the foot of a bishop's throne, disdaining the eager attentions of those around him, above all when he perceived that some low motive made them act, Pontius took pleasure only in the company of the poor, for whom he always had a father's heart.

His love of penance equalled his humility; he was not content to preach mortification to others, he chastised his body with the harshest discipline and wore on his flesh a hair shirt that might have frightened even the penitents of the Thebaid. His bed was as plain and hard as the one he had had at Meyriat; a little bread and water was all his food on Monday, Wednesday and Friday; on the other days he added only a few coarsely prepared vegetables, sometimes cheese and a few drops of wine; to conform to the rule of the Carthusians, which he followed as far as the duties of his state allowed, he always abstained from meat, even when he was ill.

Thus this venerable and vigilant pastor united example with preaching, to teach the souls entrusted to his care the way to eternal life traced by the cross of the Saviour. His labours bore fruit: he drew several great personages from the ways of iniquity, opened their eyes to the nothingness of the world and converted them to the Lord. His examples and exhortations awakened in several of his kinsmen and friends the desire to embrace the religious life. Among these were Garnier, his brother, who became a Carthusian at Meyriat, where he lived and died holily on 1 June 1140, aged more than a hundred; and Blessed Nantelmus, his secretary, who went to consecrate himself to God in the solitude of Portes, whence he was drawn to be placed on the episcopal see of Belley, which he made illustrious by his virtues. A pastor formed on the model St. Paul traces of a true bishop, Pontius always watched attentively over his Church and put all his care into preserving it from ravening wolves. Never did favour, intrigue or wealth make him open the sanctuary to hirelings; learning and morals were the only recommendation that found access to him.

One of his chief cares was to rebuild his cathedral, the dwelling of his canons and the hospitals of Belley, considerably damaged under his predecessors by a fire which had caused great havoc in the town. His vigilance was not confined to Belley; it had no other limits than those of his diocese, which he never ceased to evangelize with all the zeal of an apostle. The authors of his life affirm that heaven was often pleased to reward the holy bishop with extraordinary favours, and that he miraculously cured several persons afflicted with inveterate diseases.

In 1138 Pontius was at the charterhouse of Portes with Humbald, archbishop of Lyons, and St. Hugh, bishop of Grenoble, who had gone there to consecrate the upper church. He seized this occasion to disclose to these venerable prelates the resolution he had taken to leave his Church and return to solitude. “Remember, my very dear brother,” St. Hugh answered him, “how I was blamed by our master Bruno when I wished to give up my bishopric to withdraw with him into the desert, as I have often told you. Do not then abandon the sheep which the divine Shepherd has entrusted to your keeping. Continue to watch over them until death.” This wise advice seemed to have turned him from his plan; he resumed his functions with new courage.

Pope Innocent II had convoked a council at Pisa in 1134. Pontius went there with St. Bernard, abbot of Clairvaux, and a great number of French prelates. He had the consolation of seeing canonized at this council Hugh, bishop of Grenoble, his friend, taken two years before from the affection of his flock. On their return from Pisa the French bishops were stopped and ill-treated in Tuscany by a band of brigands in the pay of the antipope Anacletus and of Conrad III, king of the Romans, his partisan. Arrived at Pontremoli, they were again seized; Pontius, gravely wounded, was shut up in a narrow prison with many other bishops and abbots. Peter the Venerable, abbot of Cluny, who was among them, wrote this lamentable story to the Pope to beg him to proceed against the authors of the crime. At length, freed from his prison, the bishop of Belley returned to his diocese; but, weakened by age and by his long austerities, he obtained that same year from Pope Innocent II, by dint of importunity, permission to return to solitude. Not wishing, however, to leave his flock without a pastor, he directed the votes of the clergy and people to Berlio, a man who, by a happy union of all the virtues, seemed to him worthy of the episcopate. This nomination having been approved by the Pope, Pontius bade his sheep the most touching farewell, set Berlio at the head of his people, and took again the road to Meyriat with the gladness of a traveller who reaches port after the shocks of a violent storm. There he finds again with delight the rest that retirement offers him; there he tastes the charms of solitude and never ceases to savour the sweetness the fervent soul finds in solitary converse with its God; there, despising the pomp of the episcopal dignity, he aspires only to the last place among the religious, whom he regards as his brothers; he wishes to surpass them only in his fervour in following the holy rule. Such was the life of Blessed Pontius until a very advanced age.

As his soul detached itself from his body and seemed to be preparing for the flight it was about to take towards heaven, one would have said that his words were the oracles of the Godhead, so sublime were the exhortations he addressed to the religious to urge them to live in the holiness of their vocation. After

receiving the last sacraments he gave back his spirit to God without effort, amid the rejoicing of the heavenly court and the tears of his brothers, on 13 December 1140. His tomb became famous for the great number of miracles worked there.

Histoire hagiologique du diocèse de Belley, by Mgr Depéry.

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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SAINT JANE FRANCES FRÉMYOT, BARONESS OF CHANTAL, FOUNDRESS AND FIRST RELIGIOUS OF THE VISITATION OF HOLY MARY

1641. — Pope: Urban VIII. — King of France: Louis XIII, the Just.

In the face of the narrow and gloomy Christianity, soon repellent and impossible, which the Jansenism of the seventeenth century sought to make it, the lovable heroism of the Visitation won over a host of souls. — *M. l'abbé Bougaud, Histoire de sainte Chantal.*

Jane Frances Frémyot was born at Dijon, in Burgundy, on 23 January 1572. Her father was Bénigne Frémyot, second president of the parlement of that province, who had inherited from his ancestors, together with the estates of the nobility, a great integrity of morals and an inviolable attachment to the Catholic faith, which many were then abandoning to take up the new heresy. Her mother was Marguerite de Berbisey, of the ancient house of that name, into which for three hundred years the first offices of the province, of the sword as well as of the robe, had come. She was only eighteen months old when her mother died; but she was brought up with very great care by her father.

Through his wise instruction our Saint conceived so great an aversion for heretics that she could not even bear them to touch her. One day, when she was scarcely five years old, she was playing in her father's study when a Protestant gentleman, who was arguing with President Frémyot, denied the real presence of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar. At once the holy child ran up to him and said: "Sir, you must believe that Jesus Christ is in the Blessed Sacrament of the altar, because He said so. If you do not believe what He said, you make Him a liar." The gentleman, surprised and charmed by this freedom and energy, so rare in a child, gave her some sugared almonds to make his peace with her. Jane immediately ran and threw them into the fire in his presence, and, coming back to him, added: "You see, Sir, that is how heretics will burn in hell, because they do not believe what Our Lord said." Another day, when the same gentleman was again arguing in her father's drawing-room in favour of Protestantism, our Saint went up to him and said: "If you had given the lie to the king, my father, as president, would have you put to death; you give the lie so often to Jesus Christ that these two presidents" (she pointed to a large picture of the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul) "will condemn you." Her father, delighted with these happy dispositions, neglected nothing to develop them. Morning and evening, according to the traditions of his family, he gathered his three children and, with the heart of a father and a Christian, taught them to know and to relish the beauties of the Catholic faith, then so disfigured by heresy. He insisted above all on the necessity of attaching oneself from the depth of the heart to the holy Roman Church and to the common Father of the faithful, all the more worthy then of veneration and love as his sacred character was the more misunderstood and insulted. The soul of our holy child opened with happiness to this teaching quickened by faith, and she could be seen, still very young, thrilling by turns with joy and with indignation when her father told of the triumphs or the sorrows of the Church.

People began also to notice in her, from her earliest childhood, that tender compassion for the poor which was later to bring forth so many wonders. The sight of an unfortunate made her weep. When she met one

covered in rags, she seemed to see Our Lord, who had not a stone on which to lay His head.

A tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin crowned all her budding virtues. An orphan from the cradle, as soon as she reached the age of reason and could feel what it is to have a mother no more, she turned to Mary, begging her to accept her as her daughter. From then on she delighted to call herself her child, consulted her as we consult our mothers, and called her to her help in all her undertakings and in all her dangers. Among other graces, she was soon to owe to her that she kept herself spotless amid the perilous seductions to which her youth would be exposed.

When she was of marriageable age, her hand was sought by the most illustrious lords of Poitou. Among them was a Calvinist lord, a friend of her brother-in-law. Her sister Marguerite pressed her to accept this suit, which would have settled her near her; but, knowing Jane's inviolable attachment to the Catholic faith, she had hidden from her that the lord was a Calvinist. Jane guessed it. "Yesterday," she said to her sister one day when she was urging her more pressingly, "yesterday he was two steps from the gate when the holy Viaticum passed by. Not only did he not bend the knee, he did not even uncover his head. I saw him from my room; I thank God for having enlightened me… I will never marry him."

At the age of twenty, in the fear of God and by the will of her father, she married Christophe de Rabutin, baron of Chantal, lord of Bourbilly and of Monthelon, gentleman of the king's chamber and *maître de camp* of a regiment of infantry.[1] Through his mother, Françoise de Cossé, he was descended from St. Humbeline, sister of St. Bernard. He had fought with distinction in the Catholic ranks; Henry IV honoured him with his favour.

The obligation of following her husband took her to live with him at his castle of Bourbilly. There she set herself to order her conduct well and to restore good order to her husband's estates, which had until then been abandoned to the hands of stewards while the baron was at court or with the army. The first reform she undertook was that of the servants. Persuaded that example is worth more than words, and in order to watch over them more closely, she made a point of rising very early, at five o'clock, as soon as they did. She herself led their prayers, and she wished that all of them should be able to hear holy Mass every day. To this end she ordered that the foundation Mass which was due to be said in the castle chapel, but which had no longer been said since the death of her mother-in-law, should be celebrated every day, and very early. In this way everyone could hear it, even those who had to go to work in the fields. In the evening, before bed, an account was given of the work done. Often, in the middle of the day, she would take her work and come and sew or spin beside the servants, using the moment to raise their rough minds gently, by pious and pleasant talk, to the knowledge and love of God. On Sundays she took them all to the parish Mass, and so that they might help to sing the Credo more solemnly she herself trained those who had good voices. It sometimes happened that during this singing, which was practised in the kitchens or the barns, she could not contain her enthusiasm.

St. Chantal had not only too virtuous a soul but too great a mind to fall into follies. Her dress, so modest before her marriage, became more so still afterwards. Finding herself in the country and at the head of a great household, she gave up the richer clothes of her youth, the silk gowns which she had the right to wear as a noblewoman, and dressed in the commonest stuffs.

At the same time as she renounced vanity, she vowed herself to work. Her fingers, says a biographer, were never at rest. When in the morning, after hearing Mass, she had visited the kitchens, the yards, sometimes even the most distant farms, and given to everything that master's glance which makes all things prosper, she would be seen coming in cheerful and gracious and taking up her work again. She interrupted it only of necessity, when visitors came, and even then the rank of the persons had to oblige her to; otherwise she had her little work-table brought to her and, after graciously excusing herself, went on working.

Her charity towards her neighbour appeared admirably in a great famine with which the province was afflicted. Every day she herself gave bread and soup to a great number of poor who came from six or seven leagues around to ask her for charity, and she gave to the shamefaced poor according to their need. Sometimes poor people who had received alms went round the castle and then came to ask a second time. She noticed it well, but did not rebuff them for that, saying within herself: “My God, I am continually begging at the doors of Your mercy: what! would I wish to be refused the second and the third time? You have a thousand times endured my importunity; why should I not bear that of Your creature?” And so, by a great miracle, her corn and her flour multiplied in her granary, and what would not have sufficed for her household was enough for six months for her and for a countless number of poor, whom she regarded as her own children.

Her gentleness and goodness were also very remarkable. When her husband had had some peasants put in prison, she would secretly let them out in the evening and put them to sleep in a good bed; and in the morning, having sent them back to prison, she would work to obtain their freedom from him. It is noted that in the eight years she was married, and the nine she remained a widow in the world, she hardly ever changed her servants. During the long journeys M. de Chantal made to the court, she lived in an altogether exemplary retirement; this so edified that wise lord that, wishing to share in this blessing, he left the court entirely, with the great advantages he might expect there from the king’s good graces, so as never again to leave his house. He fell ill there in 1601, and during this illness, which lasted six months, he made, through his wife’s good counsel, very holy reflections for his own perfection. At length, when he was convalescent, he was mortally wounded while hunting by an arquebus shot which one of his friends fired by mistake.[2] At the news of this accident Jane ran up in tears. Then, at the sight of her misfortune, her grief burst out: “Guilty rashness! Unhappy Chazelles!” she cried. — “Jane,” her husband said to her, pressing her hands in his, “my dear Jane, this arquebus shot comes from higher up! Let us adore the designs of God, and let no word of reproach ever be addressed to my dear cousin.” God granted the wounded man nine days to prepare for death; he made his confession with sentiments of the greatest piety, and to the last moment never ceased to exhort his devout companion to perfect submission to the divine will. When the fatal moment came, and our Saint with her children had received the last farewell and the last blessings of the dying man, she was heard repeating the first cry of her grief: “My God, may Your ever-adorable will be accomplished upon me in all its fullness!” Then, covering her dear children with her tenderest caresses and bathing them in her tears: “I offer them to You, my God; be their father!”

Jane’s grief was immense. When her husband’s eyes had been closed by death, she withdrew into the deepest solitude. Her castle did not seem lonely enough to her. Often she would slip away from it unseen, and her only consolation was to go into a little wood not far off, to weep there at her ease.[3] In vain the ladies of the neighbouring castles, in vain her aunts and her cousins from Semur came to Bourbilly to try to console her. She was touched and grateful; but in the evening, when she had gone back into her room: “Ah!” she would say, “why will they not let me weep at my ease! They think they are relieving me, and they are martyring me.” Then she would fall on her knees sobbing, and pass the night in tears. She had in her heart one of those wounds which in great souls never close. And yet it is from this misfortune that a new life was to be born for her. From this grief, which she felt to excess but bore heroically, she would draw a strength, a light, an altogether divine ardour, an absolute detachment from creatures, and finally that death to self and that entire abandonment to God which made her, in His hands, the instrument of such great things.

St. Chantal, then, was a widow at twenty-eight. After having had the rare happiness of meeting a husband worthy of her, she had been torn from his arms by a horrible accident. Of the six children with whom God had blessed her marriage in eight years, two had died in the cradle; four remained to her, a son aged five and three daughters still younger, the last scarcely three weeks old. The widow’s grief was thus increased by the anxieties of the mother. The present weighed on her by its loneliness; the future frightened her by its

responsibility. These are the great sorrows of life with which nothing compares and before which all human consolations are powerless. God, who esteems a soul enough to lay so heavy a cross upon it, can alone help it to bear it. He Himself wipes away such tears; He alone heals such deep wounds. Jane was not slow to experience this. Consolations unknown to souls that have not suffered suddenly mingled with her bitterest sorrows. Bright lights filled her mind. She felt great longings to leave everything, since everything withered and broke so quickly, and to consecrate herself wholly to God.

Scarcely recovered from the first stupor into which one falls after such crushing blows, she recalled her husband's pious talks during his last illness and, moved by this tender memory, wishing to keep the great fidelity to him and to give God the great love, she made a vow of perpetual chastity. Following this vow she distributed to the poor M. de Chantal's clothes and her own, those which they had both worn in the days of their earthly union. She did not even keep the ornaments she had received at the time of her marriage, and gave them to churches, wishing no longer, she said, any wedding garment but the one required to enter the marriage feast of the Lamb. It was also at this time that she vowed always to use the work of her hands for the altars and for the poor, which was in her eyes a double and holy way of clothing Jesus Christ. The style of her household was reduced, and she dismissed part of her servants after rewarding them generously. She also regulated the use of her days, and the time which, to please her husband, she had been accustomed to give to hunting, to play and to company, she resolved henceforth to employ in prayer, in reading, in still more frequent visits to the poor and the sick, and above all in the education of her children.

To lead a life so completely consecrated to God, she felt the need of a director who could guide her through the ever difficult paths of piety in the midst of the world. Her prayer, moreover, until then fervent but very simple, was becoming more elevated; she experienced a union with God whose intimacy astonished her; at certain moments she felt herself carried towards higher regions she had not suspected. Miraculous visions mingled in her with ardent affections for God. She grew alarmed and, understanding that it was impossible for her to advance without a guide along such ways, her one thought was to find a director; and as she was earnestly begging God to choose for her one filled with His light and His love, He showed him to her in a vision and said to her, without however yet declaring who he was: "Behold the man beloved of God and of men, into whose hands you are to rest your conscience."[4]

Meanwhile St. Chantal's sorrows never ceased to grow. Her health was declining. Her father, having learned this, wrote to her to blame her sharply for giving herself up so to her grief, reminding her that she must preserve herself for her four little children, and requiring her to leave Bourbilly and return, at least for some months, to Dijon. He hoped that the noise of the town and the company of her relatives would bring some softening to so great a mourning. Jane set out at once and returned to Dijon towards the end of March 1602. There she found again some of her childhood friends; and it was with them, in this circle of intimate friends, that she finished, far from the world, the first year of her widowhood. Those who have suffered much know how sweet is that half-solitude into which only a few rare persons enter who understand our sorrows, and in whose souls our groans always awaken an echo.

Meanwhile the vacation of the parlement of Burgundy had opened, and President Frémyot, as was his custom, went to spend some months at Thotes in Auxois; St. Chantal left with her father and went to Bourbilly,[5] where the care of her affairs, the harvests to be finished and the grape-gathering to be prepared also called her. This inconsolable widow could not see again the places that had witnessed her joys and her sorrows without shedding torrents of tears. All her attraction to a holier life also increased in solitude, with a keener desire at last to meet a director. One day when, in the chapel of Bourbilly, she was pouring out her soul before an image of the Blessed Virgin and asking God to make known to her His will, suddenly, at the moment when she was praying with the greatest attention, she saw herself surrounded by an innumerable multitude of virgins and widows, and she heard a voice from heaven saying to her: "Behold the generation that shall be given to you and to My faithful servant; a chaste and chosen generation, and I will that it be

holy." Jane understood nothing of this vision; but there remained to her a sweet memory of it, which for some time lessened the bitterness of her troubles.

In the meantime she received a letter which she could not read without a tightening of the heart. Her father-in-law, the baron of Chantal, who lived at the castle of Monthelon, a league from Autun, wrote to her that he was growing old and wished her to come and live with him. Jane, who knew the old baron's character, the disorders of his house and the still greater disorders of his conduct, at once foresaw the bitterness of the chalice she would be obliged to drink. But the hope of snatching her father-in-law from evil and preparing him for a Christian death made her pass over all her repugnance. "And so," says an old biographer, "she did not hesitate. She received this command by way of obedience and, joining her heart to this cross, she went to live with her father-in-law with her four children, to make there a purgatory of about seven and a half years."

The year 1602 was drawing to its close when Mme de Chantal and her four children arrived at Monthelon. The old baron of Chantal, before whom everything had to bend, had fallen under the sway of a servant woman, without whose consent he would not have dared make a move, and who, having come to dominate him, gave orders as mistress in the castle. Scarcely had she arrived when the Saint, whose eye was at once so quick and so sure, and who possessed in a superior degree the qualities of a mistress of a house, perceived that her father-in-law's goods were being squandered. She tried to make an observation, but the servant, displeased at our Saint's arrival and fearing to be dismissed by her, had already set the old man's mind against his daughter-in-law.

Enslaved, even insulted, at the castle of Monthelon, Jane appeared greater and was holier still than when she was free and happy at Bourbilly. Occupied solely with her great work, the conversion of her father-in-law and that of his unworthy servant, she set herself to overcome them both by dint of gentleness. There were no steps and no sacrifices that cost her anything in the hope of bringing them back to God. She even came to that degree of heroism of caring for this servant's children as her own, taking the trouble not only to teach them but sometimes to dress them, comb them, clean their clothes and render them with her own hands the lowliest services.

Not that it did not cost her much to accept so humiliated a life; all her blood revolted, especially at the beginning. She admitted that she was seized with the deepest indignation when she saw this servant's children walk on the same footing as her own, and often preferred to them. But she stifled these cries of nature and opposed to every insolence only a gentle heart and a gracious face. Towards her father-in-law it was the same conduct. She took every opportunity to do him good, and no violence was ever able to lessen her respect or to discourage her patience. To this very lofty motive, which sustained her for seven years in this so heroic life, was joined another which lent her no less support. By nature she was a little haughty; she had drawn from her father's blood something proud and a little imperious which she wished to stifle at any price. The occasion seemed to her a good one for becoming humble by dint of humiliations. She succeeded beyond anything one can say. It was in this hard school, better than in the strictest novitiate, that God made her acquire that rare humility and that perfect obedience which would soon make her, under the hand of St. Francis de Sales, the instrument of such great things.

Full of these thoughts of humility, she performed in the month of April 1603 an act of great importance. The world in the seventeenth century was still peopled, as in the Middle Ages, with a host of young girls, widows and married people who, kept in the world by age or duties, associated themselves with the prayers and penances of the great religious Orders, accepted their Rule, office and spirit, and even part of their habit, on condition of having a share in their merits and good works; and, unable to go and seek the monastery, called it in some sort to themselves and brought it into the domestic hearth. Two third orders were popular above all others: that of St. Dominic and that of St. Francis, the first urging souls more especially to penance, the second to humility and poverty. Jane preferred the latter and was received into it on 6 April 1603.

In 1604, St. Francis de Sales having come to preach the Lent at Dijon, she went to hear him; she recognized that this was that man dear to heaven whom God had shown her, and who was to be her guide in the narrow ways of the spiritual life. The preacher's features, his stature, even the clothes he wore, everything recalled to her her former visions at Bourbilly. For his part St. Francis de Sales, to whom God had inspired the holy thought of founding the Order of the Visitation, and had shown in a similar vision the lady He destined for the accomplishment of this work, recognized her during his sermon and, turning to André Frémyot, who had just been appointed to the archbishopric of Bourges, said to him: "Dear lord, would you know the young lady dressed as a widow, placed opposite the pulpit, who was listening so attentively to the word of truth?" — "She is my sister, Monseigneur," he replied, "the baroness of Chantal, whose virtues are incomparable. I hope my father will have the honour of presenting her to you." — "I shall be charmed to know her," replied the bishop of Geneva.

Jane did indeed often have occasion to meet St. Francis de Sales at her father's house. She thus had holy conferences with him, and profited from them marvellously to follow the attraction the Holy Spirit gave her. She did not yet, however, take him altogether as her director; but she did so afterwards, on a journey she made to Saint-Claude, where that holy prelate happened to be; and shortly afterwards, being at Notre-Dame d'Étang on 2 September 1604, she made her first vow to obey him. The following year she went to find him at Sales, where, in the ten days she stayed there, she received from his mouth admirable instructions for her conduct. From there she returned to Monthelon, to her father-in-law's house, where she carefully practised all that had been prescribed to her. All winter she rose at five in the morning, without a fire and without help, and in summer earlier still, and then she set herself to prayer. Next she heard Mass, read the constitutions her blessed director had given her, catechized and instructed her children and all the servants, and put good order into her whole household. In the evening she also assembled the whole house for prayer and examination of conscience; and, when everyone had withdrawn, she went on conversing with her God. She made her own bed and did her own room; and, so as not to lose time in doing her hair and dressing, she cut off her hair and took clothes still simpler and more modest than before. In this she followed the advice of the holy bishop, who, having asked her one day whether she intended to marry again — "Oh! not that," she had answered quickly — said: "Then, Madame, take down the signboard."

She usually fasted on Fridays and Saturdays; but she was always so ingenious in mortifying herself in her eating that the meal was a cross and a very hard penance for her. Her affection for the poor grew at every moment. One day she met three of them who had a very good bearing. She had no money on her to give them alms; but so as not to send them away, she gave the three of them a gold ring which she had drawn from her husband's finger at his death, and which for that reason was very dear to her. At the same moment she was seized with a great sense of the presence of God. She threw herself at the feet of these poor men and kissed them. When she rose, they had disappeared, without anyone being able to tell which way they had gone. From then on she remained so enamoured of the poor that she made a vow never to refuse alms when asked for the love of God. Not content with this vow and with the one she had previously made always to work for the poor, she took greater care to visit them in their hovels. She went every day, even in the excessive heat of summer or amid the snows of winter. As she left the castle, she would say to those who accompanied her, to stir up their faith and her own: "We are going to visit Our Lord on Mount Calvary, or in the Garden of Olives, or at the Holy Sepulchre," varying the stations so as to furnish her piety with divine food each day.

When sickness was joined to poverty, St. Chantal's charity became more respectful and more tender still. At the castle she had a little out-of-the-way room where she kept waters, ointments and remedies which she prepared herself for the poor. Before going out she provided herself with the remedies she thought she would need; and when she reached the sick, she washed their sores with her own hands, removed the pus and the corrupt flesh, and dressed them with care and devotion. Then she made their beds, swept their rooms, sat beside them for a few moments; then, after wiping their faces if they had fever, she bade them farewell with

so affectionate an air that one would have said she was a mother who had just been nursing her child. She also took care to assist those who were in their agony, and to prepare and shroud the dead. And when someone died in her absence, people went at once to let her know, because, the peasants said, “shrouding the dead is a right Madame has kept for herself.”

She had spare clothes which she lent to the neediest, and meanwhile she took their rags, cleaned them, mended them neatly, and gave them back in better condition. Among the sick she assisted there were two above all who exercised her charity extraordinarily. One was a poor young man of Autun, covered all over with leprosy and scald-head, who was found lying in the hedges near her castle. She took him into her house and rendered him every duty she would have rendered her own child; at last she assisted him at death and sent him, like Lazarus, into Abraham’s bosom, after which she shrouded him with her own hands. The other was a woman who had so horrible a cancer on her face that she was entirely disfigured by it, to the point of inspiring horror. Our Saint lavished the tenderest care on her; to moderate her it needed the absolute prohibition of her father, who feared she might contract the disease and pass it on to her children.

While she was thus revealing every day, in acts of such fine devotedness, the greatness of her love for the poor, a journey she made to Bourbilly suddenly called her to a still greater heroism. It was towards the end of September. She had just arrived at Bourbilly to oversee the grape harvest when dysentery suddenly broke out in the village, and soon there were a great number of dead and dying. Our Saint, moved with pity for these poor sick people, who lacked everything, at once devoted herself with an altogether divine ardour to their service. Every morning, before daybreak, and after making her hour of mental prayer, she went to visit all the sick, to bring them remedies and to clean away their filth. Then she attended Mass, after which she went back to serve the sick of the most distant houses. In the evening she made a second visit to every house in the village, and on her return she asked for an account of the day’s work and of the state of her estates; for her devotions never made her less vigilant in preserving and increasing her children’s property. It often happened that in the evening, at the moment when she came in exhausted with fatigue, someone came to fetch her to assist a dying person, and she passed the night on her knees at the foot of his bed, praying with him, serving him like a mother and encouraging him to die a holy death. Seven weeks passed thus, during which there was not a day on which she did not wash and shroud with her own hands three or four corpses.

At last she succumbed. Fever and dysentery soon reduced her to such a state that her life was despaired of. In this extremity she had a letter written to her father-in-law to ask his pardon and to entrust to him her four little orphans; after which, abandoned to the holy will of God, she offered Him the sacrifice of her life. But its hour had not come. One night, when she was at the last extremity and everyone was waiting for her to enter her agony, she was inspired to make a vow to the Blessed Virgin; and at once life was given back to her. So she got up and, after putting her affairs in order, mounted her horse and went to Monthelon. There she was received with a joy hard to describe by her four little children, who had done nothing but weep since the letter announcing her illness had arrived, and even by her father-in-law, who could not console himself at the thought of losing her; for, despite the persecutions she had suffered at the castle of Monthelon, she was looked on and held there as a Saint. Moreover, scarcely did they know she had arrived when the inhabitants of Monthelon came running in great numbers, not knowing how to express their joy. The women and children crowded round her, kissing her hands, and the poor blessed God for having given them back their mother.

Meanwhile St. Chantal’s children were beginning to grow up, and the more they advanced in age the more their mother’s solicitude was seen to grow. She left them neither day nor night; she worked with untiring zeal to form their minds, their hearts and their consciences; feeling that they no longer had a father, she transferred to them all the love she had had for him; she covered them with a tenderness which is perhaps one of the most admirable wonders, though until now one of the least noticed, of a life so fruitful in wonders. An inconsolable wife, even after six years of widowhood, she wept every day of her life, despite her entire

detachment from all things, for the husband she had loved so much. In vain she consecrates herself to the service of God with all the impetuosity of her nature; in vain she pours out in great floods on the poor all the tenderness of which her heart is capable; nothing can veil in her soul the ever-present image of her vanished husband. She keeps for him a tender, deep and persevering love. Far from destroying the affections of the wife and the mother, the love of God renews and quickens them; and thus is revealed to us this ineffable mystery, that detachment is not insensibility, and that the true hearts of wives, of mothers and of daughters are the hearts of Saints.

Yet it was easier for her to forget the world than to make the world forget her. She was still young; she had a fine name, a great fortune, admirable qualities of mind and heart, great outward attractions, with that indefinable finish which virtue adds to beauty. So scarcely a year passed without her being sought and asked in marriage. In the year 1606 above all there was strong talk of it. To the first advances she answered plainly that no more should be thought of it, that the thing was impossible. A fortnight later, to finish the affair, she came to Dijon to President Frémyot, and she had to withstand the most painful assaults; but nothing could shake her resolution. A little later the urging began again. All our Saint's relatives joined in a league, and it was resolved to carry her consent by storm. President Frémyot used by turns entreaties, tears and commands, which was a martyrdom for our holy baroness. One day in particular the assaults were so long and so painful that it seemed to the poor heart of this holy widow that she was going to give way. Then, slipping out of the gathering of her relatives, she goes up to her room, throws herself on her knees, prays a long time with torrents of tears and, resolved at last to perform an act she had long been thinking of, she arms herself with a bodkin, heats it in the fire, uncovers her breast and traces on it in deep letters the name of Jesus over her heart, to mark that she renounced decisively every alliance other than that with Jesus Christ. The iron went in so deep that she no longer knew how to staunch the blood which flowed abundantly from this heroic wound. She then dips a pen in her blood and writes once more her vows and the renewed promise to consecrate herself solely to the pure love of God.

At the same time as she engraved on her heart the name of Jesus in sign of absolute consecration to God, she began to feel greater attractions to leave everything, to abandon the world and her family, and to withdraw into solitude. Her desires for the religious life, still vague in 1605, more definite in 1606, suddenly became, in 1607, very keen and very ardent.

God was reserving her for the establishment of the Order of the Visitation. It would take too long to relate all the circumstances of this great undertaking, the sentiments God gave her to dispose her for so important a design, the lights and the ardours with which He filled her, and the ways He opened to her to prepare its execution. The plan was settled at Annecy, during two different journeys she made there to see St. Francis de Sales and confer with him. He first proposed to her other congregations already established which she might enter, in order to test her resignation; but, seeing her submissive to everything, he at last disclosed to her this new foundation which divine Wisdom had inspired in him. She therefore renewed her vows in his hands and, while waiting for the time to form a community to arrive, returned to her father's house at Dijon. The devil, foreseeing the great number of souls the Order of the Visitation would snatch from him, neglected nothing to hinder this holy undertaking.

Before leaving for Annecy she married her eldest daughter, Marie-Aimée de Chantal, to the baron of Thorens, Bernard de Sales, brother of St. Francis de Sales; she entrusted the care of her son to her father, President Frémyot; she embraced all her servants and gave them handsome presents. Passing through Autun, she also performed many pious acts, among others vows to St. Bernard and to Notre-Dame d'Étang, which she fulfilled on the spot. She passed again through Dijon, where her whole family was gathered at her father's house to console and care for him at the moment of the much-dreaded separation. Emotion wrung every heart; the generous woman suffered a martyrdom which God alone could measure, but which her eyes full of tears betrayed outwardly in spite of her. Celse-Bénigne de Chantal, her son, noticing her distress and

doubtless hoping she was shaken, throws himself at her feet and implores her to let herself be overcome by so much grief; and, as his mother took a step out of the drawing-room to go and embrace her father, he lies down across the doorway, saying: “Well, mother, if I cannot hold you back, at least you shall pass over the body of your son.” At these words she felt her heart break and, unable any longer to bear the weight of her grief, she stopped and let her tears flow freely. A holy priest who was present at this heart-rending scene, fearing that the Saint would weaken at the supreme moment, said to her: “What, Madame! Can the tears of a child shake you?” — “No,” replied the Saint, smiling through her tears; “but what would you have? I am a mother!” And, her eyes raised to heaven, a new Abraham, she passed over the body of her son.

Our Saint threw herself at her father’s knees and asked his blessing. “My God,” he cried, “it is not for me to fight any longer against what You have decided; I consent to it with all my heart, and I sacrifice to You this daughter who is as dear to me as Isaac was to Your servant Abraham.” He then blessed her, raised her up, embraced her and said to her: “Go then, my daughter, where God calls you, and let us both stop the course of our just tears, to pay a more complete homage to the divine will, and also so that the world may not be scandalized at seeing our constancy shaken.” Thus in these holy souls nature was overcome and grace won a brilliant triumph.

Jane arrived safely at Annecy on 4 April, Palm Sunday, and was received there with joy by everyone. St. Francis de Sales bought for her and her community a house in the suburb; and on 6 June 1610 he gave her the veil, and gave it at the same time to two young ladies commendable for their birth and their piety, namely Marie-Jacqueline Favre, daughter of the learned Antoine Favre, first president of Savoy, and Charlotte de Bréchard, of an illustrious family of Burgundy. He named the holy foundress superior, and she exercised her first function by reading to her new daughters the constitutions she had received from the hand of this holy director, which the Church calls admirable for their wisdom, their discretion and their sweetness. Their number multiplied during their novitiate and soon rose to ten, most of whom, however, were of weak constitution and infirm. Poverty was the first treasure of their house, and they felt its effects in the privation of things necessary to life; but God worked miraculous multiplications to feed and sustain His spouses. At the end of the year Jane Frances renewed her vows, and the two others made theirs for the first time. These were still, however, only simple vows, and poverty itself was not among them, but only chastity and obedience, without any obligation of enclosure; on the contrary, these fervent religious went out to visit the sick and render them every kind of assistance with marvellous charity.

M. Frémyot, the father of Mother Jane Frances, died at that time, and as this death brought a great change in her family, St. Francis de Sales wished her to make a journey to Dijon and to her estates in order to settle their affairs and provide for the tranquillity of her children. She made this journey with the same recollection and the same exactness in all her exercises as if she had been in her monastery; she set everything in order with such prudence, equity and gentleness that there was no one who did not acknowledge that she was led by the Holy Spirit. When she was ready to set off home, she had a rapture during Mass, in which God inspired her to promise by vow always to do what she should know to be the most perfect and the most pleasing to His divine eyes; and St. Francis, when she had spoken to him of it, made no difficulty about giving her permission, because he recognized the admirable purity of her heart, and that she had no other desire than to please her heavenly Spouse.

Back in her religious house, she applied herself with a quite new zeal and courage to helping the poor who were neglected and abandoned in their sicknesses; she engaged a physician for them, and went, her veil lowered, with a companion, into their garrets and their cottages to relieve them. Her daughters did the same by her order, and they were seen with edification passing through the streets laden with remedies, food and linen for the sick. Nothing was more astonishing than the Saint’s courage in dressing their sores, cleaning away their filth, mending their clothes and drawing them out of the dirt in which she sometimes found them as it were buried. Often her daughters’ hearts rose at it; but she had become so accustomed to these exercises

that she performed them without any repugnance. She received great graces from heaven in them, and Our Lord rewarded her Himself for what she did for Him in His suffering and afflicted members. Her chief care was to have them receive the sacraments, so as to procure them a good death, and a great number owe it to her that they did not die without these helps, and that they did, in that extremity, a penance they had refused to do during their life.

Immediately after the foundation of her Order St. Chantal became very infirm, and she was attacked by such extraordinary illnesses that the physicians understood nothing of them; they were obliged to say that she was ill more from the violence of the love of God which consumed her than from any disorder of her body. She endured all these ills with invincible strength and with such abandonment of herself that she troubled no more about them than if she had been in full health; and besides, she never lost her freedom for the functions of the mind and, in her greatest languors, did not cease to apply herself generously to the service of her daughters. And so it may be said that all her life she was the servant of her houses: she commanded nothing without giving the example; she stooped to the vilest tasks of her community; nothing was too low for her, for her humility and her love knew no bounds. The number of her religious having increased, they moved in 1612 into a large house situated in the town. This change was not made without much opposition and many crosses; but their constancy prevailed over all the artifices of the evil spirit.

Meanwhile, God having called from this world the baron of Chantal, our religious' father-in-law, she was obliged to make one more journey to Monthelon to unravel the affairs of his estate, which the bad management of that housekeeper of whom we have spoken had extremely entangled. She went, and by her prudence prevented great disputes which were about to arise; but what is admirable is that, far from shamefully driving out this wicked servant from whom she had received such ill treatment, she on the contrary loaded her with kindnesses and had her dine at her table like one of her friends.

Scarcely had she returned to Annecy when Cardinal de Marquemont, archbishop of Lyons, wrote to St. Francis de Sales to have some of his daughters in his archiepiscopal city. The Saint judged it fitting to send the Mother there with four others. She went, occupied a house and received novices there, among others Madame d'Auxerre, who was its foundress. The cardinal himself performed the ceremony of blessing the house and taking possession. We must not omit here a most extraordinary event. As it was wished to use for this foundation certain letters patent which the king had given for a convent of nuns of the Presentation which had not succeeded, scarcely had they been taken up to write in them "of the Visitation" when it was found that the finger of God had already written in them the very words that were wanted: *Congregation of the Visitation of Holy Mary*. This house was not exempt from the trials usual to new foundations. The relatives of Madame d'Auxerre, the foundress, having seized her property out of spite because she was using it for this good work, the holy Mother sometimes found herself in great want. One day, when she had not even bread for her community, she had a *Pater* said to ask God for daily bread, and at that very hour a stranger rings at the door and hands Madame de Chantal a packet, saying to her: "Madame, he who sends you this alms asks you to pray for him." Then he withdraws without being willing to answer any question. The packet contained eighty gold crowns.

In its extreme poverty the house had only a pewter ciborium. Our Saint begged the divine Saviour to take as much care of Himself as He took of His spouses, and to provide Himself with a silver ciborium. The next day another stranger brought the community a ciborium of silver gilt. At the end of nine months she returned to Annecy, leaving her dear companions at Lyons with seven novices. It was then that the cardinal de Marquemont advised St. Francis de Sales to erect his Congregation into a religious Order, with the three solemn vows and enclosure. He received this advice as coming from heaven; he drew up its Constitution, and the holy Mother, who had already made a private vow of poverty, made it solemnly together with the two other vows, as did all those dear daughters also. Shortly afterwards she fell into so great a renewal of her ills that she was forced to keep her room. This prevented her from being present in person at the foundation of

the convent of Moulins, which the cardinal of Lyons and the maréchal de Saint-Géran procured for her Congregation; but she was soon afterwards cured by an extraordinary stroke of the divine goodness.

She then lost M. and Mme de Thorens, her son-in-law and her daughter, who died very Christian deaths. She felt a keen grief at it as a mother, but she submitted entirely to the orders of God as His faithful spouse. As soon as this trial was over, God sent her another, namely a fever so violent that her life was already despaired of. In this state she shared in the fear of death which Our Lord had in the Garden of Olives; but she overcame it by an admirable resignation. St. Francis de Sales, who knew how necessary she still was to his Congregation, made a vow for her to St. Charles Borromeo and applied his relics to her; and by this means she recovered her health in a moment.

It was not in order to rest, but in order to work and to extend her Congregation in the places divine Providence should mark out for her. She extended it in fact first to Grenoble, then to Bourges, next to Paris and to Dijon. Everywhere she suffered great troubles and very hard crosses, and at Paris itself she found herself reduced with her daughters to such poverty that, having neither convenient lodging nor furniture nor provisions, they suffered much there from hunger and cold, and were obliged to sleep on faggots in a garret where they sometimes found themselves in the morning covered with snow. But her patience and her perfect confidence in God set her above all these ills. Meanwhile other foundations of her Institute were being made elsewhere, as at Orléans, Nevers, Valence and Belley; it was a mystical vine stretching its branches on every side with surprising blessing. After she had made the foundation of Dijon, of which she left M. Favre as superior, she went to Lyons in 1622, where she happily found St. Francis de Sales. She said to him with a certain eagerness: “Father, my heart has great need to be seen by yours.” The Saint at once checked this ardour: “What,” he said to her, “are you still at that point? Have you still desires?” She lowered her eyes, answered nothing, and allowed him, instead of speaking to her of what she wished, to speak to her only of the affairs of her Congregation.

She then went to Belley, and it was in that town that she learned of the death of this heavenly man, who was more to her than a father and a mother. Her constancy and her resignation under this terrible blow were admirable: she wept for some time, but without disturbance, and her whole occupation was to adore the decrees of divine Providence, which disposes of us when it pleases and in the manner that suits it. Already at Grenoble she had heard a voice saying to her, “He is no more”; but she had interpreted it of the mystical death and annihilation of the holy prelate. She received his body at Annecy with all the pomp and respect that so precious a relic deserved, and she took particular care to collect his books, his sermons and his letters, in order to communicate them to the public and by this means to perfume the whole Church with them. The religious of Annecy met in Chapter before her arrival and elected her their perpetual superior; but she renounced this nomination and would not allow in her Congregation any election except for three years, nor any continuation in the same house except for a second triennium. She then convoked at the same place the principal Mothers of the Institute, and gathered with them all that their holy founder had said or written for the formation of their Order: from it she composed a *Custom Book*, to which she afterwards added explanations for a perfect understanding both of the *Custom Book* itself and of the Rules and Constitutions.

It would take too long to follow the Saint on all the journeys she undertook to found new monasteries, to describe the heroic actions she performed there, the supernatural help she received, and the patience with which she endured all the opposition she met. For this she went to Chambéry, to Tournon, to Remilly, to Besançon and to Pont-à-Mousson. She also passed through Turin, capital of Piedmont, and she made the journey to Paris three more times. Everywhere she was honoured as a Saint. Persons of the highest quality were eager to lodge her in their houses, and received all the more consolation from it as they saw in her a living image of all the virtues of St. Francis de Sales.

The archbishop of Bourges, the former bishop of Belley and other commissaries appointed by the court of Rome to conduct the process for the canonization of St. Francis de Sales were gathered on the feast of the

Assumption in the year 1627 in the parlour of the Visitation. Our Saint had come there. “Mother,” the bishop of Geneva said to her, “we have news of the war; there has been a hard engagement in the Île de Ré! Before going into it, the baron of Chantal made his confession, heard holy Mass, received communion…” — “And he is dead, Monseigneur?” she added.

The prelate bursts into tears and cannot answer. The Saint falls on her knees, her tears flow abundantly, she takes her crucifix, kisses it with love and, after giving vent to her grief, says: “My Redeemer, I accept Your blows with all the submission of my soul, and I beg You to receive this child into the arms of Your infinite mercy. I give You thanks for having taken him from me while he was fighting for the religion of his fathers, and for having done him the honour of sealing with his blood the fidelity his ancestors have always kept to the Church.” She also lost, almost blow upon blow, the baroness of Chantal, her daughter-in-law; M. de Toulongeon, her other son-in-law; M. de Bourges, her brother; and several of the first Mothers of her Congregation. “Here are many deaths,” she said again, with tears in her voice, “or rather many pilgrims hastening to go to the eternal dwelling: receive them, my God, into the arms of Your mercy!” At each of these painful losses, above all at that of her children, the Saint, after making an act of resignation to the will of God, became silent and dejected for several days, “having a heart very sensitive to the loss of those she loved.”

God set off her merit by miraculous deeds. M. de Granieux, overwhelmed by a continual headache, came to see her; she put her hand on the painful place and he was cured that very hour. When fire broke out in the house of Mademoiselle de Saint-Julien, she implored the help of heaven, and at the same instant it went out. At Orléans she delivered a sister from a pain in the side that had been held incurable. At Paris she cured another sister of a paralysis which made her face quite deformed, and a lady who was very ill was also cured there after putting her hand in hers. Passing through the house of her daughter de Toulongeon, she found her little grandson in danger of death; she prayed for him, and he recovered his health. She worked hard to have the inquiries made for the canonization of St. Francis. The commissaries came to Annecy for this purpose and had the tomb of that blessed prelate opened on 4 August 1632. The body was found perfectly preserved, although it had been buried for ten years. The commissaries had expressly forbidden anyone to touch the holy body. Mother de Chantal nevertheless obtains permission to veil the holy bishop’s face with white taffeta, and humbly expresses the wish to kiss his hands; it is granted her. Then, bowing her head, she asks one of the commissaries to place that venerated hand upon it. This new wish is granted: at once, in the sight of all, the hand stretches out of itself, rests on St. Chantal’s head and presses it strongly, as if to show her a fatherly tenderness. The veil that covered the Saint’s head is still kept as a relic in the monastery of Annecy. One day when she was praying she heard a voice saying to her: “Look at God, and let Him act”; and another time she received word from heaven to read a passage in the works of St. Augustine.

At Paris, on the occasion of the foundations she had gone there to make, she had come into contact with St. Vincent de Paul. She gave him as superior general to her new communities there, and obtained his promise to send some priests of the Mission to Annecy.

At last the time was approaching when the Saint was to receive the reward of so many labours and of the purest and most perfect virtues. She was close to her seventieth year; the strength of her body was diminishing, though her mind had lost nothing of its vigour and activity. She was obliged to go and visit the community of Moulins, where the princesse des Ursins had taken refuge, widow of Duke Henri de Montmorency, who had just paid with his head for the crime of having drawn the sword of the first Christian baron against the standard of his sovereign. From there she was called to Paris by Queen Anne of Austria, who honoured her with her confidence.

On 2 December 1641 she took the road again to Moulins, where she was welcomed with more happiness than ever. On the 8th she was attacked by a violent inflammation of the chest; she understood that it was the signal of her deliverance. Following the example of St. Francis de Sales, she desired to have a Father of the

Society of Jesus to assist her in her last moments. She made her general confession to Father de Lingende with entire freedom of mind. On the 11th, after receiving the holy Viaticum, she had written at her dictation to all the superiors of the Order a letter, a kind of spiritual testament, in which she recommends to her dear daughters humility, simplicity, detachment, the spirit of union and the observance of the Rules. She signed this letter, declaring that she had nothing more to say. On the 13th, towards eight in the morning, she received Extreme Unction with happiness. Towards evening she sank perceptibly; the prayers for the dying were said, to which she responded with as much calm as fervour. At seven o'clock Father de Lingende, seeing the moment arrive, said to her: "Come now, my dear Mother, here is the Bridegroom coming: will you go out to meet Him?" — "Yes, oh! yes, Father… I am going… Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!" The beautiful soul of St. Chantal took flight as she pronounced for the third time that sweet name of Jesus.

She was seventy years old, of which she had spent thirty-two in her Congregation. Her face did not change, and remained as beautiful after her death as during her life. We shall not stop here any longer to praise her. So many heroic actions, so many glorious undertakings for the advancement of God's honour, so many foundations made by herself or through her care, and, what is still more remarkable, this surprising spread of her Order since her death, and above all that eminent piety and that zeal for regular observance which are maintained in it on every side without any alteration or relaxation, complete her praise far better than we could do it.

Numerous miracles followed the death of St. Jane Frances de Chantal. We have related some of those she worked during her life. Five miracles having been recognized, attested and juridically proved, she was beatified by Benedict XIV on 13 November 1751, and canonized on 17 August 1767 by Clement XIII, who fixed her feast on 21 August.

VENERATION AND RELICS

The Saint's body remained exposed to the veneration of the faithful in the church of the Visitation at Annecy until 1793. At that time MM. Burquier, Arablet, Rochette and Baleydieu removed her coffin and that of St. Francis de Sales, to withdraw them from sacrilegious hands. At the restoration of worship, in 1801, Mgr de Mérinville, bishop of Geneva and Chambéry, made the recognition of them. In 1806 these precious remains were recognized again by Mgr de Sales, who had the shrine of St. Francis de Sales solemnly placed in the cathedral of Annecy, and that of St. Chantal in the church of Saint-Maurice in the same town.

In 1826, under Mgr Thiollaz, who had re-established (1824) a monastery of the Visitation at Annecy, the holy relics of the illustrious founders were translated with the greatest pomp into the church of this convent, in the presence of Their Majesties the King and Queen of Sardinia, of several prelates, of the de Sales family and of an immense concourse of clergy and people.

Devotion to St. Jane Frances is still lively, above all in Savoy, where it is handed down from generation to generation. Numerous graces obtained through her merits bear witness every day how great and powerful before God is she who knew how to leave all and sacrifice all in order to obey His voice.

The monastery of the Visitation at Nevers possesses the heart and the two eyes of St. Chantal.

To complete this biography we have used the *Histoire de sainte Chantal* by M. l'abbé Bougaud.

SAINT ELISABETH-ROSE, NUN OF CHELLES, FOUNDRESS-ABBESS OF ROZOY (1130)

Elisabeth, whom the continuators of the *Gallia Christiana* qualify with the title of Saint, belongs by her birth to the diocese of Troyes. The common opinion is that this fervent religious was the sister of Count Simon, and that her father was Radulphus of Crépy and her mother Adela, countess of Bar-sur-Aube. In fact Radulphus had two daughters: one, Adela, married first to Theobald I, count of Champagne, then to Herbert

IV, count of Vermandois; the other, whose name history does not record, but who in all likelihood is the one whose life we are relating.

Undeceived early about the vanities of the world, or perhaps drawn by her brother's example, Elisabeth withdrew first to the monastery of Chelles, near Paris. Her presence in that devout house became a powerful incitement to virtue for her companions. She also brought her community temporal prosperity: it was on her account that her kinsman Ralph of Vermandois, seneschal of France under Louis VI, obtained from the king letters of protection for the monastery of Chelles. But Elisabeth did not stay there long.

Consumed with thirst for solitude and austerity, she asked her abbess, and obtained, though with difficulty, permission to withdraw elsewhere. She took with her two nuns animated by the same spirit, and all three went to Château-Landon (Seine-et-Marne). It was near there, in a place called Rozoy, two leagues from Courtenay (Loiret), that they fixed their dwelling and built themselves poor huts. But the country was unhealthy: vast marshes stretched around them and deprived them of the ground needed for cultivation and for supplying the humble community. Elisabeth's companions soon lost heart and returned to Chelles; but our Saint, left alone, gave free rein to her love of mortification. She hid herself in the hollow of an oak, fed on wild fruits and raw roots, and bore unshaken the mockery and insults of the shepherds of the neighbourhood.

Her constancy in so austere a life spread her reputation far and wide and drew to her two companions from the monastery of Chelles, Constance and Acvis, her sister. Soon the people of the district conceived esteem and veneration for her who had until then been only the object of their contempt, and they helped her to build a monastery, which was placed under the protection of the Blessed Virgin. A great number of nuns placed themselves under Elisabeth's direction, and the most exact discipline soon flourished among them. Elisabeth worked several miracles during her life, and died on 13 December 1130. Some years later her body was exhumed and found incorrupt.

Peter of Courtenay, uncle of Philip Augustus, king of France, showed his munificence towards the convent of St. Mary: he gave it some villages, and this donation was confirmed by his son Peter, count of Nevers.

The convent of Rozoy was destroyed in the war between France and England, and the nuns withdrew to Villechausson, in the Gâtinais, where they founded another monastery. It is to link the memory of these two foundations to Elisabeth's name that the holy foundress has been surnamed Rose of Villechausson.

Vie des Saints de Troyes, by M. l'abbé Defer.

BLESSED JOHN MARINONI OF VENICE, THEATINE RELIGIOUS (1562)

Blessed Marinoni, born at Venice on 25 December 1490, received in baptism the name of Francis, which he changed to John when he consecrated himself to God. He showed such piety from his earliest years that he was made to receive his first communion at about the age of seven. He stood out among other children for his docility and obedience. He hardly ever lost sight of God; he loved to frequent churches, to adore the Blessed Sacrament there, and above all to assist at the august sacrifice of the Mass.

His parents having sent him to the university of Padua, he associated there only with those who joined sincere piety to purity of morals. He had as fellow-student and friend Luigi Lippomano, one of the most learned bishops of the sixteenth century. Prayer, meditation on the law of the Lord, the reading of good books, frequenting the Sacraments and fleeing bad company were the means he used to preserve his innocence. He embraced the clerical state and received holy Orders in succession. Once a priest, he attached himself for two years to the service of the church of San Pantaleone at Venice. His love for the poor made him accept the post of superior of the hospital where the incurables and orphans were received. There he gave the most striking proofs of his charity during the plague which ravaged the city of Venice in 1528.

Having been appointed to a canonry of the church of St. Mark, he fulfilled its duties with the greatest edification. But he soon left this benefice to enter the Congregation of St. Cajetan, newly established at Venice. He was received into it on 9 December 1528 and made his vows on 29 May 1530.

His fervour grew greater every day. His love of purity made him avoid the conversation of women, and he spoke with them only so far as charity obliged him. The most rigorous austerities of penance held nothing that frightened him; he loved poverty and seized every opportunity of practising that virtue. His love for the poor was extraordinary. His humility, his patience in trials, his resignation to the will of God, his obedience and his gentleness had something admirable about them. To draw heavenly blessings on the labours of his zeal he prayed with as much assiduity as fervour. He had a tender devotion to the Blessed Virgin, to his guardian angel and to the other Saints. In short, his virtues caused admiration in all who knew him; and St. Andrew Avellino said of him that he was, by his words and his actions, an image of holiness.

Blessed John Marinoni was several times appointed superior. He received into the Congregation St. Andrew Avellino and Blessed Paul of Arezzo, who always gloried in having had him as master and director in the ways of piety. He possessed in an eminent degree the gift of discerning spirits and of giving to each the counsel suited to his situation.

When he proclaimed the word of God, it was with that unction which marks apostolic men. There was a prodigious concourse at his sermons. Not content with explaining the great principles of Christian morality, he also warned the faithful against the errors which in his time were attacking the faith, above all at Naples. During his stay in that city he was entrusted with the direction of a convent of nuns, and he applied himself with success to leading these spouses of Jesus Christ to the perfection of their state. In the same city he established a *mont-de-piété* to help families on the point of falling into want; but at the same time he took every measure suited to keep away the abuses that greed might occasion. This *mont-de-piété* afterwards became one of the most celebrated establishments of the city of Naples.

Blessed John Marinoni refused the archbishopric of Naples, to which the Pope wished to appoint him. He continued to exercise the functions of the sacred ministry in that city. He received with the greatest charity all who came to him in the tribunal of penance, and went eagerly to the sick who called him; and so he had a particular unction for inspiring confidence in the dying and restoring peace to troubled and agitated consciences. So many virtues merited for him singular graces from God: he obtained the cure of several sick people and was favoured with the gift of prophecy.

His labours and infirmities made his Congregation fear that it would soon lose him; and indeed the moment had come. He was attacked by an illness whose fatal outcome was foreseen. He asked for the last Sacraments, which he received with the keenest sentiments of piety. St. Andrew Avellino and Blessed Paul of Arezzo assisted him in his illness. He died on 13 December 1562. Clement XIII published, on 11 September 1762, a decree authorizing the cult of Blessed John Marinoni. The Theatines celebrate his office with the rite of a greater double.

Godescard.

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[1] See the article *Relics* in the life we gave of Bl. Hugh on 20 April, vol. IV, pp. 536–540.

[2] The original church of the priory of Saint-Étienne of Nevers had been founded at the beginning of the seventh century by St. Columban, for nuns vowed to the contemplative life; in the wars this monastery had been destroyed and the church ruined. When, in 1063, William, count of Nevers, Hugh II, his nephew, bishop of Nevers, and the other members of the family, who held the dependencies of the old monastery, resolved to re-establish it and restore what belonged to it, they placed there canons of Saint-Sylvestre. In 1068 only one member of this collegiate body remained. Mauguin, successor of Hugh II, in concert with Count William, gave this monastery over to the abbey of Cluny. The count undertook to rebuild the church, the regular buildings, the infirmaries and a chapel for the sick. The church was entirely finished in 1097, and on 13 December of that same year it was consecrated by St. Ivo, bishop of Chartres, in the presence of Guy, bishop of Nevers; of Walter, bishop of Châlons; and of Humbault, bishop of Auxerre. Count William, wishing to complete his work, gave the church two crosses, one of gold and the other of silver, a

book of the Gospels enriched with gold, a reliquary and two silver candlesticks, a gold chalice, three copes and a precious chasuble. — Mgr Crosnier, *Hagiologie nivernaise*.

[3] Although his acts are unknown to us, his name must once have been famous, since three parishes of France have kept it: Saint-Urcisse (Lot-et-Garonne, arrondissement of Agen, canton of Puymirol), in the diocese of Agen; Saint-Urcisse (Tarn, arrondissement of Gaillac, canton of Salvagnac), in the diocese of Albi; and Saint-Urcize (Cantal, arrondissement of Saint-Flour, canton of Chaudesaigues), in the diocese of Saint-Flour. — Local notes.

[4] Some time after he had been murdered, two peasants were sailing together on the marsh of Kjulo, where the crime had been committed. One of them, alerted by the cry of a raven hovering over a piece of ice, went up to it and saw there a bloody finger. In his surprise, forgetting that his companion was blind, he pointed out to him this sight whose cause he did not know. Now it was a finger of the holy bishop. The blind man, turning his eyes towards the place shown him, recovered his sight; and this was one of the first signs that made the martyrdom and holiness of the servant of God shine forth. From that time the raven is one of the chief characteristics of St. Henry of Uppsala. He is also represented trampling underfoot Finnish paganism in the form of the idolater who took his life. — Fr. Cahier, *Caractéristiques des Saints*.

[5] Alias: Judcc, Jodoc, Judocq, Jodec, Jouven, Judgoenoc, Judganoc, Jodoce, Joce, Jost, Judocus, Jodocus, Judocius.

[6] It is said that the house where they stayed, later changed into a church, is the one which until the Revolution bore the name of Saint-Josse and was one of the parishes of that city, served for a time, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, by missionaries of the congregation of Fr. Eudes. This church, situated in the rue Aubry-le-Boucher, is now destroyed.

[7] It was in memory of this miraculous event that the abbey of Saint-Josse-au-Bois was one day to place three gold boats in its arms.

[8] This is where the town of Saint-Josse now stands, near the mouth of the Canche, and where Milo, bishop of Thérouanne, later had a monastery built, of which no trace has long remained.

[9] This cross was moved near the abbey of Saint-Josse-sur-Mer, where the monastery, built later, bore the name of the Monastery of the Cross and ended by being called the abbey of Saint-Josse. As for the place where the cross originally stood, it took back the name of Bavémont which it had had before.

[10] The mountain of Hohenbourg originally bore the name of Altitona. The origin of its castle goes back to Celtic times. The chiefs of that region formed a sort of federal republic under the protection of the lord of Altitona. The peoples who lived in the plain paid him a tribute on condition that, when they were attacked, he would give them refuge, themselves and their flocks, within the enclosure of the castle of Altitona. To protect this multitude of vassals, a wall three leagues round, fifteen feet high and six feet wide was built around the summit of the mountain. It was a gigantic construction, the remains of which can still be seen today. It was there that the peoples of Alsace withdrew at the slightest alarm. But this immense rampart could not withstand the Roman conquest. The soldiers of Julius Caesar broke into the walls of Altitona and kept this citadel, which was occupied by the Romans until the barbarian invasions. It was then that the Alemanni seized it (about the year 440) and largely demolished it. The mountain then received the name of Hohenbourg, which means, like Altitona, a strong castle. It remained uncultivated and uninhabited until the time when Duke Adalric raised again the ruins of this ancient citadel.

[11] This last chapel was a rotunda supported by six columns and, according to an ancient tradition, it had formerly been consecrated, under the name of Pantheon, to the pagan divinities. Thus Adalric would only have changed its purpose. It was destroyed in 1734, and an inn was built on its site.

[12] This veil is mentioned in the old Breviaries of Besançon. It disappeared at the time of the French Revolution. But the old inhabitants of Baume still remember having seen it exposed.

[13] The Chronicle of Freiburg relates that in her flight Odile, having arrived near Freiburg and seeing herself on the point of being overtaken by a troop of horsemen led by her father, prayed the Lord to come to her aid; that then the rock which sheltered her opened to hide her from the search of those pursuing her. Odile went into it, and the rock closed upon her. When the danger was past, the rock opened again to give the Saint back her freedom. At Musbach, near Freiburg, a chapel was shown which, it was said, St. Odile had built in thanksgiving for this miracle.

[14] The properties which Duke Adalric ceded to the community of Hohenbourg are mentioned in the testament of St. Odile, in two bulls of the popes Leo IX and Lucius III, and in a letter of the emperor Louis I. — The number of places named shows that it was a magnificent endowment.

[15] Besides these oratories, there could still be seen at Hohenbourg the old chapel built by Adalric, in which his son Hugh and his daughter Roswinde were buried. Odile had had two tombs dug there, in which the dead nuns were laid in turn, to be carried afterwards, when the flesh was consumed, into the vaults intended for their burial. — A fifth chapel, built by Odile, bore the name of the Chapel of Tears; a sixth, finally, hanging on the slope of a rock, was called the Hanging Chapel, or again the Chapel of the Angels, to whom it was dedicated. It seemed, says the historian, that blessed Odile wished to turn all Hohenbourg into chapels, or rather into stations.

[16] The hospice, like the convent built there, now exists only in ruins. The chapel of St. Nicholas was restored and almost rebuilt a few years ago at the expense of the government, in the Romanesque style, as it was in St. Odile's time.

[17] It is doubtless this pious tradition that gave painters and sculptors occasion to represent St. Odile with a chalice in her hands. It has never been possible, says Hugues Peltre, to recognise of what material this chalice was made; but it was kept at Hohenbourg, set in gold and silver, until the year 1546. The convent of Hohenbourg bore a chalice in its arms.

[18] The baron of Chantal was the last descendant, in the maternal line, of the family of St. Bernard.

[19] The place where this misfortune happened is still shown today in the wood of the Vic.

[20] This is the wood of La Garenne, which was opposite the entrance of the castle and still exists.

[21] The place where St. Chantal had this vision is still shown. It was on the road that goes down from Bourbilly to the castle mill, at about equal distance from the one and the other, at the foot of a little wood called today Bois-Thomas.

[22] Thotes and Bourbilly were two castles whose lands almost touched.

14 December

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY

At Alexandria, the holy martyrs Heron, Arsenius, Isidore, and Dioscorus, a child: the first three were torn by various torments during the persecution of Decius and, as the tortures in no way shook their constancy, they were thrown into the fire by order of the judge. As for Dioscorus, after undergoing repeated scourgings, he was set at liberty, divine Providence permitting it for the consolation of the faithful. 250. — At Antioch, the birthday of the holy martyrs Drusus, Zosimus and Theodore. — The same day, St. Justus and St. Abundius, who, having come out safe and sound from a furnace into which the governor Olybrius had had them thrown under the Emperor Numerian, at last perished by the sword. 284. — At Reims, the martyrdom of St. Nicasius, bishop, of St. Eutropia, virgin, his sister, and of their companions, who were massacred by barbarians, enemies of the Church. 5th c. — In the island of Cyprus, the birthday of St. Spiridion, bishop, one of those confessors whom the Emperor

Maximian had condemned to the mines after having their right eye put out and the sinew of their left leg cut. God made him illustrious by the gift of prophecy and the grace of miracles, and at the Council of Nicaea he confounded a pagan philosopher who was insulting the bishops and mocking the Christian religion. 4th c. — At Bergamo, St. Viator, bishop and confessor. — At Pavia, St. Pompeius, bishop. — At Naples, St. Agnellus, abbot, famous for his miracles, who was often seen, cross in hand, delivering that city when besieged by enemies. 596. — At Úbeda, in Spain, St. John of the Cross, confessor, fellow-worker of St. Teresa in the Reform of the Carmelites. His feast is celebrated on 24 November.[1] 1591. — At Milan, St. Matronianus, hermit.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED

In the dioceses of Amiens, Châlons, Paris and Reims, St. Nicasius, bishop, and his companions, martyrs, named in the Roman martyrology of this day. 5th c. — In the dioceses of Arras and Cambrai, St. Folcuin, bishop of the ancient see of Thérouanne. 855. — In the diocese of Cahors, St. Ursicinus, bishop of that see and confessor.[2] 6th c. — In the dioceses of Carcassonne and Perpignan, St. Damasus, pope and confessor, whose life we gave on 11 December. 384. — In the diocese of Poitiers, St. Fortunatus, bishop of that see and confessor. 600. — In the diocese of Tours, anniversary feast of the *Reversion* (887) of the body of St. Martin, bishop of that see and confessor.[3] 400. — In the diocese of Vannes, St. Guigner or Fingar, martyr. 455. — At Arras, the martyrdom of St. Diogenes, bishop of that see. A Greek by origin, he was sent into Gaul by Pope Siricius towards the end of the fourth century. Arriving at Reims, he was consecrated by St. Nicasius, who sent him to preach the faith at Arras. There he laboured with zeal and success: he had a church built, the first cathedral of Arras, the one whose altar St. Vedast later found again. The persecution of the Vandals put an end to the labours of St. Diogenes: he was slaughtered by these barbarians in his church at Arras at the moment when St. Nicasius himself was being martyred at Reims. 5th c. — At Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux (Drôme), in the diocese of Valence, the martyrdom of St. Lupicinus, ninth bishop of Vienne, massacred by the officers of the Emperor Aurelian in hatred of religion. 270. — At Reims, St. Florentius, deacon, and St. Jucundus, lector, martyred with St. Nicasius. 5th c. — In the diocese of Besançon, St. Odile, abbess of Hohenbourg, whose life we gave on the preceding day. 8th c.

MARTYROLOGIES OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS

Martyrology of the Order of St. Basil. — At Naples, in Campania, St. Agnellus, abbot, of the Order of St. Basil, famous for his miracles, who was often seen, cross in hand, delivering that city when besieged by its enemies. 596.

Martyrology of the Canons Regular. — The same as with the Basilians.

Martyrology of the Order of St. Benedict. — In Spain, St. Dominic, abbot of Silos. 1073.

Martyrology of the Camaldolese Order. — The same as with the Benedictines.

Martyrology of the Congregation of Vallombrosa. — The same as with the Benedictines.

Martyrology of the three Orders of St. Francis. — St. Gregory Thaumaturgus, bishop and confessor, whose birthday is celebrated on 17 November.[4] 270.

Martyrology of the Order of Friars Minor. — St. Sylvester, abbot, founder of the Congregation of the Sylvestrine monks, whose memory is celebrated on 26 November.[5] 1267.

Martyrology of the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. — In the island of Cyprus, the birthday of Blessed Spiridion, bishop, of the Order of Carmelites, who was one of the confessors whom Galerius Maximian, after having their right eye put out and the sinew of their left leg cut, condemned to the mines. St. Spiridion was famous for his prophetic spirit and the glory of his miracles; at the Council of Nicaea he confounded a pagan philosopher who was insulting the Christian religion, and brought him back to the faith. 4th c. — At Alexandria, the holy martyrs Heron, Arsenius, Isidore, and Dioscorus, a child. The first three, during the persecution of Decius, were tortured in different ways and, as the torments in no way shook their constancy, the judge had them thrown into the fire. Dioscorus, after various scourgings, was set at liberty, divine Providence permitting it for the consolation of the faithful. 250. — At Antioch, the birthday of the holy martyrs Drusus, Zosimus and Theodore. — The same day, the martyrdom of Sts. Justus and Abundius, who, under the Emperor Numerian and the governor Olybrius, were thrown into the fire and, having suffered no harm from it, were beheaded. 284. — At Reims, St. Nicasius, bishop, Eutropia, virgin, his sister, and their companions, martyrs, who were put to death by the barbarians, enemies of the Church. 5th c. — At Bergamo, St. Viator, bishop and confessor. — At Pavia, St. Pompeius, bishop. — At Naples, in Campania, St. Agnellus, abbot, famous for the glory of his miracles, who was often seen, cross in hand, delivering that city when besieged by enemies. 596. — At Úbeda, the birthday of St. John of the Cross, confessor.[6] 1591. — At Milan, St. Matronianus, hermit.

Martyrology of the Order of Discalced Carmelites. — The same as above.

Martyrology of the Order of the Servites of the Blessed Virgin Mary. — At Orvieto, Blessed Bonaventure Bonaccorsi, confessor, of the Order of the Servites of the Blessed Virgin Mary, whose death was precious before God, as numerous miracles attested by incontestable records bear witness. 1315.

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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SAINT SPIRIDION OF CYPRUS, BISHOP AND CONFESSOR

Fourth century.

His holy and tireless charity sought to win by prayer those whom it had not been able to convert in the world. — *Saint Fulgentius.*

Divine Providence makes use, when it pleases, of the weakest things to work its greatest wonders; it has even at times chosen shepherds to make them the heads and leaders of its people. Moses and David, the two greatest princes there ever were, were feeding flocks when it called them to the government of the Israelites. Similar examples have been seen under the law of grace, and we are about to see an admirable one in Saint Spiridion. He was born in the island of Cyprus, and was employed by his parents, who were poor, in keeping the flocks. Since he knew that the world is the most dangerous enemy of Christian innocence, and that solitude, on the contrary, is its sure guardian, he took a wonderful delight in this occupation, which, withdrawing him from the company of men, gave him more freedom to converse with God. The wise simplicity of the childhood of Our Lord appeared in him in an extraordinary way. His gentleness was incomparable, his charity always ready to serve those who needed him, his fervour continual, his affability charming, his temperance pleasing, his humility profound; in a word, he possessed the virtues in so eminent a degree that his historian assures us that few persons were capable of imitating him.

When he was of an age to marry, he took a wife, by whom he had two children: a daughter named Irene, and a son whose name is not known. His house was open to the poor and to pilgrims; he received them cordially, gave them food, served them at table, washed their feet, and rendered them the most humbling services with more affection than servants show to those from whom they expect a reward. This admirable example of his gentleness is related: some thieves, having come by night to his sheepfold to carry off an animal, found themselves miraculously bound there and as it were nailed fast, their hands tied behind their backs and their feet so immovable that they could not change their place. Spiridion, finding them in this state in the morning, saw clearly what the cause was. He rebuked them for their evil intent and threatened them with the judgments of God if they continued their robberies; but he set them free and even gave them a sheep, telling them with a smile that it was for the trouble they had taken in keeping watch all night round his fold.

Tremithus, today Nicosia or Leucosia, one of the principal towns of the island of Cyprus, having lost its bishop, cast its eyes on our Saint, whose merit was known on every side, to raise him to that episcopal see. Only with great difficulty did he tear himself from his beloved solitude, where he tasted the sweetness of a private life, to expose himself to the dangers of the prelacy; but he could not resist the orders of divine Providence, and he was obliged to submit to the election of the people, because God willed it and commanded it of him. Although he did not bring to this charge a mind cultivated by profane learning, he nonetheless fulfilled all its functions perfectly; for God, who never fails to give those whom He raises to dignities the talents they need to discharge them well, filled him with the science of the Saints. No one could resist the spirit that spoke in him, because he ordered nothing of which he did not give living examples in his actions. His life was an effective sermon, which brought the most dissolute to the love of mortification; and the power that he seemed to have over nature by the grace of miracles gave him a wonderful power over the hearts of men. All the afflicted found in him a prompt and sure refuge. Having learnt that a very virtuous man, one of his friends, had been unjustly condemned to death, he set off at once to save his life; but, finding on his way a river which he had to cross and which was in flood, he commanded it to divide and leave him a free passage. At his word the waves parted, and this wonder made such a stir in the city before he arrived there that the judge, terrified by it, set at liberty the man he had resolved unjustly to destroy. Those who accompanied him passed with him through the midst of the waters, which, to obey the man of God, stood suspended like strong walls on either side of them. Another time he opened the springs of heaven to bring down an abundant rain, which the earth needed after a long drought; so we may say that he was the Joshua and the Elijah of his time, since he commanded with astonishing authority the waters that are above the heavens and those that are upon the earth. But if he was an Elijah, he found his Ahab in the person of Maximinus, who, after having his right eye put out and his left hamstring cut, condemned him to work in the mines with many other servants of Jesus Christ, on whom he had practised the same cruelty.

The persecution having ceased, and the Church enjoying complete peace under the reign of Constantine the Great, the pope Saint Sylvester assembled the general Council of Nicaea against the errors of Arius. Our Saint was present and was one of the three hundred and eighteen bishops who composed it, and to whom that pious emperor furnished the sum necessary for the journey. Many persons of rank, not only of the faithful but also of the idolaters, and even some philosophers, went there out of curiosity to see so famous an assembly. The philosophers there argued about their religion, and there was one among others who attacked our holy mysteries with such subtlety and eloquence that he embarrassed all the bishops with his sophisms. Spiridion, seeing that the truth had difficulty in defending itself against falsehood before so cunning an adversary, offered to dispute with him. At first it was feared that the good cause would run the risk of being lost, defended as it was only by so unskilled an advocate. But what was known of his eminent piety outweighed this mistrust. The Fathers believed that this new David, with the sword that God put in his mouth, that is to say with his word, could easily overcome this proud Goliath, who trusted only in the strength of his sophisms and his captious eloquence. They knew that he was an apostolic man, and they did not doubt that he could confound human learning by the foolishness of the cross, as the Apostles had done. He was therefore allowed to enter into dispute with this philosopher. He addressed him and commanded him in the name of Jesus Christ to listen to him. The tone of his voice had something supernatural about it, and there came from his eyes a heavenly light which astonished that proud sophist and filled him with as much respect for this venerable old man as he had had contempt for the other bishops. He simply recited to him the Church's confession of faith, as he would have taught it to a little child; and, having finished it, he added: "Does it not seem to you, O philosopher, that all I have just told you is true?" The sophist remained for some time dumbfounded and unable to answer; but immediately afterwards, by a wonder of the grace that had been working in his soul while Spiridion spoke to him, he cried out that henceforth he would have no other belief than that; and, turning to his disciples and to all his hearers who had previously admired him, he said to them: "When the force of reasoning was used against me, I defended myself by the rules of my art; but since, instead of human reasons, a wholly heavenly power has been opposed to my subtleties, and the simplicity of the word of God has been used to disclose to me the ineffable mysteries of the true religion, I am not ashamed to confess that I am vanquished; and I advise all who have heard me not to resist the truth, but to believe in Jesus Christ and to follow the teaching of this old man, who has spoken like other men, and who yet has uttered only divine words." Gregory of Cyzicus, a very learned and eloquent man but infected with the heresy of Arius, was so struck with awe at this wonder that he renounced his error and took up again the orthodox belief he had abandoned. Thus the pagans lost the victory when they thought they were on the point of triumphing; and the vanity of their advocate, so gloriously confounded, confounded their insolence too and silenced their impiety. All the prelates of the Council revered Spiridion as a heavenly man. Constantine, who was present, paid him great honours, kissed a thousand times the wound of the eye he had lost in the persecution, and earnestly commended himself to his prayers. But amid this applause he remained always lowly in his own eyes, and attributed to God alone all the advantage and all the glory of his triumph.

During his journey to Nicaea his daughter died without having returned a precious jewel that a woman had given her in trust. Some time after his return to Cyprus this woman came to ask him for it. The Saint looked for it throughout the house; but, unable to find it, he went, followed by several persons, to his daughter's tomb, and, speaking to her as if she had been full of life, he said: "Irene, where have you put the deposit that was entrusted to you?" As though the dead woman had only been asleep, she answered him distinctly: "My father, I put it in such a place in the house, and you will find it there." They went there, and indeed found it. This miracle was immediately followed by another: for, as if Spiridion had been master of life and death, he then said to his daughter: "Sleep then, Irene, until the general resurrection"; and at once she rested again in the Lord.

While he was governing his church in peace, he was obliged to leave it to go to see the emperor Constantius, who had succeeded his father Constantine. This prince, having fallen into an illness which the physicians

judged incurable according to their art, had recourse to God by prayer; and, after calling on Him with great fervour, he had a vision during the night in which an angel showed him several bishops and, among them, pointed out two from whom he might hope for his cure; but, since neither the names of these prelates nor their dioceses had been told him, all he could do was to summon to court the bishops most renowned for holiness. Spiridion, as one of the most celebrated, was sent for with the others. He was not surprised at this order, because God had revealed to him the emperor's vision. He went therefore to Antioch in Coele-Syria, where Constantius was; but he presented himself at the palace gate in so poor an outfit that the guards refused him entry. One of them even went further and dealt him a heavy blow on the cheek. This insult did not disturb Spiridion; he remembered then the counsel of the Gospel, and at once he offered the left cheek to the man who had struck him on the right. A practice so uncommon struck the wretch with admiration; he thought that this poor clothing doubtless hid a heavenly man, since he had shown no human resentment at the greatest affront that can be done to a man. He therefore asked who he was and, having learnt that he was a bishop, threw himself at his feet and asked his pardon. The readiness with which he obtained it was in some sort a severe punishment for his fault; for he was so ashamed at having offended a man so worthy of respect that a rigorous chastisement would have been more bearable to him. As soon as the emperor saw Spiridion, he recognized him as the one whom the angel had shown him, in the very outfit in which he now saw him. He rose from his seat and, notwithstanding the splendour of his purple, went to meet him with deep humility, showing thereby the difference between a king who holds that dignity only for a time and a Saint who is for ever the favourite of the King of kings. He wept at his feet, begged him to have pity on him, and bowed his head so that the bishop might touch it with his hand; Spiridion did so, and at the same moment the emperor recovered perfect health. This miracle drew on him the applause of the whole court. People talked of nothing but Spiridion; everyone vied in praising his virtue and enjoying his conversation.

He was not content with having restored health of body to this prince; he spared nothing to procure him health of soul as well. He knew that he favoured the Eusebians, the defenders of the errors of Arius. He represented to him that, in gratitude for the grace God had granted him through his means, he ought to show great zeal for the purity of the faith and never allow the least thing to be done against the honour of the Church. He also exhorted him to clemency, mercy, gentleness and charity towards his subjects, whose father and guardian he ought to consider himself. Constantius offered him large sums of gold; but the Saint made him this wise remonstrance on the subject: "It is not thus, my lord, that Your Majesty should reward me; you will allow me to tell you that you mean to repay ill the zeal I have shown in doing you service. I have left my house and crossed the sea, on which I endured the rigour of winter and the violence of the winds; and to reward me for the pains I have willingly taken for you, you want me to accept gold, which is the source of all evils and a metal capable of ruining the most just. I should condemn myself if I committed that fault." Nevertheless the prince pressed him so hard that Spiridion, seeing clearly that he would greatly displease him if he persisted in refusing his gift, accepted it; but he did not leave the palace without having distributed that great sum, showing by this conduct that a bishop, to preserve his freedom, must not receive presents or possess riches. When the emperor learnt of this, he exclaimed: "I am not surprised that this man, who so despises the goods of the earth, works such great miracles." For the rest, the Saint's words made so great an impression on his mind that he gave large alms to the poor and made himself the protector of widows and orphans. However, he did not persevere in these good dispositions; for, having at last let himself be corrupted by the Arians, he became the persecutor of the Church and of all the orthodox bishops.

Sozomen, in book I, chapter xi, of his Ecclesiastical History, relates yet another example of our Saint's admirable zeal and of his inviolable fidelity in keeping the text of Scripture in its purity. Triphyllius, bishop of Ledra in the island of Cyprus, whom Saint Jerome in his Treatise on Ecclesiastical Writers acknowledges to have been the most eloquent man of his age, was addressing an assembly of prelates and expounding the passage of chapter ii of Saint Mark in which Our Lord says to the paralytic, "Take up thy bed and walk"; instead of *krabbaton*, as the Greek text has, which might be rendered literally in our language as a couch, he

said *skimpous*, which means a low bed — almost the same thing. Saint Spiridion could not bear this change, slight as it seemed; and, after reproaching him with being no more enlightened than the Evangelist, that he should thus alter the word of God, he left the assembly; teaching thereby the respect due to the sacred Text, and that it must be quoted with modesty and not according to the refinements of human eloquence. Triphyllius had long taught civil law in the city of Berytus; but, having learnt of the miracles and innocent life of this great Saint, who was only a shepherd and an unlettered man, he had not blushed to become his disciple, a title he preferred even to that of doctor of law. Baronius has not failed to relate this fact in his Annals under the year 325.

Besides the miracles we have related of this holy man, so great a number more are found in the history of his life that we cannot recount them here. He raised the dead, discovered the secrets of consciences, foresaw future things and knew those that were absent. One day, having entered the church of a village called Erythra, not far from Constantia in Cyprus, to pray there, he ordered his deacon to do a public reading. The deacon read slowly and with affectation because, believing he had a fine voice, he took pride in making himself heard. The Saint, seeing into the depths of his heart, told him to be silent, and at once he became dumb. The inhabitants earnestly begged him to cure him; he did so, but in such a way that thereafter the deacon had only a weak, hoarse and stammering voice, and never again gave way to the rashness of glorying in a talent he had received solely from the bounty of God.

The patriarch of Alexandria had assembled a synod of the bishops of his jurisdiction, at which it was decided to offer continual prayers for the destruction of the idols, which were still very numerous in the city. The prelates set themselves to prayer and obtained from God what they asked, except the overthrow of one statue which Providence was reserving for Saint Spiridion. Indeed the patriarch, praying one night in the church, had a vision in which he was given to understand that this idol would be overthrown only by the bishop of Tremithus. He wrote to him and begged him to come to Alexandria to work this wonder. The Saint, who missed no occasion of labouring for the glory of the Church, embarked at once to go there; and as soon as he arrived he set himself to pray, and in that very hour the statue and several temples fell to the ground and were reduced to dust. When he saw himself near death, he assembled as many of his diocesans as he could and foretold to them several things that were to happen after his death; then he gave them fine instructions on the duties of true Christians and the virtues they should practise. At last, after recommending charity to them above all, he gave up his soul while uttering the praise of that queen of virtues which he had so well practised throughout his life. This was on 14 December, about the middle of the fourth century. His memory is marked in all the Latin martyrologies, and the Greeks speak of him with great honour.

He is represented: (1) seated, blessing; (2) standing, holding a closed book. — He may also be represented: (1) bringing down rain on the parched earth; (2) questioning a dead woman to learn where she had hidden a precious deposit that had been entrusted to her and that was being sought in vain.

This account is by Father Giry. Cf. Metaphrastes, Surius, Dom Ceillier.

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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SAINT NICASIUS, ARCHBISHOP OF REIMS, MARTYR

Fifth century.

A true shepherd must labour to the shedding of his blood rather than abandon the flock of Jesus Christ. — *Saint Athanasius.*

The consummate prudence of Nicasius, his learning, his virtue and his other eminent qualities, which made him worthy to be the shepherd of the Lord’s flock, raised him to the archiepiscopal see of Reims; he fulfilled

perfectly all the duties of that charge by the very exact care he took of the temporal and spiritual affairs of his diocese.

He was the light of his people, not only by his preaching, full of a truly heavenly force and unction, but also by his example. Everyone saw in his life all that he ought to do. His justice taught men to render to each what belongs to him and to wrong no one, as we would not wish to be wronged ourselves. His moderation taught them to be humble, sober, temperate, enemies of the pleasures of this life and detached from all that flatters the senses and nature. His charity, in helping the unfortunate, invited others to help them too, and showed that the glory of a true shepherd is not to clothe himself with the spoils of his sheep but to strip himself to clothe them. Finally, his devotion drew his diocesans to frequent the churches and the sacraments and the other exercises of Christian piety. Moreover, he took particular care for the adornment and embellishment of churches; he even increased their number, for he built the celebrated basilica of Our Lady, which has become the cathedral, whereas before it was the basilica of the Apostles, now Saint-Symphorien, martyr, that enjoyed that honour.

After some years of so wise an administration, an angel appeared to him and made known to him that God meant to chastise the city of Reims for the crimes committed in it, and that He would use for this purpose the Vandals, a cruel and barbarous people, who would besiege it, take it, sack it and fill it with murder and blood. He did not fail to warn his people of it, so that they might strive by earnest penance to turn so terrible a scourge from their heads, as the Ninevites turned away the one with which the prophet Jonah had threatened them; but, whether the sins of these bad Christians had reached their full measure, or whether, regarding these warnings of their holy Pastor only as tales invented to frighten them, they took no trouble to appease the wrath of God by a sincere conversion, they found at last that his predictions were only too true. Indeed, in the year 407, under the empire of Arcadius and Honorius, sons of Theodosius the Great, and in the consulship of the same Arcadius and of Anicius, the Vandals, mingled with the Alans, threw themselves upon Gaul; and, after laying waste some other provinces, filling every place they passed through with murders, fires, rapes and a thousand other evils, they at last entered Champagne and laid siege to Reims, which was then its capital. The inhabitants defended themselves with great courage and held out for a fairly long time against the enemy's assaults; but, seeing themselves on the eve of being taken, they had recourse to their holy prelate and asked him what it would be best for them to do: to surrender to the Barbarians on terms, trusting to the faith of their promise, or to hold out to the death. This good shepherd, to whom God had revealed the taking of the city, gave them this generous answer: "You know, my dear children, that we have brought this great scourge on ourselves by our iniquities and offences. God has judged justly, and He treats us only as we have deserved; let us then enter into sentiments of compunction at the sight of the evils that surround us, and let us receive the stroke of death, not with fear and despair, but with submission, with patience and with firm confidence that it will serve us as a remedy and obtain for us the grace and mercy of our sovereign Judge. If to save your lives I had only to give mine in sacrifice, I would do so this moment most willingly; but since the sentence is universal and includes the flock with the shepherd, let us all so act that our execution may be a martyrdom and a sacrifice of sweet savour before Jesus Christ. Let us even love our persecutors and offer to God our blood and our life for their conversion."

While he was speaking thus, a sister of his named Eutropia, a virgin of consummate innocence and virtue, was for her part using all her eloquence and courage to rouse the Christians to martyrdom. Meanwhile the Vandals, continuing their assaults, broke down the gates, overthrew the walls and entered the city in crowds, with no one able to stop them. As soon as Saint Nicasius saw them, he went out to meet them with wonderful constancy and firmness, his sister at his side, singing hymns and spiritual canticles with her. He stopped on the threshold of his church of Our Lady and, having asked the chiefs of these victorious barbarians for a moment's hearing, he made them a powerful and moving address in an attempt to soften their hearts and prevent the final violence; but, seeing that there was nothing to be hoped from their hardness, he begged

them to begin their butchery with his own person, hoping that his blood offered in sacrifice might draw down God's mercy on this people. He therefore knelt and prostrated himself on the pavement, uttering these words of Psalm cxviii: "My soul hath cleaved to the pavement: quicken thou me according to thy word"; and at the same moment one of the soldiers dealt him a great blow with an axe which struck off his head. All who were with him were likewise put to the sword, except his sister Eutropia, whom the soldiers, charmed by her beauty, wished to spare so as afterwards to outrage her chastity; but the generous virgin, seeing clearly the sacrilegious design of these impious men, threw herself boldly on the executioner who had put her brother to death and, reproaching him with his cruelty, struck him in the face. The savage Hun, enraged, pierced her with blows and stretched her lifeless on the bishop's corpse.

Among those who were slain with the holy bishop were particularly noted a deacon named Florentius and a lector named Jucundus; they showed an admirable zeal and ardour for martyrdom. Their massacre was followed by many others in the city; but at last an unknown, sudden, terrible noise was heard in the church of Our Lady, and the terrified barbarians took to flight at once, without giving themselves time to strip the dead, plunder the houses, burn the city or even carry off the booty they had already amassed and had in their hands.

Saint Nicasius is represented: (1) at the moment when he is seized by the barbarians and his sister, Saint Eutropia, strikes a soldier in the face; (2) slain with his sister, while in heaven three angels threaten his murderers.

VENERATION AND RELICS

The bodies of the Martyrs remained for some time without burial under the guard of the angels, who kept them incorrupt and preserved them from the teeth of beasts of prey; but, as some of the inhabitants had managed to escape the slaughter and withdraw to the neighbouring hills, seeing from afar heavenly flames above the place of their execution and even hearing an angelic concert which seemed to come from the same direction, they judged that there was nothing more to fear in Reims, and that God, who had saved their lives, required of them that they should take care to bury these illustrious victims of Christian piety. They therefore came down into the city as soon as possible and devoutly discharged this pious duty; among others they buried Saint Nicasius their bishop and Saint Eutropia his sister. A very great number of miracles have taken place at their tomb.

The relics that Notre-Dame of Reims possessed have almost all disappeared, especially from the day when the precious objects and shrines of the treasury of Reims were removed and sent to the Mint (14 November 1792).

Saint Nicasius and Saint Eutropia his sister, having been martyred at Reims, were laid together in a tomb in the church of Saint-Agricola, founded by Jovinus, a man of Reims, prefect of the Gauls, commander of the armies and Roman consul, in the fifth century. On the tomb were read these words: "Here is the spot and place where my lord Saint Nicasius, sometime archbishop of Reims, and my lady Saint Eutropia his sister were buried in the earth after they were martyred for the Christian faith." The chest-tomb rested on four columns and was enriched with bas-reliefs. Near this tomb Saint Remigius had prepared a cell for himself, and it was even there that he was at prayer when someone came to tell him that fire had broken out in the city.

In the seventh century a solemn translation of the relics of Saint Nicasius and Saint Eutropia was made, and, as the bishop of Tournai was present as a prelate of the province, he obtained a notable part of the body of Saint Nicasius… The other part remained in the Jovinian church (Saint-Agricola) until the time when Archbishop Fulk had it carried, with the body of Saint Eutropia, into the cathedral church, where their memory is held in great veneration. Their shrine was often enriched and covered with gold and precious stones.

Under the pontificate of Gervase, the part of the body of Saint Nicasius that the church of Tournai preciously kept was carried off by a cleric and brought back to Reims. The archbishop at once had the two parts brought and the bones fitted to one another; he found that everything corresponded exactly; then, no longer doubting the authenticity of these relics, he gave the part of the body brought back from Tournai to the church of Saint-Nicaise which he was building, and of which he made the dedication on the fifth of the calends of October. The relics of Saint Nicasius and Saint Eutropia were visited several times at Notre-Dame and at Saint-Nicaise: in 1307 and 1310 by Robert de Courtenay; in 1359 by Jean de Craon; in 1377 by the emperor Charles IV, the king's uncle, who obtained a few of the relics to take to Germany; in 1584 by Louis, cardinal de Guise; in 1752, when the Reverend Father Spiridion, a Carmelite, obtained a relic of Saint Eutropia.

The head of Saint Nicasius was divided into three parts: Notre-Dame possessed the skull, Saint-Vaast of Arras the back of the head, and the abbey of Reims the lower jaw. The cathedral likewise possessed the relics of Saint Florentius and Saint Jucundus, companions of Saint Nicasius, as several official reports prove, and above all the translation made in 1680 by Ch. Maurice Le Tellier.

Of these relics there now remain at Notre-Dame only a few very small portions: the lower jaw and part of the spine of Saint Nicasius, and some fragments of the bones of Saint Nicasius, Saint Eutropia, Saint Jucundus and Saint Florentius, all enclosed in a gilded wooden shrine, in which are several authentic deeds of the fourteenth century, from one of which hangs a magnificent red wax seal of Richard Picque, archbishop of Reims in 1377.

In the middle of the nave of Reims cathedral there is a marble stone which marks the place where Saint Nicasius was beheaded: *Hoc in loco sanctus Nicasius Remensis archipraesul, truncato capite, martyr occubuit, anno Domini 406* ("In this place Saint Nicasius, archbishop of Reims, died a martyr, his head cut off, in the year of the Lord 406"). In place of this stone there was formerly a most precious monument: the very stone that Saint Nicasius had watered with his blood. Originally it was set in the part of the pavement occupied by the rood-screen and surrounded by an iron grille, which earned it the name of the cage of Saint Nicasius. When the rood-screen was built, this stone was moved forward into the nave. "In the middle of the nave," says a historian of the cathedral, "near the door of the *pupitre* (rood-screen), is a round stone, set among others and in a wooden frame out of reverence, which is the place where the portal of the church of Reims formerly stood, at which place the holy bishop had his head cut off, and Saint Eutropia his sister, with several Martyrs." This monument, so venerable in its simplicity, being only moderately to the taste of the canons, Jean Quinart, a chaplain, obtained permission in 1666 to raise another at his own expense and to his own taste. Here is the description of it given by a manuscript notice: "The stone of Saint Nicasius is now enclosed in a marble mausoleum, with four sorts of doorways in white jasper; there are four openings for viewing the said stone, at which are a cipher of Saint Nicasius in gilded copper…" This last mausoleum, as well as the rood-screen, having the fault of hiding the choir grille put up by a canon of Reims, was demolished in 1744.

We have completed Father Giry's account with local notes owed to the kindness of M. l'abbé Cerf, honorary canon of Reims.

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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SAINT VENANTIUS FORTUNATUS OF DUPLAVILIS, BISHOP OF POITIERS

600. — Pope: Saint Gregory the Great. — King of France: Theuderic II.

Ingenio clarus, sensu celer, ore suavis, Cujus dulce melos pagina multa canit.

A penetrating mind, a ready understanding, an enchanting poet, Fortunatus has left us many pages stamped with the most marvellous talent. — *Paul the Deacon of Aquileia, Epitaph of St Fortunatus.*

Venantius Honorius Clementianus Fortunatus was born in 530 at Duplavilis (*Duplavilis, Duplavenis*) in Italy, not far from Treviso. His two family names were Honorius Clementianus, which show clearly enough that his relatives were of Latin origin or had long lived in Italy. Later he added to them the names Venantius, in memory of a holy abbot of Touraine whom he had set before himself as a model, and Fortunatus, because of his trust in the martyr of that name who had suffered at Aquileia. It is this last name that remained to him afterwards, and under which he is best known. His birth bound him to Christianity. His studies brought him early to Aquileia, where perhaps he studied under the direction of Paulinus, then attached to the schools of that city, who later became its bishop without ceasing to be his friend. Paulinus would have liked to attach him to the Church; but the young man was not yet called to it, and, after receiving from him the elements of the Christian faith and of learning, he went to Ravenna to study rhetoric and poetry, which were to give him so fine a place among his contemporaries.

While he was studying in that city, where his successes were not as unremarkable as his humility was pleased to say, the assiduity of his work so tired his eyes that he soon had to fear losing his sight entirely. Anxious at this prospect, he was praying one day in the church of Saints John and Paul before an altar raised to St Martin of Tours, whose renown and miracles were celebrated throughout the world. Suddenly an impulse of faith seized his heart. A lamp was burning near the image of the holy bishop. He went up to it, rubbed his eyes with a little oil that he took from it, and at once he was healed. The same miracle was repeated at the same time for Felix, one of his friends who, suffering from the same ailment, had come with him, and who shortly afterwards became bishop of Treviso.

This favour, as may be imagined, could only increase in the young man the feeling of devotion he had had until then for St Martin, and for which he was so generously rewarded. From that moment he resolved to make, as soon as he could, a journey to France and to thank the glorious wonder-worker in his celebrated basilica at Tours. The troubles of Italy soon hastened the carrying-out of this plan. The Lombards were threatening that beautiful country, which they entered in 568. Their barbarity laid everything waste, and already men trembled at the prospect of an approaching invasion, the more to be dreaded as the Christian name was the more hateful to them. Fortunatus did not wish to wait for these misfortunes; he left in 566 and, after stopping some time at Duplavilis to see his family, continued his long road now on foot, now on horseback, as the frequent crossing of mountains, plains or rivers made the one or the other means more convenient.

During this difficult journey the engaging traveller made many halts with persons of note, by whom his talent for poetry, which he was already cultivating with success, got him noticed and detained. People liked to have him tell what he had seen. The charm of his narration and the liveliness of his wit delighted his hosts. To this admiration for his genius was joined a true esteem for the purity of his conduct and the gentleness of his company. So that, thanks to these literary relations, which so easily bind those who love them, he made friends everywhere as well as admirers.

Sigebert I, one of the most enlightened, if not one of the most virtuous, princes of that time, reigned in Austrasia. He received Fortunatus kindly, who had the happiness of captivating him and making a friend of him: he would even have liked to keep him at his court and made him tempting offers. But the wise traveller soon perceived that the king was ill advised by his courtiers; he feared a stay for which his virtue was not made, and excused himself on the main purpose of his journey, which was to take him to Tours. Sigebert wished at least to give him an honourable proof of his friendship and his regrets, by having him accompanied by one of his officers, who was to provide for his needs and his safety for the whole rest of his journey. As this prince was much attached to St Radegund, and believed he saw in Fortunatus a man who could serve her in her affairs, which were not always free of grave difficulties, he wished that, after satisfying his devotion to

St Martin, he should go to Poitiers and present to the humble and illustrious queen a letter of recommendation on his behalf.

Fortunatus arrived at Tours and there acquitted himself of his duties towards his holy protector, probably in 568. St Euphronius was then its bishop: between him and Fortunatus there began from then on a close union of feeling which never ceased, and which made them regard each other henceforth as son and father.

St Radegund was only thirty leagues from Tours, where, like Fortunatus, she had come in the days of her trials to testify her trust in St Martin and to leave in a monastic foundation a monument of her royal piety. For more than ten years she had been living in her monastery of the Holy Cross, from which the fragrance of her virtues, the renown of her learning and the delicacy of her mind drew the eyes of the world towards her. On so many counts the poet and the Christian must also have felt eager to know her. Besides, Italy was in flames under the firebrands of its savage conquerors. The traveller had become an exile. Too much leisure was left him far from his homeland. And moreover God, in His hidden designs, was directing the course of this life which He wished to settle. However that may be, resolved to delay his return to Treviso, he came to Poitiers, visited, heard and admired St Radegund. For her part, the great saint discovered in Fortunatus the rare alliance of an enlightened piety that matched her own and of a lofty genius that pleased her no less. A gentle and devout sympathy therefore soon bound these two souls, which heaven destined never again to be separated except by death. When Fortunatus, after enjoying for some time this kindly intimacy, in which the abbess St Agnes also had a deserved share, wished at last to return to Tours, which St Euphronius made dear to him, the two religious joined their entreaties to persuade him not to leave them. His high intelligence, the esteem in which he was held at court and the holiness of his life indeed showed them in Fortunatus a man whose credit could be of great advantage to them in their temporal affairs. As for him, were there not also persuasive reasons for attaching himself to this prospect of a serious, respected and useful position, at his already mature age and in that disgust he had felt for the vanities of the world, which could not diminish in contact with the great virtues of our two saints? He made up his mind, and thus, already a Poitevin at heart, he became one by the resolution never to leave again.

The abbot of Saint-Hilaire, Pascentius, had ascended the see of Poitiers in 564. He was not long in coming to know and appreciate the holy man, and although he was a foreigner, which made him canonically unfit for ordination, the prelate believed that this solid virtue, which rested in him on piety of habits and of feelings, became a sufficient guarantee for the future: he therefore did not hesitate to admit him into his clergy, where, after the canonical tests and intervals, he rose through the lower degrees of the clerical state to the dignity of the priesthood. This character must have entered into the desires of St Radegund for him. From then on he could administer, along with the temporal affairs of her community, the spiritual help of which it had no less need. From then on, too, there multiplied those holy and kindly relations in which one very often finds the poet yielding, by an innocent impulse, to the genius that colours for him the smallest circumstances of intimate life; and yet at the same time the serious negotiator deals, with all the attention they deserve, with affairs of the greatest weight. While this distinguished mind turns itself to the composition of great poems, or of numerous prose works on the life and miracles of St Hilary, of St Martin and of other illustrious persons dear to the Church, or to a thousand little poems marked by delicacy and real beauties, he none the less treats of the most important affairs of the monastery with kings who respect and listen to him, and with the holiest bishops, whom he has for friends. He enters into negotiations, he undertakes journeys to various courts, he defends the Holy Cross against the spoliations of the great, he maintains there the spirit of the rule; and amid so many details, for which an ordinary man would not suffice, he works none the less for himself at the study of the holy Books, gives himself to theology, reads the Fathers with profit, and makes for himself in Latin literature, which was expiring in his time, an immortal reputation, thus adding the prestige of human learning to the splendour of his religious virtues. And so his most illustrious contemporaries had but one voice in praising him: it was a fine glory to merit, as a first crown of his holiness, the approval of prelates as holy as

Germanus of Paris, Felix of Nantes, Nicetius and Magnericus of Trier, Euphronius of Tours and Avitus of Clermont.

Although St Fortunatus had not yet received all these testimonies of universal esteem in 570, when the precious relic owed to the entreaties of St Radegund and the generosity of the Emperor Justin II was received at the Holy Cross, there is no doubt that he was already taking part in the affairs of the convent, since on that occasion he composed the beautiful hymn so well known throughout the Church, *Vexilla Regis prodeunt*, and addressed to Justin and the Empress Sophia, as thanks, a letter in verse in the name of St Radegund and her sisters.

Thus, having become as commendable for his eminent piety as for his learning and eloquence, the good priest lived, now in the care of a complicated administration, now in retirement and study, softening the difficulties of the double ministry of consciences and of worldly affairs by the charms of an innocent friendship, which great souls always prefer to all pleasures. But deep sorrows and sad anxieties tried him. He saw St Radegund die, then soon afterwards St Agnes, then again St Disciola, the amiable and devout rival of their virtues. He saw the scandalous troubles brought into the family of the Holy Cross by the detestable ambition of two proud princesses, Chrodield and Basina; but the saints profit by reverses as by consolations to sanctify themselves, and on reaching an advanced old age ours could give thanks to God that so many years, spent in His service for the illustrious monastery of Poitiers, had produced there, at least in many souls made for heaven, fruits of blessing that nothing could take from them.

His priestly ministry continued under three bishops who succeeded one another from his arrival in Poitou to the end of the sixth century: Maroveus, who had not always favoured St Radegund's fine undertaking as the public wished, had replaced Pascentius, and Plato had replaced Maroveus. The works of the sacred poet, in which these names, venerated for fourteen hundred years, often recur with the praise they deserve, prove in what relations of filial submission, holy familiarity and useful service Fortunatus always remained with them.

In 599 he was sixty-nine years old, and nearly half his life had passed in this continual exercise of modest virtues and good works, which had made him in the eyes of all a model of administrative prudence, charitable zeal and holy devotion. As soon, therefore, as Plato, who had sat for seven years, had that same year left a life that Fortunatus has worthily praised, there was no hesitation over the choice of his successor. Fortunatus was named unanimously. From that moment he applied himself with the zeal and activity of youth to the great duties of an accomplished shepherd. He hastened to work, as though he had felt that time would soon fail him. Indeed, he was to keep the care of his charge for barely one whole year, a charge perhaps too heavy for an old man of seventy. He then composed his explanation of the Creed and that of the Our Father, intended as homilies for the people he was to feed with the word of God. These works have come down to us and bear witness, with many others, that this fine imagination, which had so often and on so many subjects inspired his poetic language, was none the less imbued with the great and solemn thoughts that present the things of faith under features able to make it loved.

St Fortunatus died in 600, probably on 14 December, the day on which his feast has always been kept in the church of Poitiers. He was buried in the apse of the basilica of Saint-Hilaire. Paul, deacon of Aquileia, passing through Poitiers towards the middle of the following century, visited his tomb, honoured by popular devotion. At the request of Aper, then abbot of the monastery, he composed an epitaph for the pontiff, whose fellow-countryman he gloried in being. In it he gave a fine eulogy of his genius and of the holiness of his life.

WRITINGS OF SAINT FORTUNATUS

The most considerable of Fortunatus's works is a Collection of poems on various subjects; it is divided into eleven books and dedicated to St Gregory, bishop of Tours. The first book begins with a poem in honour of Vitalis, bishop of Ravenna; it is followed by the one Fortunatus composed on the occasion of the church the

same bishop had built in the same city under the invocation of St Andrew, and in which he had placed relics of St Peter and St Paul, St Sisinnius, St Alexander, St Cecilia and some other martyrs. There is one on the cell built at the spot where St Martin had given part of his cloak to a poor man to clothe him; one on the dedication of the church of Saint-Vincent, where a man possessed by the devil had been delivered as soon as the relics of the holy martyr had been brought into that church. The others are either descriptions of churches, places and rivers, or eulogies of Leontius, bishop of Bordeaux.

In the second book the hymn *Pange lingua* has been placed among the poems of Fortunatus, though there is more reason to attribute it to Claudianus Mamertus; the other first six poems of that book are in honour of the cross; the fourth, fifth and sixth are acrostics: the last is figured in the shape of a cross, and all three demanded much art and attention. Fortunatus says plainly in them that he adores the cross at all times, that he regards it as the sure pledge of his salvation and that he carries it with him as his refuge in his needs. As for the *Vexilla Regis*, no one doubts that this hymn is his; the last two stanzas are not the same in Fortunatus as in the office of the Church; there are also some changes in the second. Most of the other hymns or poems of the second book are in praise of several holy bishops, such as St Saturninus of Toulouse, St Maurice and his companions, St Hilary of Poitiers, St Medard of Noyon; the others are on various subjects. The tenth is a eulogy of the zeal and piety of the clergy of Paris, and the eleventh a description of the church of that city. Fortunatus compares it to the temple of Solomon, saying that it surpassed it in that the ornaments of that temple were only material, whereas the church of Paris was dyed with the blood of Jesus Christ. The twelfth is on a baptistery that St Sidonius, bishop of Mainz, had had built; the poet acknowledges in it that God, by the healing waters of baptism, redeems us from the death of the sin we contracted by our origin. In the thirteenth poem Fortunatus praises the martyr St George. At the end of the third book of Luchi's edition, reprinted in volume LXXXVIII of the Latin Patrology, there is a piece of verse by Fortunatus in honour of St Martial.

The third book consists of thirty-seven letters, partly in verse, partly in prose; nearly all are to bishops with whom he was bound in friendship. In the ninth he treats of the mystery of the resurrection; from it has been taken the first stanza of the responsory sung in processions on Easter Day, which is repeated there by way of refrain; it begins with the words *Salve festa dies*. In the tenth he extols the ingenuity of Felix of Nantes, who had managed to level a hill to change the course of a river, and thereby to give the people the means of living, by giving them land to cultivate. In the eleventh he speaks of the fortresses that Nicetius, bishop of Trier, had built on the banks of the Moselle. In the fourteenth he describes the country of Metz and the two rivers that water it, the Moselle and the Seille; he represents the city of Metz as well fortified. The twenty-ninth is a eulogy of St Agericus, bishop of Verdun. In the thirtieth he also praises his learning and his assiduity in instructing his people. We see from the thirty-second that the abbot Paternus had asked him to correct a book that Fortunatus had written in his own hand, and in which mistakes had crept in which he admits were rather usual with him. He was near Nantes when he wrote to Drucon, deacon of the church of Paris; this letter is the thirty-second. The three following are also to deacons and are only letters of friendship.

In the fourth book there are twenty-eight epitaphs, of which the first ten are for various bishops of France, the others for persons of different conditions. The twenty-fifth is for Queen Theodechild, wife of Charibert; she is mentioned in St Gregory of Tours.

The first letter of the fifth book is addressed to Martin, bishop of Dumio in Galicia. This letter is in prose, but the second to the same bishop is in verse. Fortunatus indicates in it the countries where the apostles had preached the Gospel; in the same letter he speaks of the monastery of Poitiers and of the Rule of St Caesarius that had been established there. The third letter is to the inhabitants of Tours, whom he congratulates on the choice made of St Gregory for their bishop. The fifth concerns the conversion of the Jews brought about by the ministry of Avitus, bishop of Clermont; it is followed by the eulogy of that bishop, but Fortunatus acknowledges in it that one cannot praise the ministers of Jesus Christ in the conversion of peoples without

praising Jesus Christ Himself, who inspires the good will, who gives the accomplishing, and without whom nothing good is done, since it is He who fills the prophets and preachers with His light, so that they may beget faith in the hearts of those who hear them. Fortunatus having set himself to compose an acrostic with as many letters as Jesus Christ spent years on earth, and to enclose in this poem the story of the creation of man, his fall and his redemption, this was not easy for him, but he succeeded. He sent it to Syagrius, bishop of Autun, to whom he wrote a letter in prose to give him an account of his work and of the way to read this acrostic. The other letters have nothing of interest; most are addressed to St Gregory of Tours, to thank him for presents he had received from him, or to recommend to him persons going to Tours.

The twelve poems of the sixth book are almost all on profane subjects. The second is the epithalamium of King Sigebert and Brunhild. The fourth is remarkable for the praise he gives in it to King Charibert or Caribert; St Gregory of Tours had published only his vices, especially his incontinence, which caused him to be excommunicated by St Germanus, bishop of Paris. Fortunatus extols his virtues, making him out to be a wise, moderate and equitable prince, zealous for justice and the observance of the laws, liberal, upright, the oracle of his council, a lover of letters, and one who spoke Latin as easily as French. The sixth is a eulogy of Berthechild, of her modesty, her prudence and her love for the poor. The seventh concerns the marriage of Galswintha with Chilperic.

All that is most interesting in the seventh book, made up of thirty-one poems, is the parallel he draws in the twelfth between the wise and learned men of paganism and true Christians. To the former there has remained only a vain reputation; the latter will enjoy an eternal happiness in heaven, and will even be honoured on earth, because there is no salvation to hope for, no solid and lasting honour, except by making oneself pleasing by virtue to God, who is one in three persons. One may also note his two distichs on the shortness of life. Everything passes in a moment; we must therefore attach ourselves to the goods that never perish; let us be just towards all, cultivate peace, love Jesus Christ: let us seek delights we may enjoy eternally.

In the first poem of the eighth book he gives the details of his birthplace and his various dwelling-places up to the time when he attached himself to the service of St Radegund, whose life, as she led it in the monastery of Poitiers, he describes. In the second he speaks of the pain he felt at leaving this saint to go and visit St Germanus of Paris. The third is a hymn on the Nativity of Our Lord. The fourth and fifth are in praise of Jesus Christ and of His holy Mother, whom he calls Mother of God, and in honour of virginity, which alone was worthy to bring the Almighty into the world, and which is so excellent in itself that words fail to express all its merit. Fortunatus gives in them an admirable description of the assembly of the saints in heaven, where he gives the first place to the Blessed Virgin, then to the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs and virgins. He says in the sixth poem that the rewards promised to virgins hold the first rank after those due to the apostles, prophets and martyrs. The following six are in praise of St Radegund, and the last twelve in honour of St Gregory of Tours. We see from the ninth that the saint used the first flowers of spring to adorn the altars; from the eleventh, that she shut herself up for a month each year before the feast of Easter to prepare for it. Among the poems addressed to St Gregory there is a letter in which Fortunatus commends to him the cause of a priest who needed his protection.

The eulogy he makes of Chilperic in the ninth book is so general that it is not enough to destroy the bad impressions the historians of the time have given of this prince, and the same must be said of the one he makes of Queen Fredegund, his wife. Fortunatus wrote the epitaphs of Chilperic’s two sons, Dagobert and Chlodobert. The sixth and seventh poems are a reply to the letter in verse that St Gregory of Tours had written to him. The ninth is a eulogy of Sidonius, bishop of Mainz. In the sixteenth he praises the general Chrodin.

The tenth book begins with the explanation of the Lord’s Prayer; its style is much clearer, more flowing and more natural than that of Fortunatus’s other prose writings, which gives reason to believe that it is one of his discourses to his people, in which he sought only to instruct them. The explanation of the last petition has

remained unfinished. There follow three prose letters to a lord of the court named Numulenus, two of which are to console him for the death of his daughter; then another to the church of Tours, which St Gregory had just restored; then the account of several miracles worked by St Martin; two poems in praise of King Childebert and Queen Brunhild; the description of a journey Fortunatus had made on the Moselle from Metz to Andernach, in the diocese of Cologne; a poem in honour of a church where the archangel St Gabriel was particularly revered, and where there were relics of St George, of St Cosmas and St Damian, and of some other martyrs; one in praise of Armentaria, mother of St Gregory, whom he compares to the mother of the Maccabees, both for her virtue and for the number of her children; one to Count Sigoald, in which he praises almsgiving, because this lord was charged with distributing alms on behalf of King Childebert. We also see from it that Sigoald had made a pilgrimage to the tomb of St Martin for that prince's health. The other poems are on various subjects.

The eleventh book contains twenty-five short poems which are either thanks to St Radegund or to the abbess of her monastery for presents Fortunatus had received from them, or compliments on their birthdays. He records in the fourth that he had joined Agnes in urging the saint to drink a little wine in her infirmities, and that he had pressed her on this point by the consideration of the advice St Paul had given Timothy in a similar case. He addressed to them two other poems, in which he describes two of his journeys. All these poems are preceded by the explanation of the Creed, which is in the same manner as that of the Lord's Prayer.

St Germanus was still governing the church of Paris when Fortunatus composed his four books of the Life of St Martin. They are written in verse, except for the dedicatory epistle, which is in prose; it is addressed to St Gregory of Tours, to whom he gives an account of his work. These four books cost him only two months' work; and so he admits that they do not have all the exactness he could have given them by taking more time to polish his verses.

He also wrote a poem on the Destruction of Thuringia. In it he makes St Radegund, niece of Hermanfrid, speak, and represents her weeping over the loss of a State that had given her birth, and that of all her nearest relatives, swallowed up in the ruin of their country. The following poem is in praise of the Emperor Justin the Younger and his wife the Empress Sophia. Fortunatus praises this prince for the purity of his faith, for his attachment to the decrees of the Council of Chalcedon, and for recalling the bishops exiled for having defended the truth. There follows a poem to Artachis, first cousin of St Radegund, on the death of Hermanfrid, her uncle and Artachis's father.

These are all the writings of Fortunatus collected by Brower and printed in the tenth volume of the Library of the Ancient Fathers. Omitted from it was an epigram in praise of King Childebert II, published in 1675 by Dom Mabillon from a manuscript of the abbey of Saint-Vanne at Verdun; it is in fourteen elegiac lines, which are nothing but plays on words. Fortunatus names himself in it and recommends to this prince one Audulf. This epigram is found in volume LXXXVIII of the Latin Patrology.

Among the Lives of Saints he composed, we know that of St Germanus, bishop of Paris, printed in Surius, in Bollandus and in the first volume of the Acts of the Order of St Benedict; that of St Albinus, bishop of Angers, which is also found in the same authors; that of St Paternus, bishop of Avranches. The Life of St Radegund is divided into two books in the first volume of the Benedictine Acts: only the first is by Fortunatus. Father Labbe printed, in the second volume of his Library of Manuscripts, a life of St Amantius, bishop of Rodez. Surius had already given part of it on the fourth day of November, under the name of Fortunatus: it is fairly much in his style. To Fortunatus are also attributed an abridged life of St Remigius, which is read in Surius at 1 October, and the life of St Medard, bishop of Noyon. The Life of St Maurilius, bishop of Angers, is not by Fortunatus, as Trithemius believed, but by Raino, bishop of Angers, at the beginning of the tenth century. Nothing very certain is known of the author of the life of St Marcellus, bishop of Paris; some attribute it to Fortunatus of Poitiers, others to a bishop of the same name whose episcopal see is not known. As for the Acts of St Denis, bishop of Paris, of which M. Bosquet makes Fortunatus of Poitiers

the author, they appear to have been written at the end of the seventh century or the beginning of the following one. It is not clear on what ground the life of St Leobinus, bishop of Chartres, has been given to Fortunatus: it is not in his style.

Besides the life of St Severinus, which St Gregory of Tours credits to Fortunatus, we have lost the hymns he had composed for all the feasts of the year. Paul the Deacon and Sigebert mention them, and from the way they speak of them it is clear that these hymns were numerous; Trithemius counted as many as seventy-seven. Platina makes him the author of a treatise entitled *The Art of Reigning*, addressed to King Sigebert; we have nothing on this subject in the writings of Fortunatus that remain to us. Dom d'Achéry's *Spicilegium* cites one under the title *Medietas Fortunati*; but it is only a collection of his poems to which this title has been given.

Fortunatus was one of those happy geniuses for whom it costs little to say beautiful things; besides the surprising facility that reigns in his verse, one finds there an easy simplicity that does not strain the mind, and above all a great sweetness. He always shows something new; he is seldom a copyist; he does not copy himself; he is almost always original. One can nevertheless easily distinguish the verses he made on the spot, without effort and without meditation, from those to which he brought more study; the latter are more ornate and full of charm, while the former have some obscurity and less harmony. The description he gives of his journey by water from Metz to Andernach shows that his true talent was for writing in that genre. He is rightly reproached with several faults against prosody and against the purity of the Latin language: he often makes short a syllable that is long by nature; he makes an active of a passive verb, a plural of a singular; he disfigures words, cutting them or adding to them as the metre of his verse requires. The editors have placed after his poems a great number of examples of these kinds of poetic licence. His prose writings, such as his prefaces and letters, are in a hard and laboured style; he is much clearer and smoother in his doctrinal works: it was the genius of his century to be obscure when one wished to write with eloquence.

The best edition of the writings of St Fortunatus is that given by Mich.-Ang. Luchi, Benedictine of the Congregation of Monte Cassino, Rome, 1786–87, in two parts, quarto, with preface and prolegomena. It is reproduced in volume LXXXVIII of the Latin Patrology. An Appendix gives us verses unknown to the first editors. It contains lines addressed to Radegund and Agnes; they were found in a manuscript of the Royal Library by M. Guérard and published by him in volume XII of the *Notices sur les Manuscrits*. The poems of Fortunatus were published at Cambrai in the collection *Poetae ecclesiastici*, by M. Hurez, duodecimo, 1822. Four of his hymns have been translated into French in *Les Poëtes chrétiens* by M. Félix Clément.

Vie des Saints de Poitiers, by M. l'abbé Auber; *Histoire des Auteurs sacrés et ecclésiastiques*, by Dom Ceillier.

SAINT GUIGNER OR FINGAR, MARTYR IN BRITTANY

About 455.

Fingar, otherwise Guigner, was the son of Clyton, one of the kings of Hibernia, to whom St Patrick went to preach the Gospel. The respect the young prince showed, in a general assembly, for this holy missionary, despised by all the other kings and lords of the island, and the eagerness with which he embraced the faith, led his father to drive him from his States as an enemy of his person and of his gods. Guigner took refuge, with a band of friends, Christians like himself, in Armorica. Audren, who then reigned in that country, gave him a favourable welcome and gave him lands for his companions and himself; he lived there in the exercises of the religious life for some years, imitating as far as he could the life of St Patrick, his master. The desire he felt to be occupied with God alone led him to separate from his companions and withdraw into a cave, where he spent all his time meditating on eternal truths and lived on nothing but acorns. Having then returned to his own country with the intention of converting his fellow-countrymen to Jesus Christ, he refused there the

crown that death had just taken from his father, and which his subjects, converted during his absence by St Patrick, offered him with an eagerness that showed clearly that those who profess the true faith never fail in loyalty to their lawful sovereigns. Love of retirement and of the contemplative life led Guigner to leave his country a second time, in the company of more than seven hundred persons, among whom were seven bishops, and of his sister Piala, as humble and as detached from the world as he. The aim this holy band set before itself was to preach the Gospel to the Saxons who had settled in part of Great Britain and followed the errors of paganism. Having arrived in insular Cornwall, St Guigner and his companions had no sooner made their intentions known than Theodoric, a British prince, gathered his soldiers and fell upon them with such fury that he had them all massacred. This slaughter was, it is said, solely the effect of the hatred the Britons bore the Irish, without religion having had any part in it. However, as the death of these holy persons was most unjust, they have always been honoured as martyrs. St Guigner, who had not ceased to exhort his people to suffer death with patience, was himself beheaded after them. This event took place about the year 455.

St Guigner is commemorated in the country of Léon, in the parish of Ploudiry (Finistère), where he is patron of the chapel-of-ease church of Loc-Eguiner, so called from his name. A chapel of the cathedral church of Vannes also has him for patron, and the diocese keeps his office as a double on 14 December. This saint is also the patron of the parish of Pluvigner (Morbihan), in the diocese of Vannes; perhaps it was in that place that he first withdrew.

The axe or the sword, instrument of St Guigner’s martyrdom, is his usual emblem.

Saints de Bretagne, by Dom Lobineau and the abbé Tresvaux.

SAINT FOLQUIN, BISHOP OF THÉROUANNE

Folquin had for mother Erkensinda, sprung from a noble family of the Gothic nation, and for father Jerome, uncle of the Emperor Charlemagne. His youth was cultivated at once by letters and by piety. Drawn by grace from on high as well as by his nature, inclined to virtue, he disdained the honours of the world and enlisted in the army of Christ, firmly resolved to serve God alone. For some years he led a gentle and quiet life, wholly given to the things of God, until the bishop of Thérouanne (Pas-de-Calais), Erkembodo, having died, he was called to succeed him by the votes of the clergy and people, in the year 817. His humility was the more striking as his birth and merit were the more brilliant. He maintained discipline with a firmness as far from rigour as from laxity. He seldom frequented princes and the great of the world, although his noble birth seemed to make it a necessity for him.

He attended the sixth and seventh Councils of Paris, as well as the assembly of Soissons. Besides statutes concerning the general discipline of morals, in which he had a large share, he also drew up particular ones for his diocese. He relieved his people, overwhelmed by the calamities of war. He had particular occasion to exercise his charity when the Normans began to lay waste Flanders and the land of the Morini and to hurl themselves with a kind of fury on every part of France. He made the translation of the relics of St Omer, the most celebrated of his predecessors. His fear of the Norman raids led him to hide the body of St Bertin under the altar of Saint-Martin, in 846. Having reached an extreme old age, he still fulfilled all the duties of his charge. On the pretext that he was too old to continue his functions (he had been bishop for nearly forty years), the king sent him a successor, which was a grave violation of the holy canons; then the old bishop resolved to vindicate the freedom of the Church, and called down the curse of heaven on the head of a man who preferred to obey the king of earth rather than the King of heaven: it is related that the punishment was not long in coming. St Folquin died while making the visitation of his diocese, on 14 December 855, at the village of Esquelbecq (Nord, arrondissement of Dunkirk, canton of Wormhoudt). His body was carried, as he had wished, to the monastery of Saint-Bertin and buried beside that of St Omer. Seventy-three years later (928), Odwin, with the consent of the bishop of Thérouanne, raised from the ground the body of his uncle

and erected an altar at the place of his burial: great miracles have been worked in favour of those who have invoked his name.

The cult of St Folquin has always been celebrated in the land of the Morini and the neighbouring countries. Several parishes invoke him as their patron, among others those of Pitgam, Esquelbecq and Wulverdinghe [*Wolckerinckove*], in the diocese of Cambrai. There is also in the present diocese of Arras, not far from Bourbourg, a village that bears the saint's name.

Proper of Arras; Légendaire de la Morinie; Vie des Saints des diocèses de Cambrai et d'Arras, by M. l'abbé Destombes.

BLESSED BONAVENTURE BONACCORSI, OF THE ORDER OF SERVITES

1315.

Bonaccorsi was born at Pistoia, a city of Tuscany, at the time when the party of the Guelphs and Ghibellines was laying Italy waste (thirteenth century). He belonged to one of the most distinguished families of the city. Giving himself passionately to the impetuosity of youth, he became one of the leaders of the Ghibelline faction and was the occasion of great troubles for his native town. Amid the agitations of his life he wholly forgot the care of his soul. St Philip Benizi, fleeing the episcopate, came to Pistoia and laboured to quench the civil discords. His words touched a great number of his hearers, and Bonaccorsi in particular. He came and threw himself at the saint's feet, humbly confessed his faults to him and entered his Order. At the request of St Philip Benizi he was seen to be reconciled with his enemies and to busy himself repairing the harm the internal discords had done the city. His conduct was an object of admiration to all. Having taken the name Bonaventure to express his joy, the Blessed went to Monte Senario, where in a short time he made such rapid progress in virtue that he became a model the religious strove to imitate. Giving himself without respite to fasts, vigils and prayer, he thought ceaselessly of death and prepared for it. Raised to the priesthood, he established in Pistoia a confraternity that took the name of Penitents of St Mary. To penetrate himself thoroughly with the mercies of God, he gave himself under the guidance of St Philip to the study of holy letters, and made such progress in them that he was put in charge of governing several monasteries, and acquitted himself of this office to the entire satisfaction of his superiors. Not content with labouring to direct his brethren in the ways of perfection, he busied himself bringing souls back to Jesus Christ and obtained numerous conversions among the people. It was he who received the vows of St Agnes and governed the convent she had founded. He was held in such veneration that in his lifetime he was called the Blessed. He died at Orvieto in 1315 and was buried in the church of his Order, under the altar of the Blessed Virgin. Pius VII approved his cult on 23 April 1822.

Local notes.

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[1] We gave the life of St. John of the Cross on 24 November, vol. XIII, page 577.

[2] St. Ursicinus spent his youth at the court of King Childebert and by his virtues won the esteem of the pious Queen Ultrogotha, who named him her chancellor or referendary; he used this high dignity only for the greater good of Church and State. His name became popular, and as his eminent qualities drew all eyes to him, St. Maurilio, bishop of Cahors, chose him as his successor and had him ordained in his lifetime. In the episcopate as at court, Ursicinus gave the example of every virtue. When he had fallen asleep in the Lord, his body was laid in the crypt of the cathedral church of Cahors; from then on this underground church was called only the church of Saint-Ursicin. — *Proper of Cahors.*

[3] See on this subject the article *Veneration and Relics* which ends the life of St. Martin of Tours, which we gave on 11 November, vol. XIII, pages 312–340.

[4] We gave the life of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus on 17 November.

[5] See the life of St. Sylvester Gozzolini on 26 November.

[6] See his life at 24 November.

15 December

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY

The Octave of the Conception of the glorious Virgin Mary. — At Vercelli, the Ordination of St. Eusebius, whose death is recorded on 1 August; Benedict XIII fixed his feast on 16 December. About 370. — At Rome, the holy martyrs Irenaeus, Antony, Theodore, Saturninus, Victor and seventeen others, who suffered death for Jesus Christ during the persecution of Valerian. 3rd c. — In Africa, the martyrdom of Saints Faustinus, Lucius, Candidus, Caelianus, Mark, Januarius and Fortunatus. — In the same country, St. Valerian, bishop, who, during the persecution of the Vandals under the Arian king Genseric, being pressed, at the age of more than eighty, to hand over the vessels and ornaments of the church, refused to do so, and was condemned to leave the city alone, with a prohibition against anyone receiving him in any house or even in any field, so that he was forced to wander a long time on the highways, exposed to the inclemency of the weather, and thus finished the course of his holy life confessing and defending the Catholic truth.[1] 457. — In the territory of Orléans, St. Maximinus or Mesmin, confessor. 6th c. — In the country of the Iberians, beyond the Euxine Sea, St. Christiana, a servant, who by the power of her miracles brought that nation to embrace the faith of Jesus Christ, in the time of the Emperor Constantine. 4th c.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED

In the dioceses of Albi, Autun, Bayeux, Beauvais, Cambrai, Carcassonne, Chartres, Le Puy, Meaux, Pamiers, Poitiers, Rouen, Soissons, Verdun and Versailles, feast of the Octave of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. — In the diocese of Paris, St. Maximinus, abbot of Micy, named in the Roman martyrology of this day. 6th c. — At Metz, Blessed Adalbero II, bishop of that see and confessor. 1005. — In several regions of France, St. Urbicius of Bordeaux, confessor. He left his homeland to go and lead the eremitical life near the city of Huesca (Aragon), where he fell asleep in the Lord at the age of a hundred, adorned with the precious gift of virginity. About 805. — At Quimper, Blessed John the Discalced, priest, religious of the Order of St. Francis. 1349.

MARTYROLOGIES OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS

Martyrology of the Cistercian Order. — The Octave of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary, Mother of God.

Martyrology of the Order of Friars Preachers. — The Ordination of St. Eusebius of Vercelli, bishop and martyr. About 370. — In Africa, St. Valerian, bishop, who, during the persecution of the Vandals under the Arian king Genseric, being pressed, at the age of more than eighty, to hand over the vessels and ornaments of the church, refused to do so and was condemned to leave the city alone, with a prohibition against anyone receiving him in any house or even in any field, so that he was forced to wander a long time on the highways, exposed to the inclemency of the weather, and thus finished the course of his holy life confessing and defending the Catholic truth. 457. — The Octave of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God.

Martyrology of the three Orders of St. Francis. — The same as with the Cistercians.

Martyrology of the Order of Friars Minor. — The same as with the Cistercians.

Martyrology of the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. — The Octave of the Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. — The same day, the Ordination of St. Eusebius, bishop of Vercelli, whose birthday in heaven is celebrated on 1 August, and whose feast, by order of Pope Benedict XIII, remains fixed on 16 December, and is kept in our Order on the 20th of the same month. 370.

Martyrology of the Order of the Servites of the Blessed Virgin Mary. — The same as with the Cistercians.

Martyrology of the Order of Discalced Carmelites. — The same as with the religious of Mount Carmel.

SAINT CHRISTIANA, VIRGIN AND SLAVE, APOSTLE OF THE IBERIANS

Fourth century.

Multa est virtus orationis. Astonishing is the power of prayer. — *St Bonaventure.*

Among the devices that divine wisdom has used to convert the most barbarous peoples outside the bounds of the Roman Empire, one of the most marvellous has been to send among them Christian exiles, fugitives, captives and slaves, who, by the purity of their morals, the brilliance of their miracles and the light of their exhortations, converted their own masters and opened their eyes to know the truth of the Gospel. We have a great number of examples of this throughout ecclesiastical history; but one of the chief and most illustrious is that of St Christiana, who found herself a captive and slave among the Iberians, beyond the Euxine Sea, in the time of the Emperor Constantine the Great. It is not said what country she was from, nor by what misfortune she fell into the hands of these barbarians; even her name could not be known, and that of Christiana is rather the name of the religion she professed and caused to be received in Iberia than that of her baptism.

In servitude her spirit was not captive; she served God there with admirable innocence and purity. Prayer was her life and fasting her food. She obeyed her master and mistress with a gentleness, patience and modesty that delighted them; she despised gold, silver and bodily ornaments, and took trouble only to adorn her soul with the noblest virtues; she was seen, after doing the duty of her condition, to withdraw into a corner of the house and spend whole hours there, by day and by night, with tears in her eyes and in most fervent prayer. This conduct at first astonished the women of the country. They could not sufficiently wonder that she lived chaste in a corruptible body and was joyful and content in so wretched a condition. Her prayers and abstinences, so long and so constant, frightened them, and they did not understand why she refused all the pleasures of life, even when she could enjoy them and they were offered to her. They questioned her about all these things, and she told them that the God she adored was a God of infinite purity; that Jesus Christ, His Son, having come down to earth for the salvation of men, had given them, by His example and His word, lessons of mortification and penance which she was obliged to practise, and that she awaited after this life of misery an eternal happiness that would abundantly reward all her good actions.

This answer astonished them still more, but they understood nothing of it. As they were accustomed, when a child was ill, to carry it to their neighbours to learn whether they had some remedy for its sickness, one of these barbarian women one day brought her son to her and asked whether she knew any means of curing him. She told her that she knew of no natural one, but that Jesus Christ, her Lord and her God, could do it, and that she hoped He would not refuse her this grace. And indeed she took him, laid him on the hair-cloth that served her as a bed, and by a fervent prayer restored him to health. This miracle caused a great stir in the city; the queen, who was extremely ill, was informed of it and at once sent for the captive to receive the same benefit from her; but as this wise Christian refused to go, out of modesty and humility, the queen had herself carried to her room, where, having lain down on her hair-cloth, she was likewise cured by her prayer. Our saint at once told her that, since Jesus Christ had healed her, she must believe in Him if she wished to escape the eternal punishments prepared for idolaters and unbelievers. As soon as she had returned to the palace she told the king what had happened, and when that prince wished to send great presents to Christiana in gratitude for so considerable a favour, the queen told him that the captive wanted neither gold nor silver nor precious clothing, because she loved poverty and suffering; but that she asked only that Jesus Christ be acknowledged as true God, and that the superstition of idolatry, which is nothing but an abominable worship of demons, be abandoned. The king at first turned a deaf ear to these proposals; but having gone hunting and finding

himself in great danger of death, he vowed, if he were delivered from it, to embrace the captive's religion and believe in Jesus Christ. His deliverance followed his vow at once; so, having returned safe and sound to his palace, he sent for our saint and asked her for the advice needed to embrace this new religion. She explained our mysteries to him, according to the instruction she had received in the Church and the supernatural lights given her in prayer, and begged him to have a church built, of which she gave him the plan. He agreed to all she wished, assembled his people with the lords of his State, set before them all he had learned from so holy a woman, told them the miracles Jesus Christ had already worked through her, and exhorted them like an apostle to leave the errors in which they had lived until then and acknowledge the truth of one God. The queen, for her part, and our saint preached to the women in a most forceful and touching manner. Thus everyone agreed that they must embrace Christianity, destroy the idols and their temples and build a church where Jesus Christ would be adored.

The king and queen applied themselves with great zeal to this building, during which it happened that, when the circuit of the walls had been made and two columns already set on their bases and pedestals, the third became so immovable that neither men nor oxen could ever stir it; but at night, at the captive's prayer, it rose of itself above its base, in such a way, however, that it hung in the air a foot above its seat. In the morning everyone witnessed this marvel, and the column was seen to descend little by little to the place where it was to be set. The Iberians, having seen this new miracle, were perfectly confirmed in the faith. The king, on Christiana's advice, sent ambassadors to Constantine to obtain a bishop and priests, and he obtained what he asked, with great honours that the emperor paid him of his own accord. He had himself baptized with all his people, and kept all his life the ardent zeal he had for the Christian religion. As for our blessed captive, she continued until death the holy life she had led among these peoples, and she confirmed them ever more and more in the faith by her words and her miracles. At last the great Father of the household called her to heaven to reward her for the services she had rendered Him on earth, and the whole country has honoured her since as a saint.

Mgr Jauffret, bishop of Metz, founded in 1807 a teaching Congregation called of St Christiana. He had at first given it the name of Congregation of the Holy Childhood of Jesus and Mary. But as several religious Congregations were already recognized in France under that beautiful title, it seemed fitting to distinguish by a particular name the one about to be formed, while leaving it the divine protectors it had chosen from its first origin. The pious bishop was searching his thoughts for a saint who could become, with Jesus and Mary, the patron of the new society. In his perplexity he opened the Roman martyrology, and the first name that struck his eyes was that of this humble slave, to whom the nation of the Iberians owed the knowledge of the Gospel, and who is known among men only by her title of Christian. The prelate believed that she was indeed a good protectress to offer in heaven to religious who on earth must aspire to nothing else than to do what she had first done, that is, to lead a wholly hidden life, to seek only obedience, to practise the evangelical counsels in silence, and to contribute to the salvation of souls by example far more than by words. The Congregation of St Christiana, whose mother-house is at Metz, has numerous and important houses of education in that diocese, in those of Reims and Châlons-sur-Marne, and in Germany.

This biography is taken from Rufinus, book I of his History, and completed by notes owed to the kindness of M. l'abbé Noël, of the diocese of Metz.

BLESSED ADALBERO II, BISHOP OF METZ

1005. — Pope: John XVIII. — King of France: Robert II.

Martyrio majus quidquam est charitas proximi. Charity towards one's neighbour is something greater than martyrdom. — *St John Chrysostom.*

Adalbero was the son of Frederick, duke of Lower Lorraine, and of Beatrice, sister of Hugh Capet. Brought up in the abbey of Gorze (Moselle), where he made very great progress in learning and in piety, he destined himself for the ecclesiastical state. The duchess Beatrice, his mother, and the Empress St Adelaide, his grandmother, widow of Otto the Great, seconded by the choice of the clergy and people, had him named to the bishopric of Metz in 984. Adalbero made his entry into that city amid the acclamations of the people. The gentleness and affable manners of the new prelate soon won him the affection of his flock. The author of his life, Constantine, abbot of Saint-Symphorien, represents him as a bishop worthy of the finest ages of the Church. He was of such great kindness that he used to say he could not conceive how men could fly into a rage. He received into his palace all the poor and pilgrims who presented themselves, washed their feet and served them at table himself.

A faithful imitator of the virtues of the venerable Adalbero I, his uncle, whose affection for religious and zeal for the restoration of regular observance had earned him the surname of Father of Monks, he applied himself above all to making religious discipline flourish again in his vast diocese. One of the holy bishop's first cares was to restore the abbey of the Holy Innocents, known since by the name of Saint-Symphorien, which had suffered greatly in the recent wars. He repaired its buildings, had its property restored to it, gave it new property and set over it as abbot Blessed Fingenius, a Scot by origin, who had succeeded St Cadroë in the government of the abbey of Saint-Clément and was at the same time abbot of Saint-Vanne at Verdun. At the same time Adalbero rebuilt the abbey of Saint-Pierre. He also founded, near Saint-Pierre, another abbey, of nuns, which took the name of the august Mother of God. He established at Épinal (Vosges) a community of nuns at the place where Blessed Theoderic I, his predecessor, had deposited the relics of St Goëricus.

About the same time there raged, especially towards Burgundy, the terrible disease known by the name of sacred fire or *mal des ardents*. The unfortunates who were stricken with it, having heard of the cures worked at Épinal through the intercession of St Goëricus, flocked there in crowds. Adalbero, who often resided in the castle above the monastery, took the most tender care of them. Not content with procuring them what was necessary for life and consoling them with his words, he dressed their ulcers himself, and often rendered this humble service to eighty or even a hundred persons in a day, thinking himself happy to see his house thus turned into a hospital. The author of his life assures us that he assisted him for seven consecutive days in this heroic exercise of charity. Such an action could not fail to be accompanied by all the Christian virtues. Indeed Adalbero, who loved and tended so tenderly the suffering members of Jesus Christ in the person of the poor, was filled with the deepest respect and most affectionate piety for our holy mysteries. He never offered the august sacrifice of the Mass without first putting on a hair-shirt, and could not hold in his hands the sacred body and precious blood of the divine victim without watering them with his tears. He spent the eve of the principal feasts without taking any food; and the better to sanctify the Lenten fast by prayer and recollection, he spent the whole of it in holy retreat.

All the provinces of the empire were then as though given over to pillage; the lords, to meet the cost of the contributions they owed to the army that the emperor maintained almost continually in Italy, plundered, and were obliged to ruin their lands and oppress their subjects. Adalbero by his wisdom managed to avoid these extremes, and to fulfil his duties towards his sovereign without failing in what he owed to the peoples entrusted to him. To reduce the expense as far as lay in him, he made no campaigns, and took from his own revenues the greater part of the subsidies his flock was to furnish. Although the holy prelate was naturally inclined to gentleness, he knew how to use severity when circumstances required. He was seen to make war on lords who harassed his people and to ruin their castles and fortresses. He came to these extremes only after using the ways of gentleness. As for the property he had seized, he never appropriated it, but distributed it to the poor or used it for repairing churches.

Adalbero went twice to Rome to satisfy his devotion to the holy apostles. On a first journey, which he made in 994, he was very well received by Pope John XVI, who presented him with some precious relics. On the

second journey he accompanied the Emperor Otto III, whom he persuaded to bestow great benefits on his church. Always occupied with the reform of the monasteries of his diocese, he brought in St William, abbot of Saint-Bénigne at Dijon, and charged him with restoring regular discipline in the celebrated abbeys of Gorze and Saint-Arnould. He held ordinations there regularly twice a year, at Christmas and at Easter, and they were so numerous for the time that more than a thousand priests and other ministers are counted on whom he had laid his hands.

In 1005 the holy bishop was struck with paralysis. When he saw his end approaching, he distributed all his goods to the poor and to the churches. He sent presents as far as Saint-Martin of Tours, Saint-Denis, Saint-Remi of Reims, Notre-Dame of Verdun, Saint-Pierre of Cologne and several other celebrated places of devotion. He died on 15 December, deeply mourned by all his people, even by the Jews, who shed tears for him. Duke Theoderic, his brother, and Berthold, bishop of Toul, his pupil, attended his funeral amid an immense concourse of people. The holy prelate was buried in the abbey of Saint-Symphorien, where he had chosen his burial place. His precious remains were kept there until the Revolution, with the hair-shirt he used in the ardour of his penance.

We owe this biography to M. l'abbé Noël, of the diocese of Metz. — Cf. *Saint Symphorien et son culte*, by M. l'abbé Dinet.

BLESSED JOHN THE DISCALCED, RELIGIOUS OF ST FRANCIS, IN THE DIOCESE OF QUIMPER

1349. — Pope: Clement VI. — King of France: Philip of Valois.

Ad veram perfectionem integra mortificatione pervenitur. The road of perfect mortification is also that of true perfection. — *The Venerable Louis de Blois.*

This holy man, whose memory is venerated at Quimper, was born towards the end of the thirteenth century, in the diocese of Léon, of parents of little means but who had the fear of God. He was named John on receiving the sacrament of regeneration, and out of a principle of humility he wished afterwards always to be called Jeannic, that is, Little John. He had a relative, a skilled craftsman, with whom he settled on leaving childhood and worked assiduously. His inclination drew him by preference to works that could serve piety or the relief of his neighbour. That is why, when there were crosses to make or to set up along the roads, or bridges and arches to throw over streams, fords and torrents, Jeannic joyfully employed all his skill on them. He earned a considerable amount in his trade and could have lived comfortably in the world; but God was calling him to a holier state, and, faithful to his vocation, he resolved to enter the clerical state. His relative mocked him for such a plan and hindered him as much as he could from carrying it out. This new Satan was punished: he lost his property, became a leper, died excommunicated and was deprived of church burial; while Jeannic, despising the threats, persecutions and mockery of this dangerous tempter, left his country and went to Rennes to try to make himself fit there to receive holy orders. He succeeded, and was at last ordained priest.

From then on he began to live in a very austere manner. He fasted three times a week on bread and water; his clothes were poor, though clean; he visited and helped the sick with great affection and assiduity; in a word, his virtues and holiness were the object of the admiration of the whole city. The humility of which he made sincere profession did not prevent Yves, bishop of Rennes, from discovering the merits of a man who sought only to hide. He summoned him to his palace and entrusted him with the care of a parish in his diocese. The holy priest did all he could to avoid an office that gives some distinction; but the precise orders of his bishop laid on him the necessity of submitting to what was wished of him.

Provided with this parish, he took possession of it and produced great fruit there by his example and by the fatherly care he gave his people. He governed this parish for thirteen years, under three bishops of Rennes,

Yves, Gilles and Alain de Châteaugiron, whom he assisted in their visitations and of whom he was as it were the forerunner, going before them on foot to dispose the people, by his preaching and by the sacrament of penance, to receive confirmation from them. He never used horse or litter, but always went on foot and without shoes, which he practised all his life; whence has remained to him the surname of Discalceat or Discalced. A man as austere and as sparing as he could have put money aside, if avarice had held over him the same sway it has sometimes had over other ecclesiastics of hard life and well-ordered exterior; but he regarded himself as the least of his poor; persuaded that the goods of his church belonged to them, he gave them everything, and, generous to the needy, he often forgot himself.

After governing his parish until 1316, he felt so strongly drawn to the Order of St Francis that, resolved on the sacrifice God was inspiring in him, he went to place his parish in the hands of his bishop and ask him for permission to embrace the institute of the Friars. The bishop could not receive without tears a resignation that deprived him of a subject of such extraordinary merit. Having tried in vain to turn John from his resolution, he wished at least to show him his regard by conferring the parish on his brother. But John, entirely detached from the ties of flesh and blood, and who moreover knew the unworthiness of the man, made it a duty to reveal his defects to the bishop and to beg him to choose another pastor.

Armed with his prelate’s blessing, he entered the Order of St Francis in 1316, at the friary of Quimper. If he had loved poverty before making public profession of it, he gave himself to it with ardour when it had become an obligation for him. His clothes were always the worst; and if he was asked the reason, he answered that it was because he was the most imperfect of all, and therefore unworthy to be dressed decently and in new clothes. Persuaded that his Rule promised a particular blessing to those who did not disdain to mend their own clothes, he took pleasure in sewing patches on his; and the more unsightly and ill-placed these patches looked, the better his humility was pleased. Brother John, poorer still than the voluntary poor, his brethren, did not see in his own destitution reasons to close his heart to mercy and his hands to the inclination that led him to give alms. His resourceful charity found means to relieve the wretched; he was constantly surrounded by them, and he consoled them all effectively. He sometimes gave them his own cloak and hood, and did not fear on that account that his father St Francis would fail to recognize, for lack of some livery of penance, one of his own inwardly clothed with the new man. The charity of this excellent religious did not find that inability was a sufficient pretext to dispense him from doing good to the poor, especially when public miseries increased the needs of individuals. Then his zeal, gathering new strength, led him to do gentle violence to the rich; he impressed on them so vividly the great advantages religion promises to almsgiving, and the necessity the Gospel lays on us to give it, that the same fire with which he burned was kindled in their hearts too.

Time was dear and precious to him; he gave not a single moment of it to idleness; his days were full, and he was found constantly busy at work, at prayer or at some exercise of piety. He rose every night long before the others: his eyes, open to God, always went before the night vigils, and when Matins were over he found it hard to leave the sanctuary; daylight often surprised him there still continuing his prayer. As soon as he had said Mass, he went into the confessional or went to visit the sick of the town. The rest of the day, with a good part of the night, he spent in prayer. It was not enough for his fervent piety to say the canonical Office in choir with the community; he said it again privately, most often alone, sometimes with one of his brethren, always bareheaded, with deep respect and affectionate attention. Besides the great Office he also recited that of the Cross, that of the Holy Spirit, the Gradual and Penitential Psalms, the Office of the Dead, and a great number of litanies, hymns and canticles in honour of the Blessed Virgin.

Some miraculous effects of his prayers for the healing of bodies and minds are related; and it is not surprising that a man so full of faith should have been heard. His virtue was tried, like that of Job, by the inward and outward attacks of the devil, who now tried to throw him into discouragement and lukewarmness, now attacked his very body, already worn out by the rigours of penance. The shield of faith, and the sword of

the spirit, which is the word of God, were the weapons with which, after the example of his Saviour, he conquered and drove away this dangerous enemy. The divine canticles of the son of Jesse had once checked the efforts of the evil spirit that tormented Saul: they also furnished this holy religious with the means of winning similar victories. Sometimes he would say: “O God, deliver my soul from the sword; deliver this desolate soul from these raging ones”; and to show his contempt for his tempter he often used the word “dog”. At other times he would say: “Touch not my anointed, and do no evil to my prophets”; or else: “Depart from me, all you who work iniquity, for the Lord has heard the voice of my weeping”; or these other words: “Let all my enemies be utterly confounded.” But lest the outward enemy should keep up intelligence with the enemy within, Blessed John applied himself particularly to subduing the latter by extraordinary austerities. He spent sixteen whole years without drinking wine, except at the altar, and without eating meat unless forced to by illness, by doctors’ orders and by the commands of his superiors. He even very rarely ate fish. He lived on coarse bread of barley or beans, which he let go mouldy on purpose so as to find it less pleasant. He avoided pleasure even in the water he drank, and spoiled its taste by mixing some sour or bitter liquid in it, in memory of the vinegar and gall given his Saviour to drink on Calvary. He ate only once a day, unless he was ill and actually bedridden; except for forty days, he fasted the whole rest of the year, which he had divided into eight Lents. The first began on the day after the Epiphany and lasted forty days, during which he lived on bread, most often quite dry and sometimes dipped in broth, and drank only water. The second Lent was that of the Church; he kept it entire, fasting on bread and water. The third, which he called the Lent of Moses, also lasted forty days, and, except for three days a week on which he took soup, for all the rest of it, as well as the ten days before Pentecost, he fasted on bread and water. The fourth Lent, in honour of the apostles St Peter and St Paul, began forty days before their feast, and in it he often fasted on bread and water. The fifth was that of Our Lady, which lasted until her Assumption, and that one was as severe as the great Lent. He kept the same austerity during the sixth, in honour of the holy angels, which ended at Michaelmas. The seventh lasted until All Saints, with the austerities of the third. The last, which is that of the Rule of the Friars Minor, he began on All Souls’ Day and continued until Christmas Day, always on bread and water. He had three kinds of hair-shirt: one was woven of coarse hemp tow, called in Brittany *reparon*, which makes a cloth better fitted to flay the toughest skin than to serve as clothing; the second was of horsehair; and the third, which this holy man, ingenious in tormenting himself, had invented himself, was of pigskin, with the bristles cut two or three lines from the surface; this caused him pains one cannot think of without shuddering. But what shall we say of the constancy with which he left in his always bare feet the nails that happened to pierce them as he walked? His feet were often seen ready to rot as a result of accidents of this kind, without his complaining of what he suffered, and without his troubling to remove the cause of the harm unless the express orders of his superiors forced him to. Vermin is a kind of scourge that often defeats the patience of the most perfect, who believe they are only satisfying what public decency demands, when it is perhaps only too true that they are gladly escaping an irksome penance not of their own choosing. Great saints have seen more merit in this involuntary penance than in those of which self-love can flatter itself as the inventor. Blessed John, following their example, respected the finger of God in these little household tormentors, and far from destroying them, regarded himself as their shepherd and put back in the fold those in danger of straying and being lost.

The masters of the spiritual life greatly esteem the gift of tears and compunction; and indeed, if one of the marks of the ungodly, according to St Paul, is to be without affection, why should we not regard it as a favour God grants His elect to give them a heart of flesh, a soul sensitive to the things of the other life, and a tender and ready outpouring of tears at the consideration of objects worthy of devotion? It was from these principles of holy and supernatural tenderness that Blessed John shed such abundant tears in prayer, in the exercise of his office of confessor, and over the public evils that the prophetic spirit made him foresee. Thus one day, during the common meal, when the food had no share in the attention of his mind, foreseeing the evils that civil war was to cause in Brittany after the death of Duke John III, he not only soaked his bread

with his tears but spent the rest of the day weeping with so great an effusion that one would have said his eyes had become two fountains. He foresaw and announced the siege and capture of Quimper, and the cruel famine that was to follow them, before Charles of Blois had formed the plan of that siege. The city was taken in 1344; the victors committed great cruelties there, and famine did not fail to follow the war, in 1346. Then the good religious, who had foretold both, having been unable to avert the effects of the first, made those of the second bearable for the poor by the care he took, and the success he had, in effectively persuading the rich that on such occasions they were only the stewards of their own goods. God likewise revealed to him the plague that desolated the city and country of Quimper in 1349. He had knowledge of it the year before, while he was in choir with his brethren. The other religious, seeing him weep bitterly, asked him the cause of so keen a grief. He told them nothing else than that the city would shortly be afflicted with a new calamity. And indeed, from the following summer, the contagion carried off a great number of people.

Blessed John, in this circumstance, offered his life to God in sacrifice and charitably exposed it by the assiduity with which he attended those stricken with the plague, to whom he administered the sacraments and spiritual and bodily consolations with a zeal and affection that were rewarded by a holy death, caused by the same disease that every day carried off so many others. Thus Blessed John ended, in the exercises of charity, a life he had spent in those of penance and prayer. He died aged about sixty-nine, after having long worn the habit of St Francis and constantly observed all its rules to the least iota, as the author of his life puts it; which, in the opinion of a great pope, takes the place of the most signal miracles and suffices to canonize a son of St Francis.

The body of this holy religious was buried in the church of the friary of his Order at Quimper, in the chapel near the choir door, under the rood-screen, on the Gospel side. It was later taken from the coffin that had served for its burial and placed in a more honourable shrine, which for some time was kept under a little dome in the form of a chapel, made of trellis and iron grilles. Finally it was moved again from there to be placed in the chapel that formed the right wing of the choir. Although this holy body is lost today, the city of Quimper still has great confidence in Blessed John, and it is asserted that several sick people have been cured through his intercession. His statue is seen in the cathedral, before which the faithful make vows and offerings. This servant of God is invoked especially for finding lost objects.

Taken from the *Saints de Bretagne*, by Dom Lobineau and the abbé Tresvaux.

SAINT EUSEBIUS, BISHOP OF VERCELLI

About 370.

Born in Sardinia of a noble family, Eusebius, after his father’s death, withdrew to Italy and studied at Vercelli (Intendancy of Novara). He so distinguished himself in the clergy of that city that, when the episcopal see fell vacant, he was unanimously elected to fill it. The new bishop applied himself with all his power to forming worthy ministers of Jesus Christ. His conduct was justified by its success: several churches wished to be governed by his disciples, and from his clergy there came forth a great number of holy prelates as commendable for their virtues as for their learning.

Eusebius had already acquired a high reputation for holiness: it was now to be tested by persecution. In 355 a council was held at Milan at which several Catholics, intimidated by the threats of the Emperor Constantius and the fury of the Arians, signed the sentence pronounced by the heretics against St Athanasius of Alexandria. Eusebius openly resisted the emperor and loudly reproached him with his impiety. Constantius answered with violence: Eusebius was exiled to Scythopolis in Palestine; later he was transferred to Cappadocia, and some time afterwards he was taken to the Upper Thebaid. In these various places the Arians heaped insults on him and made him suffer the cruellest treatment.

But the hour of deliverance struck. Constantius having died (361), Julian the Apostate allowed the illustrious exile to return to his diocese: he did return, and Italy put off her mourning. Eusebius did not remain inactive: together with St Hilary of Poitiers he spent all his zeal in fighting Arianism in its last entrenchments. At last, full of days and merits, he fell asleep full of hope in the Lord on 1 August, about the year 370. His precious relics are kept in a shrine in the cathedral of Vercelli.

Of the writings of St Eusebius there remain to us only two letters, addressed, one to his church while he was in exile at Scythopolis, the other to Gregory, bishop of Elvira. Eusebius wrote it during his exile in the Upper Thebaid. In it he exhorts Gregory to stand up courageously to Hosius, who had had the misfortune to fall into heresy, and to all those who had abandoned the faith of the Church, and not to fear the power of princes. These two letters are found in the Annals of Baronius and in volume XII of the abbé Migne's Patrology.

Godescard and Dom Ceillier.

SAINT MAXIMINUS OR MESMIN OF VERDUN, SECOND ABBOT OF MICY, IN THE DIOCESE OF ORLÉANS

About 520.

St Euspicius, priest and archdeacon of the church of Verdun, having induced King Clovis to pardon that rebel city, which he was besieging (498) and intended to sack, so won the good graces of this prince that he easily obtained whatever he wished to ask of him. Clovis took him with him to Orléans, where he granted him the territory of Micy to build a monastery there.

Mesmin, nephew of St Euspicius, followed his blessed uncle to Orléans: there he was ordained deacon and afterwards raised to the dignity of the priesthood by Eusebius, bishop of that city. Our young priest, together with St Euspicius, managed in a very short time to gather a great number of religious of admirable piety and fervour: the monastery of Micy was founded.

Two years after this foundation, Blessed Euspicius fell asleep in the Lord: Mesmin felt such grief at it that Bishop Eusebius was obliged to go expressly to Micy, even to take him to his palace and keep him there several days to console him for this loss. When he returned to his abbey, his virtues shone there with still greater brilliance than before. He was a perfect model of humility, patience, gentleness, affability and all the other religious perfections; he so joined the pursuit of contemplation with pastoral solicitude that the one did no harm to the other, and that, without losing the spirit of prayer or the presence of God, he wisely provided for all the needs of his religious. His community grew from day to day, because everyone hastened to place himself under his guidance, and even solitaries left their deserts and monks their abbeys to come and submit to the direction of so enlightened a man. His charity towards the poor knew no bounds, and his monastery having become extremely rich through the care he took to have the lands the king had given him cultivated, he poured out abundantly on the needy the goods he received from the liberal hand of God. The gift of miracles was conferred on him in a most excellent manner. By his word alone he calmed a storm that was about to sink boats of grain he had on the Loire. He multiplied wine and wheat in a famine, so as to have the means of continuing his alms to the afflicted people, almost consumed by hunger. He put to death a horrible dragon that was poisoning the whole Orléanais with its breath, by building a pyre on which he forced it to burn itself. He delivered a possessed man who did not deserve this grace, because he was very dissolute. He restored sight to two blind men, one of whom had lost it for maliciously cutting down a tree belonging to his monastery. Finally he worked many other wonders that caused him to be revered as the wonder-worker of his age.

His life was not very long, because he was soon ripe for eternity. He died in the arms of his children, full of merits and glory, about the year 520. His body was buried, as he had ordered, at the very place where he had overcome the monster we have just spoken of: this is the place where the parish church of Saint-Mesmin

(Loiret, arrondissement and canton of Orléans) now stands. Later it was carried to a church nearer the city, which St Avitus had had built in his honour; but afterwards, under Jonas, bishop of Orléans (821–843), it was returned to his abbey of Micy, which has taken his name.[1]

A simple reading of the life of St Mesmin will easily suggest his principal emblems.

This account is by Father Giry.

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[2] It is believed that the body of St. Valerian, bishop of Abbensa, was brought from Africa to Italy at almost the same time as that of St. Augustine, in the eighth century. According to certain hagiographers, it would be he who is preserved at Retorbido, near Voghera (province of Alessandria della Paglia), in the Milanese. — Cf. Baillet.

[1] The Benedictine abbey of Micy or Saint-Mesmin was ruined in the eighth century as a result of the ravages it suffered during the war between Pepin the Short, king of the Franks, and Waifer, duke of Aquitaine. From then on it ceased to be inhabited by religious. Restored by Theodulf (788–821) and Jonas (821–843), bishops of Orléans, it was pillaged again by the Normans in the ninth century and afterwards restored by Abbot Letald. Devastated later by the English (fourteenth century) and almost entirely destroyed by the innovators (sixteenth century), it was granted (1608) by Cardinal de La Rochefoucauld to the Reverend Feuillant Fathers, who applied themselves with all their power to restoring it. — Local notes.

16 December

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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SAINT JUDICAEL,[8] KING OF BRITTANY, MONK AT SAINT-JEAN DE GAËL

658. — Pope: Vitalian. — King of France: Clotaire III.

Magnum est de honoribus hominum non laetari. I cannot esteem too highly the man who knows how to make little of the honours of this world. — *Saint Augustine.*

St. Judicael was born about the year 590, or a few years after that date, and was baptized by a priest named Guodenon. He was nursed until the age of three in the house of his grandfather Ausoche, and afterwards brought up at the court of the king of Brittany, his father, whom, as the eldest of all his brothers, he was to succeed on the throne after his death. He did indeed strive to secure the throne, and even upheld his rights by arms; but Salomon II, his brother and rival, contested the crown with him and obtained it. Renouncing the world from then on, he went to the monastery of Saint-Jean de Gaël (Armorican Domnonée) to put on the livery of penance under the guidance of St. Meen. All Brittany, though grieved at the retirement of its prince, on whose merit it had founded great hopes, admired this great action, which appeared all the more generous and Christian to his subjects as they knew better his fine qualities, and as the solidity of his mind persuaded them that he had not taken this step without reflection.

Marvellous things are told of Judicael's first fervour. His mortifications were extreme, and would have gone to the greatest excesses had not the wise discretion of St. Meen moderated them. Yet however vigilant the holy old man was in restraining the outbursts of this inexperienced zeal, he could not prevent Judicael from

often overstepping the bounds prescribed to him, and, presuming too much on his courage and his strength, from doing much more than was required of him, and even than he was permitted. One winter's day St. Meen surprised him plunged in the water up to the neck, through a hole he had made in the ice. The holy abbot could not help admiring so great a fervour, but he gave Judicael to understand that it is sometimes no less dangerous to try to triumph over certain temptations by force than not to mortify oneself enough through too reserved a discretion.

Judicael listened to these instructions with docility, and however severe the corrections St. Meen imposed on him, he always found so much kindness and tenderness for himself in his master's salutary counsels that he received them without difficulty and submitted to them with joy. He had not even any repugnance to taking care of the community's garden under the direction of the one who had charge of it, and he loved this lowly employment all the more because he lived by the labour of his hands, and because the fatigue inseparable from this occupation imperceptibly weakened in his body the domestic enemy he feared.

Judicael had not been long in this house, where after his entry he had received the clerical tonsure and the monastic habit, the mark of his engagement, when the holy abbot Conard-Meen gave back his soul to God and left his disciple in so great an affliction that nothing could console him for this loss. The ancient author of the Life of St. Josse tells us that Judicael then let his hair and beard grow, took up his secular clothes again, reascended the throne after the death of his brother Salomon II, which occurred about the year 630, and edified the whole royal house and the whole court by the example of his virtues.

Judicael married a lady of the same family and the same country as the queen his mother, who according to the chronicle of Saint-Brieuc was named Meronoë or Merovoë, and according to the author of the Acts of St. Léri, Morone. She was hardly less virtuous than her husband, and gave herself with no less zeal than he to every kind of religious and pious action; which maintained between them an admirable peace and concord. Both persuaded that the chief obligation of Christian kings is to labour with zeal to make the law of Jesus Christ reign in their States, and that all their greatness should be in dependence on His, they used their power only to have Him adored with greater respect. They employed their treasures only to relieve more effectively the need of the poor, and used their authority only to have the laws of God more faithfully observed and to make piety and justice reign in their kingdom. The author of the Life of St. Judicael relates in particular some facts which show how holy were the dispositions of his heart in this regard. He always kept in the train of his court, says this author, a band of poor people to whom he had distributed regularly all that was cleared from his table, and he often served them with his own hands. He even had so great a tenderness for them that, finding one day a poor leper on the bank of a swift river which could be crossed on foot only with great difficulty, he ordered all the officers and lords of his suite to go on ahead and leave him alone. When they were at a distance, he embraced the leper and, to carry him across the river, set him before him on his horse, without being repelled by his stench and his ulcers; and it is added that this apparent leper was Jesus Christ Himself, who, having promised him worthy rewards, gave him His blessing and at once disappeared.

In the midst of the abundance and delicacy of his table the Saint was very sober, and knew so well how to hide his abstinence that he seemed to seek only his own satisfaction at his meals when he was occupied only in mortifying himself. He reduced himself to drinking nothing but water, and to hide this penance he had his drink served to him in a covered golden cup.

His goodness towards his peoples and his piety towards God shine brightly in what follows. Once, during the night preceding Easter Day, while he had withdrawn to prepare himself for the solemnity of the feast, he was surprised to hear the noise and shouts of a great number of carters trying to get ahead of one another at the crossing of a bridge not far from his palace. He asked the cause of it, and was told that the farmers of certain dues paid to him in kind were bringing him a great number of laden wagons, and that this was the source of all the din and confusion. He was so pained that the holiest night of the year should be spent in this sort of labour, and that dues burdensome to the people should be paid to him at a time when the Church is occupied

in giving thanks to God that Jesus Christ has delivered us from what we all owed to His Father's justice, that he resolved on the spot to remit this tax to his subjects for ever; and he did so in fact, as he had resolved.

The time he had spent under St. Meen in the abbey of Gaël had given him so great an esteem for the religious life that he built several other monasteries and sanctuaries, among which is counted Notre-Dame de Paimpont, raised in honour of the Blessed Virgin on the bank of a pond, at the head of a bridge, whence its name came to it. This religious prince had the chapel served by monks of the monastery of Saint-Meen, and by a charter, about the year 648, granted land to all who might wish to settle in the forest that covered the country. Indeed, in the most remote times an immense forest divided the whole of Brittany: it was among the sacred groves of the druids, who watered its trees with human blood; and here and there are still found stones which served as altars for their horrible sacrifices. The holy king Judicael judged that the best means of purifying these places and making reparation for the outrages done there to humanity was to establish in them the cult of the Blessed Virgin, whom the druids honoured without knowing her. And in fact Notre-Dame de Paimpont soon drew to herself numerous pilgrims, who came to implore her help and to ask her for remedies for every human infirmity. But unhappily, towards the beginning of the tenth century, Norman pirates came and burned and destroyed the pious sanctuary. A century later it was rebuilt by a prince of Brittany and became an abbey of Canons Regular of St. Geneviève. The cult of Mary then recovered its first lustre: people came from every side to pray to Our Lady of Paimpont; almost every day there was some pilgrimage; on Whit Monday above all the throng was immense. In the end this sanctuary acquired such a reputation that in the very cathedral of Rennes, as in the church of Le Rheu, an altar was consecrated to Our Lady of Paimpont.

These good works could not content Judicael's heart, and whatever he gave to the monasteries, his conscience kept suggesting to him that he was not discharging his debt to them so long as he did not give himself to them. A secret remorse ceaselessly reproached him with his leaving the cloister and the engagements he had contracted there under the discipline of St. Meen. It is true that his duties towards his family, the flattering noise of the court, the multitude of affairs and the occupations inseparable from his dignity often turned his attention away from these thoughts that troubled his rest; but they often returned, and if they did not produce a final resolution, they at least shook and loosened the bonds that held him in the world. He was indeed seen to give himself more than ever to exercises of piety, to the reading of Holy Scripture, to almsgiving and to prayer, and soon afterwards to shut himself up in the monastery where he had already taken the habit. After a long life spent in the exercises of piety and mortification, he peacefully gave back his soul to God on 16 December, about the year 658. He was buried beside his master St. Meen. Today there remains of his relics, in the church of Saint-Méen, only the lower part of a femur; the rest disappeared at the Revolution.

St. Judicael is represented with a crown at his feet and holding a broom in his hand; this is the usual characteristic of persons who, after renouncing a brilliant life according to the world, embraced with joy the humblest offices in the cloister.

Saints de Bretagne, by Dom Lobineau and the abbé Tresvaux; *Caractéristiques des Saints*, by the Reverend Father Cahier.

SAINT HILDEMAN,[1] BISHOP OF BEAUVAIS

844. — Pope: Gregory IV. — King of France: Charles II, the Bald.

Let us learn to bear insults to ourselves courageously, after the example of Christ; but let us not bear even to hear insults addressed to God. — *Saint John Chrysostom.*

Hildeman, sprung from a rich family of the Beauvaisis, renounced the advantages of fortune and rank to go and seek in the celebrated abbey of Corbie that peace of soul which the world is powerless to give: there he

had St. Adalard for master, and for fellow-disciples monks equally eager for virtue and learning. Under such a guide and with such edifying examples, Hildeman, gifted with great keenness of mind and tireless ardour for work, could not fail to make rapid progress in evangelical perfection and in the knowledge of Holy Writ. Faithful to all the duties of the monastic life, he excited the admiration of his brethren by his sobriety, his love of prayer and study, and the angelic purity of his conduct, and won their friendship by his charity, his devotedness and his gentleness. He gained the esteem and confidence of Adalard by the gravity of his manners and his humble obedience to the least prescriptions of the Rule. This holy abbot conceived so high an opinion of Hildeman that, after the death of Raimbert, bishop of Beauvais, which occurred about the year 821, he pointed him out to the church of that city as the subject most worthy of its choice.

The clergy and people of Beauvais did not deliberate long: as the virtues and learning of the humble monk of Corbie were already known to them, they elected him with one voice. This election having been approved by King Louis the Pious, Hildeman, after trying in vain to escape the honours of the episcopate, came to fulfil the sacred functions of which he was all the more worthy as he dreaded their burden the more. To maintain within the clergy the salutary rules of discipline, to distribute to his people the bread of the divine word, to lavish on the poor, together with the consolations of religion, the help of his abundant alms: such was the constant solicitude of the pontiff Hildeman. Yet the multiplicity of his labours did not make him forget the holy refuge of Corbie; he often went there to receive the counsels of the virtuous Adalard. Until the death of the blessed abbot he showed him the respectful tenderness of a son and the docility of a disciple. In his last illness he nursed him with his own hands, and never ceased exhorting him to profit by his sufferings to adorn his crown. He himself administered to him the sacraments of the Church, received his last breath, and gave him a magnificent funeral, at which he assisted shedding abundant tears.

After paying the last duties to the Saint’s remains, Hildeman laboured more than ever to sanctify himself and to sanctify the flock of which God had entrusted him with the keeping. His virtues made him dear to his people and won him the veneration of his colleagues. In the year 829 we see him attend, with Ebbo, his metropolitan, the sixth council of Paris. He showed there such great wisdom in all questions relating to the honour of the Church and the settling of disputes that he was soon invested with important missions. Charged with remedying the abuses which the misfortunes of the times had introduced into the abbey of Saint-Denis, and afterwards with ending a litigious affair dividing Aldric, bishop of Le Mans, and a lord of that country, he fulfilled both missions with as much skill as success. By dint of kindness, gentleness and patience he almost always succeeded in bringing together what was divided and reconciling what seemed irreconcilable.

Yet to strengthen Hildeman’s holiness, God willed that he should pass through the crucible of trial. Unjustly accused of having favoured the revolt of the sons of Louis the Pious against the king their father, the Saint was arrested and shut up in the monastery of Saint-Vaast at Arras, where he awaited the judgement of a council assembled at Thionville. However painful his separation from his faithful flock was to Hildeman, he secretly rejoiced at having found the occasion to resemble his divine Master in some point. His disgrace was not of long duration: recognized innocent of the crime imputed to him, he returned to his episcopal city, where he was received with the liveliest marks of joy.

The diocese of Beauvais was not slow to recognize the value of the favour God had granted it in restoring its beloved pastor. On the point of suffering the disasters of a barbarian invasion, it needed more than ever a defender and support. Soon indeed the Normans rushed upon the country and put everything to fire and sword. Churches and monasteries were pillaged and destroyed; the sacred vessels, the shrines containing holy relics, and the precious ornaments fell in many places into the power of these sacrilegious despoilers. Before the invasion Hildeman had tried to turn the scourge from his diocese by exhorting the faithful to appease the wrath of heaven by their supplications and fasts. Having been unable to stop the effects of the justice of God, angered by the forgetting of His holy law, he devoted himself to relieving every suffering and applied himself to repairing every ruin. He gathered into the city of Beauvais the monks whose monasteries

had been destroyed. It was, they say, in these unhappy circumstances, and to relieve a greater number, that his inexhaustible charity had the abbey of Saint-Michel built. Orphans, widows and the needy found in him a protector and a father. It seemed that a city sheltered by the holiness of this illustrious pontiff was impregnable; from every side people came to seek refuge there from the enemy. The relics of St. Just, St. Evroult, St. Germer and St. Angadrisma were transferred there. The monks of Saint-Vaast of Arras also brought there the body of their venerated Patron, who rewarded the hospitality of the people of Beauvais with miracles.

In those times of misfortune for these unhappy regions, the ministers of the Church displayed a charity and devotedness which the Gospel alone has the privilege of inspiring. In each diocese the bishop and priests went to every scene where there were wounded to tend, poor to help, buildings to raise again. In each province the metropolitan and his colleagues considered means of relieving all suffering and preventing its return; hence the assemblies of pontiffs so frequent in those calamitous times. It must not be thought that these solemn gatherings had as their aim only the regulation of spiritual things; in concert with the princes, effective measures were taken there to repair the evils caused by invasions or internal discords and to secure the temporal happiness of the peoples: such was the council held at Germigny, in the diocese of Orléans, in the year 843. Hildeman had a great share in the work of this holy assembly; it was the last act with which the virtuous pontiff closed his public career. His death, which occurred shortly afterwards, was worthy of his whole life: when he felt it approaching, he disposed by a pious legacy, in favour of his cathedral, of a property he had acquired at Froidmont. Until the moment he gave back his soul to God, his thoughts were only for heaven, where he was to be crowned by the hand of the angels. He was received into the midst of their holy host on the fifteenth day of December in the year 844.

The holy pontiff's body was buried near the altar of the abbey church of Saint-Lucien, beside the apostle of the Beauvaisis. He did not merely rest in the same shelter as the venerated remains of the Martyr; he soon shared their honours. Miracles worked at Hildeman's tomb bore witness to his holiness and won him the cult reserved to the memory of the Blessed. His name was inscribed in the martyrology of the cathedral of Beauvais. The martyrology of France and that of the Benedictines also adopted it. Since the episcopate of Mgr Cottret, the whole diocese of Beauvais celebrates his feast, by virtue of a decree of the Sovereign Pontiff Gregory XVI dated 22 May 1841.

Vie des Saints du diocèse de Beauvais, by the abbé Sabatier. — Cf. the *Hagiographie du diocèse d'Amiens*, by the abbé Corblet.

SAINT EVRARD, FOUNDER OF THE ABBEY OF CYSOING, IN THE DIOCESE OF CAMBRAI

869. — Pope: Adrian II. — King of France: Charles II, the Bald.

God requires of those who live in the midst of the world and sincerely desire to work out their salvation only the keeping of His commandments, love of neighbour, and alms to the poor. — *Saint Lawrence Justinian.*

At the beginning of the ninth century, at the time of the continual wars waged by Charlemagne and his son against the Saracens, the Lombards, the Avars, the Saxons and other peoples of the North, there lived in the country of Cysoing a noble and powerful lord whose virtues and admirable works have caused him to be placed among the Saints. This was St. Evrard, husband of the pious Gisla, daughter of Louis the Pious.

Most hagiographers give him a princely birth; some even suppose that he was the son of Carloman, brother of Charlemagne, and that he was taken at Verona with his mother during the emperor's war against Desiderius, king of the Lombards. However that may be, it is at least beyond dispute that this young lord was brought up at the side of Charlemagne and of his son Louis the Pious, and that he took part in several military expeditions as soon as his age allowed him to bear arms. Despite his youth and the many dangers to which he

was exposed, the noble and pious warrior already distinguished himself among all his companions in arms by his wisdom and the purity of his conduct no less than by his courage and bravery. A man of action and of counsel at once, he knew on the day of battle how to give the example of intrepidity and to take the means that ensure victory. Then, when restored to the repose of peace, he practised with noble generosity the Christian works which Jesus Christ recommends in His holy Gospel. Such was the holy and illustrious life the noble and powerful lord Evrard had led from his earliest years. Already dear to Louis the Pious, who recognized in him a kinsman, a friend and an excellent counsellor, he became still more so by the great services he rendered him in helping him to drive the Saracens from the coasts of Italy and to subdue the Slav and Avar peoples who had revolted. A still more signal service was that which the brave and faithful Evrard rendered shortly afterwards to the emperor Louis the Pious when he helped to set him at liberty and restore him to the exercise of his royal authority, of which his sons and some rebellious subjects had robbed him. It was to reward so many merits and services that the emperor gave him his daughter Gisla in marriage, with the duchy of Friuli and the enjoyment of the royal fisc of Cysoing.

In the first years of their union the pious couple lived in that country, which they edified by every kind of virtue and good work. They built a church there and were able to see for themselves the rapid progress of this house of God which they had just raised on their lands. They neglected none of the means that were to guarantee its prosperity, up to the moment when they went to Italy, to the duchy of Friuli. Lothair, eldest son of Louis the Pious, was then governing Italy with the title of emperor. It is known that this prince, after raising with his brothers the standard of revolt against their father, waged against those same brothers a fierce war which was a new source of calamities for France. It would be hard to say whether Count Evrard took part in these violent quarrels and murderous wars. The ancient authors speak scarcely of anything but the advantages he won over the enemies of Christendom, that is, “the Numidians and the fierce inhabitants of Mauretania, whom he often defeated and drove from the coasts of Italy”.

In the rare intervals of rest left him by these implacable enemies of the Church, the virtuous lord employed himself wholly in the building of new churches and chapels in the lands of his dominion. Like all great servants of God, Evrard had a particular zeal for honouring the relics of the Saints. Wishing to enrich his dear abbey of Cysoing with them, he had the happiness of obtaining the entire body of a successor of the Prince of the Apostles, St. Callistus, whose name has since become so popular in those parts. Pope Leo IV, as much out of affection for St. Evrard as out of gratitude for the many signal services this pious warrior had rendered the Church, allowed him to carry this precious deposit away from Rome. Priests bore it on their shoulders, crossed the whole of France, and arrived at last in the lands of the Vermandois, where a numerous procession came to meet them. This translation of the body of St. Callistus was marked by cures, reconciliations and other favours from heaven, which filled with joy the people running from every side to meet the procession. These holy relics, after being laid for some time in the village of Hornaing, between Valenciennes and Douai, arrived at last in the abbey of Cysoing. For eight days the pious Evrard delighted in honouring the sacred remains of the Pontiff-martyr with solemn chants, prayers and fasts. All the monks, whom this event filled with happiness, took part in these religious exercises. At the end of this time the abbey church was dedicated to God under the patronage of St. Callistus with extraordinary magnificence and amid the liveliest transports of joy. This ceremony took place about the year 854.[1]

St. Evrard, already so admirable for the works he accomplished, whether on behalf of Christendom by driving back the infidels or for the prosperity of this country by establishing churches and monasteries in it, was distinguished besides by the touching and sublime virtues he practised in his family. A virtuous and wise husband, a religious father attentive to the conduct of his children, he neglected nothing that could help to form their minds and hearts. Four sons and as many daughters whom heaven gave him walked worthily in his footsteps, and helped, each in their own way, to make piety and religion flourish. His charity towards the poor and unfortunate and his gentleness towards those subject to him drew to him the affection and

veneration of all. He bore in the features of his face the imprint of the sentiments with which his beautiful soul was filled, and no one could see him without feeling drawn towards him by a sweet and irresistible inclination.

It seems that later St. Evrard had to fight once more against barbarous peoples, and above all against the Saracens, who were making continual efforts to penetrate into Italy. After rendering, as in previous years, important services to Christendom and to Italy under the government of Louis the Young, who had succeeded his father Lothair in that part of his States, he resigned his offices and dignities and divided his goods among his children. By this division Unroch and Berengar had possessions chiefly in Italy and Germany; the two others, Alard and Rudolf, received as their inheritance lands situated in various regions, as is very well proved by the few writings that have come down to us, and in particular by the noble count's will. This will was made in the year 866 at the palace of Musestre, in the march of Treviso, in Italy. This document is one of the most important monuments of that age, and the one in which one can best recognize the influence the virtuous Evrard must have exercised over his whole family and even over the whole kingdom.

The rest of St. Evrard's life presents no further well-known fact until his death, which occurred in 869, as he was returning from Italy to Cysoing. This virtuous prince, after receiving the help of religion with marks of the most edifying piety, peacefully gave back his soul to his Creator in the presence of his two sons Unroch and Berengar, who shed abundant tears over the body of their beloved father.

Unroch, who was the eldest of the family, hastened to inform his venerable mother Gisla of the loss she had just suffered. He himself undertook to bring the precious body back to her; she received it with the most touching demonstrations of grief and respect, and had the honours of burial paid to it with great magnificence.

He is represented holding two small models of churches, emblems of his many monastic foundations.

VENERATION AND RELICS

St. Evrard's remains were laid in the church of the monastery he had founded, and so high was the opinion held of his holiness and virtue that all thought less, at that moment, of praying to God for him than of commending themselves to his powerful protection. Fifty years had passed since this blessed death when the Saint's body was raised from the ground with the authorization of the archbishop of Reims, then enclosed in an elegant shrine and exposed publicly to the veneration of the faithful. This shrine at first occupied the place where the relics of St. Callistus had previously been, these having lately been carried to the church of Notre-Dame at Reims to save them from the fury of the Normans.

In the year 1282 Peter, archbishop of Reims and metropolitan of the ecclesiastical province, went himself to Cysoing to venerate the relics of St. Evrard. In the midst of an immense concourse of people, religious and lords of the country, he transferred the Saint's head and bones into two new shrines prepared for the purpose.

The archbishop of Cambrai, François Vander Burch, also visited them on 17 May 1637. He in his turn placed them in two other reliquaries of very fine workmanship, which replaced the former ones, almost decayed with time. It was a few years after this last translation that the abbey of Cysoing gave a bone of St. Evrard's arm to the distinguished collegiate church of Saint-Pierre at Lille. This precious relic was received by the canons of the basilica in the presence of the bishop of Tournai and amid the transports of joy of the people of Lille.

In the evil days that so sadly marked the last years of the eighteenth century, the abbey of Cysoing was invaded by raving revolutionaries, who committed the greatest disorders there and shamefully profaned the holy bodies it contained. Only the head of St. Evrard, with the upper jaw of St. Callistus, was saved, at Tournai, through the care of Augustin Gosse de Saint-Amand, last abbot of Cysoing. These venerable relics

remained away from that place until the year 1841. Through the care and piety of M. Salembier, parish priest of Cysoing, this precious deposit was then restored to its lawful possessors with all the desirable guarantees and attestations of authenticity. The shrine containing St. Evrard's head still enclosed three letters bearing the signatures and seals of those who had written them. The first was from Abbot Robert, dated the year 1284, on the eve of Pentecost; the second from François Vander Burch, archbishop of Cambrai, dated the year 1667; and the third from Abbot Gosse, who died at Tournai in 1802. The vicars capitular of Cambrai, the see being vacant by the death of Mgr Belmas, recognized this holy relic, as well as those of St. Callistus, St. Eligius and St. Aldegund. There was a piece of the holy thorn and of the true cross of Our Lord. They were all carried in procession and with extraordinary pomp into the church of Cysoing on 12 June of the year 1842, amid an immense concourse of people and with every mark of the most sincere devotion.

Mgr Pierre Giraud, then archbishop of Cambrai, allowed the memory of this translation to be celebrated every year by a solemn feast with octave, assigning for its celebration the Sunday falling within that octave, that is, from 12 to 19 June. He likewise approved for this feast and for several others proper offices, which go back to a very high antiquity. Finally the pontiff gave St. Evrard as secondary patron to the parish of Cysoing, and ordered that in future, as before the Revolution of 1793, his memory should be made in the suffrages of the Saints together with that of the other titular patrons of that church.

In 1843 a new Proper containing the offices of St. Callistus and St. Evrard was printed through the care of M. Salembier. They are entirely in conformity with those of the former abbey of Cysoing. Only a few lines have been added recalling the recognition and translation of his relics made in 1841 and 1842. In this Proper there are two feasts of St. Evrard: one on 12 June, for this last translation, a double of the first class with octave; the other on 16 December, recalling the Saint's death, also a double of the first class, but without octave. The Mass is proper on both solemnities.

We have borrowed this biography from the *Vie des Saints de Cambrai et d'Arras*, by the abbé Destombes.

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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SAINT ADO, ARCHBISHOP OF VIENNE

875. — Pope: John VIII. — King of France: Charles II, the Bald.

Charity rises wonderfully to the highest actions when it knows how to stoop mercifully to the humblest needs of one's neighbour. — *Saint Gregory the Great.*

St. Ado, of a noble and illustrious family, was born in 799 and was brought up from his earliest years in the Benedictine abbey of Ferrières, in the diocese of Sens, under the discipline of the celebrated abbot Lupus Servatus. There too he took the religious habit, and became one of the most notable members of the house, both for learning and for regular observance. He guarded his chastity with perpetual vigilance, and, attaching himself to the conversation of the oldest monks, became like them a model of virtue and consummate prudence.

After some years he passed to the monastery of Prüm, in Germany, whose abbot was Marcward, formerly a monk of Ferrières;[1] but as his brethren kept causing him pain through the secret jealousy they had conceived of his great merits, he undertook, with the permission of his superiors, the journeys to Jerusalem and to Rome. For this he put on a pilgrim's habit and performed his devotions with all possible fervour. At Rome, where he stayed more than four years, he made himself known to all persons of learning and piety. Returning to France, he stopped for some time at Ravenna and there copied a book which a religious lent him; this book afterwards served him in composing his Martyrology, as he says in its preface.[2]

Passing through Lyons, he was favourably received there by St. Remigius, its archbishop; and this prelate, having recognized in conversation that he was as learned as he was virtuous, kept him in his diocese after obtaining the permission of his abbot, giving him nevertheless as a retreat, when he wished to live more in solitude, the church of Saint-Romain, near Vienne. His kindnesses to Ado did not stop there; for when Agilmar, archbishop of that see, died in 860, he worked to put him in his place, and had no difficulty in succeeding, because the clergy and people, with Abbo, bishop of Grenoble, desired him. A count of the country named Bernard opposed it, because our Saint's enemies spread the rumour that he had left his monastery without permission; but Lupus Servatus, his former abbot, cleared him of so black a calumny by his 122nd letter, which he wrote to this count.

As soon as our Saint was on the episcopal throne he wrote to Pope Nicholas I, making in his letter, according to custom, his profession of faith. His Holiness answered him and sent him the Pallium as the mark of his archiepiscopal dignity. In this reply he expresses his surprise that in his profession of faith Ado had mentioned only four general councils, whereas there had already been six. But the Saint had done so with reference to the saying of St. Gregory the Great that he honoured the four councils like the four Gospels. Ado afterwards kept up a holy correspondence with this great Pope, and often wrote to him on important affairs both of Church and State. There remains to us a fragment of an apostolic rescript on the affair of King Lothair's divorce, in which Pope Nicholas calls him his most holy brother.

The care he had to stir his people to penance led him to have built, at the entrance of his cathedral church, a chapel on the model of the sepulchre of Our Lord. Before the door of this chapel he consecrated an altar under the name of Mary the Sinner, of Peter guilty of denial, and of the good thief who confessed Christ. The sick who went there to pray and invoke these illustrious penitents received great relief in their ills, and often returned home in health. He exercised hospitality towards strangers, and his charity for the poor was so great that he wished the door of his palace to be always open to them, even during his meals, so as to be able to say with Job: "My house was open to strangers, and I was the father of the poor." Although during the day he employed himself with great fatigue in the duties of his office, he scarcely rested at night; for after granting very little time to the needs of nature, he spent the rest in prayer or in composing holy books.

Regular observance having grown slack in the monasteries, he laboured to restore it, and among the fine regulations he made for this purpose he prescribed the manner of singing the divine Offices day and night, giving the example himself. He also took particular care that the clergy of his diocese, on whom the salvation of the people depends, should live in conformity with the holiness of their state and discharge their ministry with all the decorum due to the divine Majesty. He vigorously opposed the rich and powerful of the world who undertook anything against the poor. But as severe as he was towards those who resisted his pastoral exhortations, so gentle and tender was he towards those who were willing to profit by them.

As he wished to be useful by his word not only to the people of his own age but also to those of ages to come, he left us in writing very precious monuments of his doctrine, among others a Chronicle from the beginning of the world to his own time; a Treatise on the feasts of the Apostles and of the Saints who were their disciples or successors or lived near their times; a

Martyrology which he calls Litanies; and in particular the Lives of St. Desiderius, archbishop of Vienne and martyr, and of St. Theudarius, abbot at Vienne. He died after these glorious labours on 16 December 875, aged sixty-six, and was buried with his predecessors in the church of Saint-Pierre outside the city, which has passed from the Benedictines to secular Canons.

St. Ado is represented: 1° studying Holy Scripture in the midst of a library; 2° holding a book in his hand or writing.

Taken from his Life by Mabillon. — Cf. Dom Ceillier.

BLESSED MARY OF THE ANGELS, OF THE ORDER OF DISCALCED CARMELITES

1717. — Pope: Clement XI. — King of France: Louis XV.

I resolve to trample underfoot every human consideration and every human motive, and to act in all things only with the aim of pleasing God. — *Maxim of the Blessed.*

Our Blessed was born at Turin on 8 January 1661, and four days later, at the font of the parish of Saints Simon and Jude, she received with the saving water the name of Marie-Anne, which she later exchanged for that of Mary of the Angels on entering the Order of the seraphic Teresa. Her father was Giovanni Donato Fontanella, count of Baldissero, and her mother Maria Tana, marchioness of Santena, of the town of Chieri in Piedmont, a cousin in the third degree, on the mother's side, of St. Aloysius Gonzaga. She was the last-born of the ten children (seven girls and three boys) of this fortunate and virtuous couple, all of whom remained faithful to the end to the lessons and examples of their father's house.

She showed from the cradle that God had forestalled her with the abundance of His blessings. Obedient to the point of self-denial to the least signs and least orders of her parents and teachers, full of deference towards her brothers, her sisters and even her servants, she had for all who approached her attentions and courtesies which childhood does not usually know. Like Tobias, like her angelic kinsman, she did nothing childish at that age. Her greatest pleasure was to converse as often as possible with one of her brothers about the greatness of God and holy things, or to teach the duties of a Christian to her little companions. At four she was grieved that she could not yet feed on the bread of Angels, and at six, to imitate a Saint whose story she had heard read, she took the generous resolution of fleeing into solitude and doing penance there to the end of her days. As may well be imagined, she was stopped in carrying out her plan; but she was so distressed by this setback that she fell ill, to the point of needing the help of the Blessed Virgin herself to recover her health.

This is what happened on that occasion. The doctors having declared the illness of this admirable child incurable, the countess her mother, at the request of a Franciscan religious, made a vow for her cure in honour of the Immaculate Conception, and at the very moment of a crisis which had brought her to extremity, she had her say: "Mary, come to my help." Instantly the illness disappeared as if by enchantment; and comforted at the same time by a supernatural apparition of the Mother of mercy holding her divine Son in her arms, she who had just been at the gates of the tomb rose up full of life and health, amid the indescribable joy of her family and friends.

This miracle was for her a new motive for stirring herself to virtue, and above all for redoubling her love for Our Lord Jesus Christ and His most holy Mother. Her ardent desire for the divine Eucharist grew likewise, and there was no kind of entreaty she did not make, to her confessor or to her mother, to be allowed to make her first communion. She was eleven years and eight months old when this happiness was at last granted her; and despite her age her confessor, who knew well that in her piety had outrun her years, allowed her from then on to approach the Holy Table three times a week.

A year later, having been taken by her mother to Saluzzo to attend the clothing of one of her sisters, received among the Cistercian nuns of the monastery of Santa Maria della Stella, she thought the occasion favourable for carrying out the plan she had long formed of leaving the world. So, a few minutes before the ceremony, she obtained the Abbess's permission to enter the choir, on the pretext of seeing the details of the clothing more easily and attentively; and when she had to leave the convent, she declared to her mother with such firmness and energy her settled resolution to consecrate herself to God in the cloister that her mother had to consent to her wish and return alone to Turin.

God, however, was not calling her to the Cistercian profession. At the end of a year a serious illness forced her to leave the monastery of Saluzzo, to the great displeasure of the nuns whom she had edified, and she returned to her mother, whom the death of the count of Baldissero, her husband, had just left a widow.

Meanwhile there took place at Turin the solemn exposition of the Holy Shroud, in which Joseph of Arimathea wrapped the body of Our Lord when He was taken down from the Cross, a precious relic which, after being given in 1148 by the grand master of the knights of Rhodes to Count Amadeus III of Savoy, was venerated successively in Burgundy, at Chambéry, at Vercelli and at Nice.

Our Blessed, who was spending the time of her family's mourning in the country, wished to return to her native city in order there to satisfy, before so remarkable a monument of the sufferings of the God-Man, her devotion to the sorrowful Passion of this adorable Saviour. During the procession held on this occasion she found herself on the same balcony as two Discalced Carmelites, one of whom, Father Francis Anthony of St. Andrew, was rightly held to be a great servant of God.

This holy religious had no sooner seen the young lady than, with the help of God's grace, he discovered both the treasures of virtue contained in her beautiful soul and the high perfection to which heaven was calling her. He at once entered into conversation with her; he questioned her about her plans for the future, and after learning from her own lips the circumstances of her leaving the monastery of Saluzzo, he suggested to her the idea of presenting herself at that of the Carmelite nuns of Santa Cristina in the city of Turin itself. No more was needed to decide her to embrace the austerities of the reformed Carmel; and so, a few days after this meeting, evidently arranged by divine Providence, she hastened to write to the Cistercian nuns of Saluzzo to take leave of them, thank them for their kindness and show them the finger of God in the great affair of her vocation. She signed her letter with the words "Sister Mary, unworthy Carmelite", exactly as if she had already made profession among the daughters of St. Teresa.

From that moment she thought only of subduing her body, mortifying it, reducing it to servitude. Disciplines, hair shirts, fasts, nothing repelled her; and although, because of her rare skill in the management of worldly things, she found herself obliged to take her mother's place in the care of her brothers and sisters and in the government of her house, she nevertheless applied herself to becoming, in the very midst of the world, an accomplished Carmelite.

And she succeeded so well that in 1676 when, having settled all her family affairs, refused several important marriages and overcome all the opposition of tenderness and friendship, she put on the coarse habit of Carmel at Santa Cristina, she found behind the grilles of the cloister nothing astonishing or new to her. She was accustomed to every penance, inured to every mortification, and the least prescriptions of the Rule were as familiar to her as if she had spent years in the convent.

Amid the rigours of the religious life, *in claustro rigidioris observantiae*, as one of the papal decrees preparatory to her beatification puts it, she went each day from virtue to virtue. We shall not stop to recount the heroic acts by which she distinguished herself among her virtuous companions. Everyone knows what the life of Carmelites is here below, of those angels who live on earth as though not there, and whose whole conversation is in heaven; it is enough, then, to repeat that Mary of the Angels walked with giant strides in the footsteps of the seraphic Teresa along that way of sacrifice which the noble, illustrious and great Madame Acarie had lately travelled with the double halo of holiness and miracles; that way which the celebrated Mlle de La Vallière was then making illustrious by her glorious penance under the name of Louise of Mercy; and on which, finally, some years later, the very daughter of our kings, Madame Louise of France, was to cast the incomparable brilliance of her birth and the still greater lustre of her virtues.

As fervent in the Lord's service as their sisters of France, Spain and Italy, and like those industrious bees which ceaselessly distil the fragrant juice of flowers in their hidden cells, the Carmelites of the convent of Santa Cristina daily laid up treasures for eternity in the secret of their solitude; and yet it may be said of our

heroine, as of the valiant woman of Scripture, that she surpassed them all. Obedient to the annihilation of her own will, poor to the most complete stripping of her person, chaste to the point of refusing in her illnesses the help even of the infirmarian, she did not for a single moment belie the reputation for humility her entry into religion had won her, nor the remarkable marks of piety she had given in the world. The book of the Rule of Carmel was everything to her: her chief occupation consisted in striving not to depart by one iota from the letter and spirit of the constitutions of her Order; and so she deserved that, as early as the year 1778, Pope Pius VI of glorious memory should declare with certain knowledge that she had practised the theological and cardinal virtues in a high and heroic degree.

God, however, was pleased to try her in every way: He sent her crosses in abundance. Sickness fell upon her repeatedly; she was long a prey to troubles of conscience, and the devil, not content with tormenting her with frightful temptations, more than once showed himself visibly to her eyes. Purified in this way in the crucible of suffering, like gold in the furnace, she reached the highest perfection; and God, to reward her fidelity in the day of tribulation, granted her His most extraordinary favours: the gift of prayer, the gift of prophecy, the gift of reading the depths of hearts, the gift of ecstasy, the gift of miracles; she had every grace for her portion, even that of frequent apparitions of the most holy Virgin and her divine Son. She had, besides, so much devotion to the Passion of this adorable Saviour, to the Sacrament of His love and to His august Mother, that it seems only just that she should receive even here below, by their visits, a foretaste of the joys of Paradise. She also honoured in a quite special way St. Joseph, St. Teresa, St. Francis Xavier, and above all the archangel St. Raphael, whose cult she strove to spread by every possible means.

We cannot pass over here the charity with which her compassionate heart burned all her life for her neighbour, and especially her unfortunate neighbour. The noise of men usually dies away at the threshold of a monastery of Carmel: the grille, bristling with iron spikes, is there most often an impassable barrier between the world and the cloister, and the pious solitaries remember that they are still in the land of the living only to offer themselves as a holocaust to the Lord, to turn aside His anger and disarm His arm raised against sinners. Yet Blessed Mary of the Angels had not, on entering the convent, lost the memory of those she had known in the world, and they for their part had not been able to forget that the most accomplished young woman of Turin society had stolen away from their admiration to hide and annihilate herself in religious humility. That is why people very often came to knock at the door of her monastery.

It is impossible to say how many persons had recourse to her, by word of mouth or in writing, whether to obtain spiritual consolation from her piety or to take the counsels of her prudence. The sick, the unfortunate and the needy received from her hands, or through her powerful intervention, the help their misfortune called for; poor girls were married through her care, or, if they preferred to give themselves to God, found themselves admitted, on her pressing recommendation, to the monasteries of their choice. Sinners were likewise the object of her solicitude; not only did she pray and have others pray for them, but she also used for their conversion every means that could be furnished her by the high position she had left and the acquaintances with whom she had not been obliged to break.

Even prisoners felt the effects of her immense charity. It is told that, having asked her sovereign without success for the pardon of a soldier condemned to death for desertion, she threw herself at the foot of an image representing Our Lord in the Garden of Olives: “O my sweet Saviour,” she cried, “if I had addressed myself to You, You would not have failed to grant my prayer; ah! I see it well, one must not put one’s trust in the princes of the earth.” Scarcely had she finished these words when they came to tell her that her prayer had been heard at last, and that her protégé would not be torn from his large and unhappy family.

She worked so effectively, too, for the relief of the souls in Purgatory that in the process of her Beatification it is related that those members of the suffering Church whom she had delivered from the expiatory flames by her prayers came visibly to thank her before flying away to heaven. By her tears at the foot of her crucifix she also obtained the removal of a pestilential epidemic with which the justice of God was threatening

Piedmont; and it is certain that she likewise obtained the end of the sterility of Anne of Orléans, wife of King Victor Amadeus II, for whom she also obtained from heaven, at the treaty of Utrecht, the royal crown of Sicily. But four years later, in 1717, this prince exchanged Sicily for Sardinia.

Meanwhile our Blessed was ripe for heaven: the Angels, whose name she did not bear in vain, envied the earth her beautiful soul, and the immaculate Lamb was calling her to the chaste delights of the eternal nuptials. She was about to complete the fifty-seventh year of her life when a burning fever carried her off in seven days from the love of her sisters.

She expired on 16 December 1717, at about eleven o'clock at night. It is said, and one of the decrees of her beatification attests it, that a few moments before breathing her last she heard the voice of her heavenly Spouse inviting her to follow Him, and, a wise virgin carrying in her hands her lamp full of the oil of charity, she rose to go to meet Him. She then had forty-one years of religious life and fifty-six years of age. Four times she had been elected prioress of her monastery, and still more often mistress of novices. She had besides presided over the foundation of the convent of her Order at Moncalieri.

The news of her death set the whole city of Turin astir. From every quarter of that great city there was but one cry: "The Saint is dead!" People ran in crowds to the church of her monastery to gaze on her venerable remains, so that it was necessary first to postpone their burial for two days, and then to have her coffin guarded by armed force to prevent the people from dividing her clothes among them. This coffin was laid in the common vault without any distinguishing mark. On 10 October 1722, the day of the first recognition of the body, the apostolic commissaries had it placed apart; and on 19 June 1733, after the second visitation, it was carried into the church of the monastery. This convent having been given over to profane use at the beginning of this century, the body of the Blessed was carried on 20 September 1802, by order of the archbishop of Turin, to the church of the Discalced Carmelites of the same city and placed to the right of the high altar; there it remained until recent times. But the gravestone, in hiding her relics from public veneration, did not carry her memory away into the depths and darkness of the tomb. The fame of her holiness spread quickly on every side; moreover, the report of the miracles attributed to her intercession did much to spread and increase it.

Of all these miracles the most remarkable are the instantaneous cure of Mother Felicia Teresa of St. Joseph, a Carmelite nun, suffering from a painful hemicrania; that of a girl of twenty named Maria Antonietta Masotti, brought to extremity by pleurisy; that of the physician Gianotti, suffering from nephritic pains in the bowels; that of Anna Cristina Auda, freed from a long palpitation of the heart by the mere touch of the Blessed's scapular; and above all the two prodigies approved by the Sacred Congregation of Rites for her Beatification.

One concerns Maddalena Cavassa of Turin, a lady of high rank and of the Blessed's family. This noble and pious woman, more than sixty years old, suffered frightful pains caused by an enormous gangrenous polyp which for more than a year had invaded the nasal cavities. Seeing herself lost, she decided to have recourse to the powerful intercession of her holy kinswoman. "In the month of April 1788," she says, "I suddenly had the inspiration to commend myself to the venerable Sister Mary of the Angels, and at once, kneeling down in my room: 'Venerable Mary,' I cried, 'cast a glance on her who lies prostrate at your feet to beg you to ask of the most holy and adorable Trinity the grace of my cure; I shall be eternally grateful to you.' And I made this prayer with the firm and unshakeable confidence that I should be cured." And in fact, having at once begun a novena in honour of the Blessed, she had not time to finish it before her polyp came away from the flesh, of itself and without pain, and fell to the ground amid a heavy nosebleed. Moreover the sick woman, whom suffering had almost entirely deprived of the use of her legs, was able to walk with ease: her first outing was to the tomb of her heavenly benefactress, and on this occasion the glorious sepulchre seemed to her (and the persons accompanying her noticed it too) to give off a delicious fragrance such as she had never breathed.

The other is more astonishing: it is the disappearance of the cancer from which Sister Maddalena of St. Francis, a lay sister in the convent of the Augustinian nuns of Caprarola, near Rome, was suffering. This pious woman was almost at the last extremity when, on the evening of 20 July 1844, a relic and an image of our Blessed were applied to her body. She fell asleep almost at once in a sleep so calm and tranquil that it lasted until eight o'clock the next morning. "I woke," she deposed in the process of Beatification, "with clear and lucid ideas, without pain, without any feeling of illness. 'I am cured,' I said to myself, 'the Saint has granted me this grace; let us get up and go to holy communion.'" At once she rose and dressed, feeling nothing inside her body but the sensation of a hand that had torn something from her stomach, and outwardly only that of an impulse given her, towards a cross placed in her cell, by a force greater than her own; at the same time she vomited a mass of corrupted flesh, and distinctly heard these words: "You are cured; for there at your feet is the canker that was devouring you." She fell at once on her knees before her crucifix, and after giving thanks for a whole hour to God and to her deliverer, she went down to the choir to receive holy communion among her sisters, who were filled with astonishment and joy. The Lord having thus allowed the high holiness of His humble and chaste servant to be further enhanced in the eyes of men by the brilliance and splendour of miracles, the Church our holy Mother has willed to propose her to her children, who groan and weep in this valley of tears, as a new model to imitate and a new patroness to invoke. And it is, one may say, very timely; for do we not live in a stormy age, when the fury of the impious and unbelieving seems to be unleashed by preference against these refuges of peace, innocence and charity, where the Christian virgin, like Moses of old on the mountain of Raphidim, raises her arms day and night towards heaven to appease its anger, where she ceaselessly pleads by her prayers and penances the cause of sinners before the justice of the Most High, justly angered by the crimes of the earth?

Mary of the Angels was beatified by Pope Pius IX on 14 May 1865.

This notice, which we owe to the great kindness of the abbé Duchassaing, canon of Angoulême, is an almost complete reproduction of the notice published at Avignon in 1865. — Cf. *Vie de la bienheureuse Marie des Anges*, by Canon Labis, professor at the seminary of Tournai (H. Casterman, 1867).

BLESSED SEBASTIAN MAGGI, OF THE ORDER OF FRIARS PREACHERS (1494)

Brescia, a celebrated city of Italy, was the birthplace of Blessed Sebastian, who was of the Maggi family, one of the oldest and noblest of the country. The desire to work for the salvation of his neighbour determined him from his earliest youth to consecrate himself to God in the Order of St. Dominic, and he was soon noticed there for his innocence, the austerity of his life, his love of regularity and his ardour for ecclesiastical studies. His success in letters was so great that he became for his brethren not only a model by his example but also a light by his doctrine. Having been raised to the priesthood, he gave himself by order of his superiors to the ministry of preaching, and applied himself above all to the right ordering of the morals of the peoples to whom he announced the word of God; his sermons produced abundant fruit. He converted a great number of sinners, reconciled enemies, and restored or strengthened piety in several cities of Italy.

Sebastian's virtue and merit caused him to be chosen successively as prior of various convents of his Order. Everywhere he led his religious to the practice of evangelical perfection and the exact observance of their Rule; but he never required anything of others in this regard that he had not first fulfilled himself. Full of zeal for the salvation of souls, he noticed while he governed the house of Santa Maria delle Grazie at Milan that he and his brethren were not as useful to the people as he wished, because that house was situated in an out-of-the-way place and the faithful could not conveniently come there to hear the word of God. He therefore formed the plan of building a great church in the middle of the city, and undertook its construction. With the help of abundant alms which he received from pious persons, and above all from Beatrice, duchess of Milan, who had chosen him as her confessor, he happily brought his undertaking to completion.

The Friars Preachers of Lombardy had formed a particular Congregation. The servant of God governed it twice as superior; but this dignity made him change nothing in the austerity of his way of life. His prayer was continual; he joined to it a profound contempt for himself and practices of mortification by which he chastised his body and strove to bring it into subjection. Attentive to maintaining the exact observance of the Rule while he governed his brethren, he acquired by his conduct, not only among his own but also among the public, a reputation for piety greater still than that which he already enjoyed. Having gone in his old age to Genoa to visit the convent of Santa Maria di Castello, he had knowledge of his death, and turning to his companions he told them that this would be the place of his rest. This holy religious, having received the last Sacraments, died in peace in the year 1494. As soon as the news of his death had spread, the people of Genoa came in great numbers to venerate his body. The Blessed's precious remains were first buried in an inconspicuous place; but they were afterwards placed more fittingly in the church of Santa Maria, where they have long been honoured and where, it is said, many miracles have taken place. Pope Clement XIII, having become certain that the cult of the servant of God had never been interrupted, approved it on 9 December 1760 and permitted his feast to be celebrated.

The Continuators of Godescard.

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[1] See the notice of St. Eusebius of Vercelli on the previous day.

[2] Everyone knows the touching story of these three young Hebrews persecuted by Nebuchadnezzar, and the sublime canticle which they intoned in praise of God in the midst of the flames of the furnace. We shall therefore dwell only on their usual attributes. Some monuments, among others a painting in the cemetery of Callistus and a sarcophagus at Milan, represent them at the moment when, led before the king's statue, they are summoned to worship it. They wear a simple tunic which seems tied below the hips; they are capped with the tiara or Phrygian bonnet. Their attitude bears witness to their invincible repugnance for the act of idolatry proposed to them. One of the two has his hands bound in front; the other, whose hands are free, makes with his right hand a gesture of refusal. On top of a column is the bust of Nebuchadnezzar, and before the idol the king himself, who points to it with his finger, his head turned with an imperious air towards the young Israelites. The subject of the martyrdom of the young Hebrews is met with much more frequently. They usually stand in the furnace and stretch out their arms in the attitude of prayer. Outside the furnace a standing figure, clad in the tunic and pallium, is turned towards the three young men, whom he seems to be exhorting: in this figure some see Daniel, others an angel of the Lord. — Cf. Martigny, *Dictionnaire des Antiquités chrétiennes*.

[3] We translate literally the entry of the Roman martyrology: *Aberdone, in Hibernia, sancti Beani, episcopi.* Now Aberdeen is a city not of Ireland but of Scotland. What misled the compiler of the Roman martyrology is that there are two saints Bean, bishops, one in Scotland, the other in Ireland. We have inserted St. Bean of Aberdeen in the Additions of the Bollandists for 26 October. On 16 December one should read: "In the province of Leinster, in Ireland, St. Bean, bishop and confessor." — Cf. *Nouveaux Bollandistes*, at 26 October.

[4] They suffered during the same persecution as Saints James, Marian, Agapius and Emilian, whose Acts we gave on 30 April. — Cf. the Life of St. James of Numidia (vol. V, pp. 94–100).

[5] First buried in the church of his monastery, the body of St. Caradeuc, because of wars during which it was feared that these precious relics might be profaned, was transferred to France and laid in the Donziais (probably in the twelfth century). According to an ancient legend of the collegiate church of Saint-Caradeuc, the Saint's body was carried to the old parish of Bagneaux, near Donzy; a little chapel arose on the spot where it was laid, and this small oratory was called the Chapel of the Breton saint, then the Chapelle bretonnière; and finally the village which grew up nearby took the name of Bretonnière, which it has kept to this day. A spring flowing at the foot of the village has kept the name of the fountain of Saint-Caradeuc; near it may be seen some stones which evidently come from the now destroyed chapel. It is rather difficult to state the date and the reason of the translation of St. Caradeuc's body from La Bretonnière to Donzy; it is probable, however, that this translation took place in 1170, when Louis the Young and Guy, count of Nevers, marched their troops against Hervé III, baron of Donzy, and besieged his castle. However that may be, it was in 1180 that the same Hervé III founded the collegiate church and established in it the canons who were to celebrate the divine office over the Saint's tomb. When Donzy was taken by the Protestants on 18 September 1569, the collegiate church of Saint-Caradeuc was pillaged, and the ornaments and holy relics were thrown into the flames; in this way Donzy was deprived of the body of St. Caradeuc. However, since the canons had formerly given part of the relics of their holy patron to the church of Tury, they made approaches to the inhabitants of Tury to obtain some in their turn and repair, though imperfectly, the loss they had suffered. Two bones of the Saint were granted them, and on this occasion there was a solemn procession at Donzy on Sunday 21 August 1689. Innocent XII granted indulgences for seven years to those who should visit the church of Saint-Caradeuc within the octave of the translation of his relics; the bull is dated 17 April 1693. The church of Donzy still possesses a bone of St. Caradeuc, enclosed in a reliquary and furnished with an authentication. — Mgr Crosnier, *Hagiologie nivernaise*.

[6] We sketched the notice of St. Eusebius on 15 December.

[7] See her life at 25 May, vol. VI, pp. 160–174.

[8] Alias: Giguel, Gicquel, Juhel, Jahel, Jozel, Judhaël, Juhaol, Juthaël, Hoël, Widicall [as read], Judicaïl, Rodicnaël [as read], Widichaël.

[9] Alias: Hildemanne [as read], Hildemaae [as read], Adelman, Hildemanus, Mildemannus [as read].

[10] St. Callistus is honoured not only at Cysoing but also at Hornaing, at Lambersart near Lille, at Antoing near Tournai, and in an oratory formerly to be seen near Condé.

[11] The convents of Ferrières and Prüm then had frequent relations with each other. Monks of the first of these abbeys were often sent to Prüm to learn German, a language no less necessary in France, in the state of things at that time, if we are to believe Lupus of Ferrières.

[12] Rosweyde had given a good edition of this martyrology; but Giorgi, secretary of Benedict XIV, has given a new one, much more correct and enriched with learned notes and dissertations.

17 December

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ROMAN MARTYROLOGY

At Eleutheropolis, in Palestine, the holy martyrs Florian, Calanicus and their companions, fifty-eight in number, massacred by the Saracens in hatred of the faith of Jesus Christ, in the time of the emperor Heraclius. 7th c. — At Marseilles, St. Lazarus, bishop, whom the Gospel tells us was raised from the dead by Our Lord. 1st c. — At Rome, St. John of Matha, founder of the Order of the Most Holy Trinity for the Redemption of Captives, whose solemnity is kept on 8 February, by decree of Pope Innocent XI.[1] 1213. — In the monastery of Fulda, St. Sturm, abbot and apostle of Saxony, placed in the number of the Saints at the second Lateran council by Pope Innocent II. 779. — At Bigarden, near Brussels, St. Wivina, virgin, whose holiness is attested by frequent miracles. 1170. — At Constantinople, St. Olympias, widow. About 410. — At Andenne of the Seven Churches, St. Begga, widow, sister of St. Gertrude.[2] 693. — The same day, the translation of St. Ignatius, bishop and martyr, who governed the Church of Antioch third after St. Peter. From Rome, where he had suffered death under the emperor Trajan, his body was carried to Antioch and placed in the cemetery of the church, outside the gate of Daphne. St. John Chrysostom preached a sermon to the people on this solemnity. Later his relics were brought back to Rome and placed, with very great veneration, in the church of St. Clement, with the body of that blessed pope and martyr.[3] 107 or 116.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED

In the dioceses of Aix, Ajaccio, Autun, Auch, Châlons, Coutances, Dijon, Fréjus, Le Puy, Limoges, Marseilles, Mende, Nantes, Rodez, Strasbourg and Viviers, St. Lazarus, bishop of Marseilles, cited in the Roman martyrology of this day. 1st c. — In the diocese of Arras, St. Aubert, bishop of Cambrai, whose notice we sketched at 13 December. 669. — In the diocese of Beauvais, St. Eusebius, bishop of Vercelli, whose notice we gave at 15 December. 370. — In the diocese of Lyons, St. Columba, virgin and martyr at Sens, whose life we shall give at 31 December. 3rd c. — In the dioceses of Quimper and Rennes, St. Judicael, king of Brittany, whose life we gave on the previous day. 658. — In the diocese of Saint-Claude, St. Adelaide, empress of Germany, whose life we gave on the 12th of this month. 999. — In the diocese of Tours, St. Fortunatus, bishop of Poitiers and confessor, whose life we gave at 14 December. 600. — In the diocese of Verdun, St. Mesmin or Maximinus, abbot of Micy, whose notice we sketched at 15 December. 520. — In the diocese of Metz, St. Christiana, virgin, whose life we gave on the 15th of this month. 3rd c. — In the former diocese of Tréguier, St. Briac, abbot, a native of Ireland. After living some time under the direction of St. Tugdual, bishop of Tréguier (30 November), he built at his order a monastery on the very spot where the town of Bourbriac now stands (Côtes-du-Nord, arrondissement of Guingamp),

and there governed a community of religious for several years. He then withdrew further into solitude, and chose for his dwelling the place since called the Penity. At last, wearied by the continual importunity of a multitude of sick people who came to ask him for miracles and left him scarcely a moment free for contemplation, he made a journey to Rome; then, after staying two years in the diocese of Arles, he came to end his days in his monastery.[4] About the year 555. — At Cunault (Maine-et-Loire), in the diocese of Angers, St. Maxentiolus (Maixençol, Mezenceul), disciple of St. Martin of Tours, founder of the monastery of Notre-Dame de Cunault.[5] 5th c.

MARTYROLOGIES OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS

Martyrology of the Cistercian Order. — St. Gregory the Wonderworker, bishop of Neocaesarea, whose birth into heaven is celebrated on 17 November.[6] 270.

Martyrology of the three Orders of St. Francis. — At Rome, Blessed Margaret Colonna, virgin, most illustrious by her birth and by her virtues, whose body is kept in that city in the church of San Silvestro.[7] 1284.

Martyrology of the Order of Friars Minor. — Among the sisters and the monks of the Third Order, Blessed Delphina, virgin, of the Third Order of St. Francis.[8] 1360.

Martyrology of the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. — Blessed Franco, confessor, of the Carmelite Order, whose birth into heaven is celebrated on the 11th of this month. 1291.

Martyrology of the Order of Hermits of St. Augustine. — The ordination of St. Eusebius, bishop of Vercelli, whose birth into heaven is mentioned at 1 August and whose memory we celebrate today.[9] 370.

Martyrology of the Order of the Servants of the Blessed Virgin Mary. — At Marseilles, Blessed Lazarus, bishop, whom the Lord raised from the dead, as we read in the Gospel. 1st c.

Martyrology of the Order of Discalced Carmelites. — The same as among the Carmelites.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS

Among the Friars Preachers, Blessed Siger of Lille, confessor, of the Order of St. Dominic. He led Blessed Margaret of Ypres in the ways of holiness. Tireless in the exercise of the pulpit and the confessional, an angel was often seen at his side when he preached, making his face shine. He is represented holding an arm in his hand: after the death of Blessed Margaret, a woman whose arm was paralysed came to him, and he bade her go to the tomb of his penitent and order the Blessed, on his behalf, to heal her; which took place instantly. About 1250. — In the grand duchy of Luxembourg, Blessed Yolanda (Yolendis), virgin. She was born about the year 1231, of Henry, count of Vianden, and of Margaret of Courtenay. From her early years she showed great piety and a keen desire to consecrate herself to God. Having made a journey to Luxembourg, her mother, who accompanied her, took her to the monastery of the Dominican nuns of Marienthal. The young Yolanda, scarcely sixteen, shut herself in a cell, bound her head with the novices' band, covered herself with a veil, put on the habit of the Order, and had herself led to the altar, where she consecrated herself to God. Thunderstruck, the countess of Vianden ran to the church, threw herself on her daughter, felled her, dragged her by the hair, and after stripping her of her religious dress tried to pull her out of the holy place; but Yolanda managed to escape and shut herself in a vault of the convent. Threatened, however, if she did not give herself up, with perishing under the ruins of the monastery, Yolanda yielded to the storm and returned to Vianden, where she had great assaults to sustain from her mother. The latter, nevertheless, overcome by a constancy that nothing could shake, consented to her entering religion, and herself took her to Marienthal, where Yolanda received the veil (1248). After ten years of profession she was elected prioress, and for twenty-five years she showed herself the model of her companions. 1283.

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SAINT LAZARUS OF BETHANY, FIRST BISHOP OF MARSEILLES AND MARTYR

1st century.

Fortis ligatum mors tenet, / Sed fortior dilectio. / Amore victa mors fugit, / Vitamque vita contulit.

In the dread embrace of death Lazarus lay groaning, a captive; stronger than death, love has vanquished its rival, and a new life, drawn from the very source of life, has come to revive this victim of death. — *Proper of Marseilles.*

The Gospel contains a great number of narratives full of grandeur and simplicity: we know of none calmer and more powerful, more familiar and more divine, than that of the raising of Lazarus, the friend of Jesus. Let us hear the Gospel:

“There was a certain sick man named Lazarus, of Bethany, the town where Mary and her sister Martha dwelt. It was that Mary who had anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped His feet with her hair. Lazarus, the sick man, was her brother.

“The two sisters therefore sent to Jesus: ‘Lord,’ they sent word to Him, ‘he whom Thou lovest is sick.’ — ‘This sickness is not unto death,’ Jesus answered at this news, ‘but it comes for the glory of God, that is, that the Son of God may be glorified by it.’

“Now Jesus loved Martha, and Mary her sister, and Lazarus. And yet, when He had heard that he was sick, He still remained two days in the place where He was. After letting this time pass:

“‘Let us go into Judaea again,’ He said to His disciples. ‘Master,’ they answered Him, ‘only lately the Jews sought to stone Thee, and wilt Thou go thither again to put Thyself into their hands?’ — ‘Are there not twelve hours in the day?’ Jesus replied to them. ‘If a man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world; but if he walk in the night, he stumbleth, because the light is not in him.’ These were His words. Then He added: ‘Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go that I may awake him out of sleep.’ — ‘Lord,’ His disciples then said to Him, ‘if he sleep, he shall do well.’ But Jesus had spoken of his death; and they thought that He spoke of ordinary sleep. Then Jesus explained Himself plainly. ‘Lazarus is dead,’ He said; ‘and I am glad, for your sakes, that I was not there, that you may believe. Now let us go to him.’ At this word Thomas, called Didymus, turning to the other disciples, cried: ‘Let us also go! Let us also go, that we may die with him!’

“When Jesus arrived, He found that Lazarus had been four days already in the tomb. And as Bethany was only about fifteen furlongs from Jerusalem, many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them concerning their brother. Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, ran to meet Him. Mary meanwhile sat still in the house. ‘Lord,’ said Martha to Jesus, ‘if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died; but I know that even now whatsoever Thou wilt ask of God, God will give it Thee.’ Jesus answered her: ‘Thy brother shall rise again.’ — ‘Yes,’ answered Martha, ‘I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.’ — ‘I am the Resurrection and the Life,’ Jesus went on. ‘He that believeth in Me, although he be dead, shall live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?’ — ‘Yes, Lord,’ she answered Him, ‘I believe that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God, who art come into this world.’ And having said these words, she went away and called her sister: ‘The Master is here, and calleth for thee,’ she said to her softly. At these words Mary rose in haste and went to Jesus; for He had not yet entered the village, and was still in the same place where Martha had met Him.

“The Jews, however, who were with Mary in the house comforting her, seeing her rise so quickly and go out, followed her. ‘She is going, no doubt, to weep at the tomb,’ they said. As soon as she came to the place where Jesus was, Mary, on seeing Him, fell at His feet. ‘Lord,’ she said, ‘if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.’ Jesus, seeing her weep, and the Jews who had come with her weeping also, groaned in the spirit and was troubled. ‘Where have you laid him?’ He said. ‘Come and see,’ they answered Him. And Jesus wept. The Jews then said: ‘Behold how He loved him!’ — ‘What!’ some of them, however, went on, ‘could not He who opened the eyes of the man born blind have caused that this man should not die?’

“Jesus therefore, again groaning in Himself, came to the sepulchre. It was a cave, whose entrance was closed with a stone. ‘Take away the stone,’ said Jesus. ‘Lord,’ said Martha, the sister of the dead man, ‘by this time he stinketh, for he is now of four days.’ — ‘Did I not assure thee,’ Jesus then said to her, ‘that if thou believe, thou shalt see the glory of God?’ They took away the stone. Then Jesus, lifting up His eyes to heaven:

“‘Father,’ He said, ‘I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me. As for Me, I knew that Thou hearest Me always; but I speak thus because of the people who stand about, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me.’ And having said these words, He cried with a loud voice: ‘Lazarus, come forth!’ And at once the dead man rose and appeared. His feet and hands were bound with bands, and his face was wrapped in the napkin. ‘Loose him and let him go,’ said Jesus. Then many of the Jews who had come to see Mary and Martha, and who had witnessed what Jesus had done, believed in Him.”

In calling Lazarus back to life, Jesus wished much less to keep a friend for Himself than to prepare a zealous propagator of His sublime teachings. The vocation of the newly chosen man was miraculous; he was not to falter in it; and indeed persecution is the ordinary trial of lofty vocations: it did not fail the friend of Jesus. About ten years after Our Lord’s Ascension, Lazarus was thrown by the Jews into a ship without sails or oars, with his sisters Martha and Magdalene, with St. Marcella, St. Maximinus and other Christians. Exposed thus without resources to the mercy of the waves, this frail craft was, in the minds of the Jews, to sink a few paces from the shore and engulf with it all the hopes of the newborn band of the faithful. But the wicked were deceived, and the vessel they had doomed to shipwreck, guided by the hand of Him who had steered the ark of Noah, came happily to land on the hospitable soil of Provence. Marseilles opened its port to it and acclaimed Lazarus its bishop.

The new apostle planted the standard of the faith on this soil, and around this banner of Christ he laboured for thirty whole years to gather a dense crowd of neophytes. Paganism took fright at the progress of the Gospel, and the infidels, having seized the person of Lazarus, brought him before the judge of the city. The judge summoned him to sacrifice to the idols on the spot: if he refused, he must die. The venerable old man answered that he was the servant of Jesus Christ, by whom he had already been raised once from the dead, and that he would never acknowledge any other God than Him with His Father, Creator of all things. This generous confession won for the blessed apostle the palm of martyrdom. His body was torn with iron combs; a red-hot iron breastplate was thrown over his shoulders; he was violently laid, to be roasted, on a gridiron red with fire; several arrows were shot at his breast, which nevertheless could not pierce his flesh; at last his head fell under the executioner’s sword.

St. Lazarus is represented: (1) coming out of the tomb at the voice of Our Lord; (2) in episcopal dress, holding on his hand a little bier recalling his resurrection; (3) in a group with his two sisters Martha and Magdalene; (4) abandoned on the sea in a disabled ship.

He is patron of Autun, Avallon, Carcassonne and Marseilles.

APOSTOLATE OF ST. LAZARUS

VENERATION AND RELICS. — MONUMENTS

The apostolate of St. Lazarus in Provence, in which people had ceased to believe in the last century, is no longer doubtful since the peremptory proofs given of it by Abbé Faillon. We shall summarize what is most interesting in his work concerning our holy bishop.

In the very genuine and very authentic Acts of the martyrdom of St. Alexander of Brescia it is said that, under the reign of Claudius (41–54), Alexander went to Marseilles to Blessed Lazarus, bishop of that city, and from there to Aix, to the blessed bishop Maximinus. It is certain, on the other hand (M. Faillon proves it very well), that before the ravages of the Saracens and the other barbarians who stripped Marseilles of its monuments, its written titles and its relics, the body of St. Lazarus, raised by Jesus Christ, and a martyr, was buried and honoured at Marseilles in the church of Saint-Victor. The name of this church dates from the 4th century; as for the vaults, they were built at several times; the crypt is visibly older than the rest, and its origin goes back beyond the reign of Antoninus (138–161). It was there that St. Lazarus hid with his neophytes during the persecution for the exercises of religion. To the left of the altar there is seen a stone seat, cut in the rock, which is venerated as having served St. Lazarus in administering the Sacraments; similar ones are noticed in the catacombs of Rome. Above it is traced a rough figure which seems to go back to the 6th century and represents St. Lazarus with the palm of martyrdom and the pastoral staff. In the vault, moreover, are seen the alpha and the omega, which are also found in the catacombs of Rome. The apostle of Marseilles having been buried in this crypt, his burial made the place dear to the people of Marseilles and gave rise to the underground cemetery which has since formed there, as happened at Rome and in many other cities: “The custom of having oneself buried near the Martyrs,” says St. Augustine, “having had for its end to draw the suffrages of the Saints upon the dead.”

Here is another very precious monument, on the mass of buildings which made up the ancient *abbey of Saint-Sauveur*. It lies on the place de Linche, in an underground position with respect to the square, which has been brought to the level of the lower streets. Going down towards the port are found cellars which the old authors designated by the name of “caves of Saint-Sauveur”: they consist of seven halls, all equal and parallel, surrounded on three sides by a returning gallery. The whole building is of large dressed stones running through the wall. They were, in the unanimous opinion of archaeologists, public prisons, with lodging for the soldiers charged with guarding the prisoners. On the eastern side of the gallery, at the north-east angle and outside the walls, is a small four-sided chamber which is called the prison of St. Lazarus. It is in fact an immemorial tradition, confirmed by many documents, that “Lazarus, having refused to sacrifice to the idols, was beaten with rods till the blood came, dragged through the whole city, and at last shut up in this dark underground prison.” Out of respect for the place, Cassianite nuns were established there, just as the keeping of his tomb and crypt had been entrusted to religious of the same Order. When this prison was given to the nuns it had already been turned into an oratory, which proves at once the certainty and the antiquity of the tradition attesting the imprisonment of St. Lazarus in that place. Let us add to this proof that the oratory bore the dedication of St. Lazarus.

According to the same tradition, St. Lazarus was beheaded in the prison itself, or at least on the place de Linche, close to the prison. That is why, in the solemn procession in which the relics of this Saint are carried, a station is made on this square, near the corner of the rue du Radeau, during which the clergy sing an antiphon or a responsory in honour of the holy bishop, as though to congratulate him on having won the palm of martyrdom in that place.

During the ravages of the Saracens and other barbarians, of which we have already spoken, the relics of St. Lazarus were carried from Marseilles to Autun, where the church of Saint-Lazare, which later became the cathedral, was built to keep this holy body with honour. Marseilles nevertheless kept the jaw and the head of its holy apostle. Another head was cleverly fitted by a priest of Marseilles to the body of the Saint which the Burgundians carried off. The head was kept apart in a silver shrine; a few fragments of the body of St. Lazarus also remained at Marseilles: one of these fragments was placed in the altar of the Charterhouse of

Montrieux in 1252. The head of the holy Martyr was put into a new shrine in 1356, and into another in 1389. To enclose this shrine a marble monument was built which also served as the chapel of St. Lazarus in the cathedral, which had formerly borne his name and had replaced it by that of Notre-Dame de la Major; it was completed in 1481. Since the French Revolution the Church of Marseilles no longer possesses a precious shrine, but it still keeps the head of the holy Martyr.

We have said that in the 12th century a church was built at Autun to keep the body of St. Lazarus; it is wholly steeped in the traditions of Provence. Built in the form of a Latin cross, it consists of a nave two hundred and seven feet long and seventy-four wide, accompanied by two aisles, each ending, like the nave, in an apse. The nave is dedicated to St. Lazarus; one of the aisles to St. Magdalene, the other to St. Martha, his sisters. On one of the four capitals of the side portal, on the side of Saint-Nazaire, is still seen the figure of the Saviour, with St. Magdalene before Him kissing His feet, and behind, Lazarus, whom He is restoring to life. Of the bells, one, which is still to be seen, was blessed under the name of Sainte-Marthe, and another under that of Sainte-Madeleine.

The body of St. Lazarus was translated into this church on 20 October 1147. It was enclosed in a magnificent mausoleum of white and black marble placed behind the high altar; many miracles took place there, especially in favour of lepers.

From the translation of St. Lazarus in 1147 until the 18th century, we do not find that the coffin enclosing the relics of our Saint was ever opened. But in the 18th century, the writings of Baillet and Tillemont having considerably weakened zeal for his cult, it was at last resolved in 1727, in order to dispel the doubts these works had spread in people’s minds, to open his tomb. This took place on 20 June of that year. In the vault of the holy Martyr was found a lead coffin with an inscription stating that this was the body of St. Lazarus, the dead man raised after four days, and that it had been placed there on the 13th of the calends of November in the year 1147…

To satisfy the devotion of the faithful, the holy relics were put provisionally in a shrine, and for a fortnight they remained exposed to their veneration. People came from all sides to Autun to honour them, and after the fortnight they were carried in procession through the whole city. This event became known not only in the neighbourhood but throughout France, the Chapter of Autun having sent a circular to all the cathedral churches to inform them of it. The bishop of Autun himself wrote to the bishop of Marseilles, Henri de Belsunce, to learn whether the archives of the Major held any ancient document concerning the translation of the body of St. Lazarus to Autun. Mgr de Belsunce answered that, the Saracens having ravaged the city of Marseilles in the 9th century, the archives had entirely perished, and that nothing earlier than the 13th century was kept; but that the constant tradition, confirmed by the historians of Marseilles, was that the Burgundians had carried off the body of St. Lazarus, though the year of the event could not be assigned precisely; and that at the time of the removal the sacristan priest of the cathedral and a canon had taken the head of the holy Martyr and substituted another, which was carried off with the body by the Burgundians. “What is remarkable,” added Mgr de Belsunce, “is that we do not have the lower jaw, which leads one to think that these two priests put with the precious relics of the holy Martyr a head which likewise lacked it, so that those who carried off the relics should find no change in them.” The bishop of Marseilles on this occasion asked very insistently, and obtained from the Chapter of Autun, a few small bones of the holy founder of his Church. He established a special feast of the translation of these relics to Marseilles and fixed it on the Friday of the fourth week of Lent, the day on which the memory of the raising of this holy patron was celebrated in his cathedral.

Meanwhile the bishop of Autun, burdened in the interval with several important affairs, was in no hurry to put the relics of St. Lazarus back in the tomb. They remained in the shrine where they had been placed for the veneration of the faithful until at last, on 18 July 1731, they were taken out of it and put back into the old coffin, in which were also enclosed the official report of what had taken place in 1727 and the one drawn up

that very day. After the coffin had been bound with seven bands of iron, as it had been at first, it was carried in procession by the canons into the mausoleum and put back in its former place. To perpetuate the memory of so happy an event a feast was established which it was proposed to celebrate every year; but what followed did not answer to this first impulse of devotion to the holy Martyr. The principles of the new critics gaining credit little by little among the clergy of Autun, these, through too blind a confidence in the supposed discoveries of Tillemont and Chastelain, let themselves be persuaded that St. Lazarus had not been a bishop, that he had never even come to Gaul, and that his relics were in the East. Consequently, the cult always rendered to this Saint in the Church of Autun becoming a sort of scandal for these reformers, they cut out of the diocesan Breviary everything that seemed to consecrate these supposed popular errors; and, by a necessary consequence, they went so far as to proscribe the monuments of sculpture which contradicted this new liturgy. Under pretext of repairs or improvements, they removed from the portals all the figures in which St. Lazarus was represented in episcopal dress, and even several others which represented St. Magdalene and St. Martha and accompanied that of St. Lazarus raised by Jesus Christ. But what can never be sufficiently regretted is the marble mausoleum of St. Lazarus, which was included in this proscription in the year 1765. The reason alleged was the design of replacing this tomb with decorations in better taste. However, as this was only a pretext for destroying it, instead of moving it to some chapel, they annihilated, by a resolution hard to understand, all these statues and the mausoleum itself, of which only a few fragments remain.

At last, a few years later, towards the end of 1793, the very body of St. Lazarus, so venerated at Autun for nine centuries, was profaned like most of the other holy bodies. The relics of the holy Martyr, taken from the shrine and thrown pell-mell on the pavement of the church, served for some moments as a plaything for a troop of children who dragged them here and there, when, through a remnant of religion, the very authors of the spoliation carried the relics into the vestibule leading from the sacristy to the old Treasury chamber and threw them on the pavement, where they remained several days. There, while the public sale of the sacristy effects was going on, a woman named Jeanne Moreau, finding herself alone in the vestibule, quickly picked up the head said to be that of St. Lazarus; and other persons of Autun carried off in turn various bones of the holy Martyr. Calm having been restored to France, all these persons hastened to hand over to Mgr de Fontanges, bishop of Autun, the relics of St. Lazarus of which they were the keepers; and this prelate, after verifying their identity, ordered on 18 August 1803 that they should be enclosed in a shrine and carried in procession into the cathedral church on the following 3 September, with all the pomp customary on such occasions. The shrine was carried by the canons and exposed in the choir for the veneration of the faithful from the first vespers of the feast until the end of the octave of the holy Martyr.

We have replaced Fr. Giry's narrative with that of the Gospel, completed from the Proper of Marseilles, the *Monuments inédits sur l'apostolat de sainte Marie-Madeleine* by Abbé Faillon, of the Society of Saint-Sulpice, and the *Caractéristiques des Saints* by Rev. Fr. Cahier.

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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SAINT STURM, FIRST ABBOT OF FULDA

779. — Pope: Adrian I. — Emperor: Charlemagne.

No one is perfect unless he desires to be more so; and it is a proof of perfection to tend to a higher perfection. — *Saint Bernard.*

This holy abbot, whom the ancients also called Sturmin, and sometimes Sturmion, was born about the year 712 of noble parents in Bavaria. As they professed Christianity, they lost no time in presenting to God this worthy fruit of their marriage; and the reputation of St. Boniface, the Apostle of Germany, then spreading everywhere with brilliance, Sturmin's father and mother thought they could do no better than entrust this

dear child to the care of so holy a man, that he might bring him up in the principles of the Catholic religion.

St. Boniface, having recognized the good disposition of mind of the young disciple presented to him and his holy inclinations to virtue, thought fit to remove him from his family and send him to a monastery called Fritzlar. There he had the happiness of finding another holy abbot, named Wigbert, who, on St. Boniface's recommendation, took very particular care of the young Sturmin's education. The boy became a religious in this house and answered, as fully as could be wished, the care of this excellent master; so our young professed soon made very great progress, not only in the ways of perfection but also in the study of the holy Scriptures, in which he acquired an extraordinary understanding that made him admired by everyone.

His virtue and talents soon decided the religious of the community to send him to receive holy Orders when he had reached the age prescribed by the canons. As soon as he was raised to the dignity of the priesthood, he believed himself obliged to fulfil the duties befitting that state by giving himself to preaching and by conferring holy baptism on those whom he had instructed and drawn from their former error. He applied his care equally to those who were sunk in vice and in the blindness of paganism and to those whom he had already won to Jesus Christ or who were striving to attain perfection in the supernatural ways. He inveighed powerfully against those who troubled the public peace, and he had a particular talent for reconciling those who kept up hatreds against one another. He neglected nothing to abolish the old customs of the pagans and to show the deplorable state of those who were guided only by superstitious rules, which subjected them to the empire of the demons.

Having spent some years in these praiseworthy occupations, he was touched with a most ardent desire to withdraw into some desert, where he might attend to God alone in the exercise of contemplation. He communicated his design to his old master St. Boniface and begged him to make it easy for him to carry it out. That enlightened superior, having carefully examined the motives that moved this wise religious, granted what he wished; which made him at once resolve to go and hide himself in the forest called Buchonia, at a place named Hersfeld or Hirschfeld, where there was, it is said, a little church. There our Saint, accompanied by two other religious whom he had chosen, began to lead the most rigorous life of the ancient solitaries, mortifying his body with fasts, vigils and the other austerities befitting the kind of life he had undertaken.

He resolved, on the advice of St. Boniface, with whom he conferred about it several times, to form a religious community. He chose a spot that seemed to him very suitable for building a monastery; it was near the river Fulda. St. Boniface obtained for him the protection of Carloman, king of the Franks, who made it easy for him to succeed in his undertaking; for this purpose he gave him the estate of a property called Eichloha, and added besides an extent of four thousand paces of the surrounding land. All the neighbouring lords also contributed to this good work, and St. Sturm, with this powerful help, easily built the famous monastery called Fulda after the river near which it stands. It lies in the diocese of Mainz, between Franconia, Hesse and Thuringia. This celebrated abbey afterwards became the mother of several other houses, which gave great prelates to the Church and made themselves commendable both by learning and by piety. St. Boniface dedicated the church of this monastery under the title of the Holy Saviour, and, having been made bishop of Mainz two years after this dedication, he took pleasure in taking refuge in this holy place to rest from his fatigues and the painful cares of the episcopate, devoting himself quietly to the sweet exercises of contemplation.

St. Sturm, with St. Boniface's consent, was elected first abbot of this house, to which he prescribed the Rule of St. Benedict. The religious lived in such great fervour that they resolved to abstain from wine and from every other drink that could intoxicate. They worked with their hands to provide for the needs of the monastery and could not bear that any stranger should come to help them in the hardest tasks of their house. They absolutely forbade all women entrance to their church and submitted to the observance of a great number of other very austere rules, which caused them to be regarded as the most perfect religious of their

time, whose conduct people tried to imitate in the other monasteries, even the most regular. The better to succeed in this, they were willing, when asked, to send some of their subjects to these other houses, the better to introduce there by their holy example the exact regularity of the Rule of St. Benedict, which they professed and to which they even added several other practices of extraordinary mortification.

St. Sturm, whose zeal kept increasing and who meditated continually on the most fitting means that lead to perfection, resolved, with the approval and on the advice of his great master St. Boniface, to visit the most celebrated monasteries of Italy, to learn their manner of life, note their holiest observances and add them to those he had already prescribed in the abbey of Fulda. Taking two religious with him, they carried out this design; and while they edified all the houses they passed through by their good example, they found on their side food for their souls in the conduct of the most perfect religious, whose modesty, regularity, austerity in all their actions and extreme fidelity in never relaxing in anything they admired. Our holy superior did not fail to go also to Monte Cassino to learn all that was practised there; at last this very wise abbot, having gone as far as Rome, returned to the monastery of Fulda full of new light and animated with a zeal still more ardent than before, firmly resolved to introduce there, with his usual prudence and gentleness, whatever could perfect the first Rule he had had observed until then.

Our holy abbot always observed first what he proposed to others, and showed in his own person how easy it was to practise what was most difficult. So far from the Rules he enforced keeping postulants from coming to ask a place in his monastery, people flocked to it on the contrary from all sides, and persons of distinction even brought their goods to it, to provide the means of feeding a greater number of religious. St. Boniface, who always took a great share in the works of his disciple St. Sturm, also obtained from Pope Zachary that the monastery of Fulda should depend only on the Holy See; and some time afterwards this great prelate resigned the bishopric of Mainz and the oversight he had of the other churches of Germany, to return to Frisia, there to continue the first functions of his apostolate and satisfy the holy zeal he had to bring back to the true faith those who had strayed from it. Before his departure he declared that he chose the church of Fulda for the place of his burial: which was carried out, for three years later, having been martyred in the Low Countries, his body was brought back to the place he had appointed.

After the death of this illustrious prelate, God, wishing to try St. Sturm’s virtue, permitted him to be attacked and thwarted in his designs and in the reputation he had acquired; and, what is remarkable, divine Providence willed that it should be St. Lull, successor of St. Boniface in the see of Mainz, who was the persecutor of our holy abbot. This is how. Those who sided with the prelate gave him to understand that St. Sturm was too ardent and too enterprising, and that he had given his religious bad impressions and distrust. Three false brethren of the abbot’s monastery, hoping for some protection from the bishop against their superior, with whom they were discontented, joined this prelate and even went to Pepin, then king of France, to tell him that their abbot was not on his side and was not devoted to His Majesty’s service. On these false accusations the king, surprised by what he was assured, sent St. Sturm into exile in the celebrated monastery of Jumièges, in the diocese of Rouen. Our Saint remained there two years, during which he constantly received every kind of esteem and goodwill from the religious of that monastery, who recognized the signal virtue of this great servant of God.

The holy abbot’s removal did not fail to cause change in the monastery of Fulda: some wished to leave their state, others claimed that the monarch should be better informed; others, wiser, took the course of having recourse to God, who holds the hearts of kings in His hand. Prayers and fasts were therefore made for this purpose; and although St. Lull had already placed another superior named Mark in the monastery of Fulda, nevertheless, the religious having carried their complaints to Pepin, God, who had heard their prayers, allowed this prince to do justice to their just complaints and to permit them to elect an abbot from the body of the community. It was one of the wisest disciples of St. Sturm, named Prezzold, who was chosen for this office; he discharged it very wisely, uniting all minds and omitting nothing to bring about the return of their

former abbot. Indeed, a short time afterwards the king summoned St. Sturm to his court, learning more and more every day of his signal merit; he wished him to remain in his palace with the other ecclesiastics who served his chapel, until he should have disposed of his lot otherwise. In the meantime the king, having found the holy abbot alone at prayer in the palace chapel, showed him goodwill, conferred with him, and asked him why his religious had accused him before his person and what reasons he had had for not being devoted to him; to which the holy abbot answered, with great wisdom, that he was a sinner, but that he had never undertaken or done anything against His Majesty's interests and service. The king then told him that he prayed God to forgive him if he had offended him, but that he wished him always to have, from then on, a large share in his goodwill.

This interview and conversation of Pepin with St. Sturm had happy consequences; for the religious of Fulda, having learned that their first abbot had returned to the sovereign's good graces, had no difficulty in obtaining his return and his restoration to his office; and not only did the king grant them this favour, but he also confirmed them in the privilege Pope Zachary had granted them, and gave the holy abbot great tokens of fresh protection. St. Sturm was received by his religious in his monastery of Fulda with extraordinary respect and joy; the superior who held his place handed over to him all the authority he had; the holy abbot again took cognizance of all affairs and of the state of things temporal and spiritual. He revived the first fervour he had introduced before his removal; he enlarged the cells of the religious; he embellished the church with several very rich ornaments; he brought the river Fulda into the enclosure of the monastery for the greater convenience of the offices carried on there.

His history remarks that, experience having taught him that the first austerity he had tried to introduce was found hardly bearable by the generality of religious, who are not all equally strong, the holy abbot judged it fitting to cut away something of it, to make the Rule gentler and in that more conformable to that of St. Benedict, which he claimed to follow; he therefore granted the use of wine, and this permission was confirmed by a council. The wise government of this holy superior and the moderation he used after returning to the house of Fulda attracted so great a number of subjects that the community came to be composed of at least four hundred religious, not counting the servants. It was for this reason that King Pepin, and after him his son Charlemagne, made great donations to this monastery, both to provide for the feeding of the religious and to mark the singular esteem and respect they had for him who was its worthy superior.

Charlemagne, having taken the government of the kingdom after his father, would give no lesser tokens of his goodwill and esteem than his predecessor towards the holy abbot of whom we speak, and was pleased to acknowledge him and take him as mediator of the peace he made in the year 771 with Tassilo, duke of Bavaria. He also employed him with much success in the great affair of the conversion of the Saxons, whom this prince had undertaken to make renounce the idolatry to which they had long been given. Our pious abbot, following the praiseworthy zeal of his king, appointed several religious to this fine work; they instructed those who were in ignorance and blindness and baptized those whom they had prepared to receive it; St. Sturm even found means to build several churches in their country, though we cannot deny that the barbarians who persisted in their obstinacy greatly delayed the progress of these holy missionaries.

These infidels, rebelling alike against their prince and against the laws of the true God, obliged Charlemagne to take up arms against them again and go and subdue them once more in their own country. He did so successfully; and, having subjected them to his royal authority by force of arms, our holy abbot thought he too should return to the barbarians, to make them take up again the worship of the true God by preaching to them anew the mysteries of the true faith. He was resolved to carry out this design, and even went for this purpose to Eresburg with some of his religious, to await Charlemagne there according to the order the prince had given them; but divine Providence, disposing otherwise and contenting itself with our Saint's good will, allowed him to be attacked by several infirmities which compelled him to return to Fulda, accompanied by a physician of the king's named Wintar, who did what he could to restore his health, but in vain.

The holy abbot, who knew well that his end was near, had his religious assembled around him and gave them a fine exhortation to encourage them in virtue and in perseverance in the observance of the Rule. He declared aloud that he forgave all those who had caused him pain at the time of his disgrace with King Pepin, and especially St. Lull, bishop of Mainz, though he had always been opposed to him during his life.

This celebrated abbot, full of virtues and merit, died the next day, 17 December 779, aged about sixty-seven. He was mourned not only by all his religious but also by all the peoples round about, to whom he had been a great help in all their needs.

He has been represented on a desert island, praying, with no other attribute than a traveller's staff. — This Saint may be represented: (1) visiting the monks gathered under his direction; (2) directing the felling of trees for the building of his abbey; (3) withdrawn in the midst of the woods with two companions.

VENERATION AND RELICS. — WRITINGS. — ABBEY OF FULDA

The reputation of this great servant of God was always preserved, and everyone regarded him as a Saint. Although his name is not observed to have appeared in the martyrologies composed after his death, people were nevertheless always so persuaded of his holiness that Pope Innocent II solemnly canonized him while holding the Lateran Council in 1139; for this purpose he sent a brief, on 19 April, to Conrad, then abbot of the monastery of Fulda, and to all his religious. It was John of Würzburg who, though long afterwards, published Pope Innocent's brief, on the last Sunday of the month of November 1439. He ordered that the feast to be kept of him should be of double rite and a holiday of obligation in the diocese and in all places dependent on the abbey of Fulda. The relics of the holy abbot were kept in the church of this monastery: when they were raised from the ground in 1613, it was noted with astonishment, from the size of the bones, that St. Sturm had been of gigantic stature.

We have from St. Sturm a collection divided into two parts. The first contains the order of the office as it was performed at Monte Cassino on the principal feasts. The second part concerns the exercises practised in the cloister. These writings are reproduced in volume LXXXIX of the Latin Patrology.

The abbey of Fulda formerly had one of the finest libraries, rich above all in precious manuscripts. A great part of these treasures perished in the Peasants' War and in the Thirty Years' War.

The abbot of Fulda was a prince of the Holy Empire, arch-chancellor of the Roman empress and primate of Germany and Gaul, to the point that he several times disputed precedence with the archbishops of Cologne and Magdeburg. He resided at Neuenhof. His jurisdiction extended to the towns of Fulda, Hammelburg, Bieberstein, Brückenau, Fürsteneck, Haselstein, Makensell, Rockenstahl, Saleck and Schildeck, as well as to the bailiwicks of Herolz, Hosenfeld, Ulmbach, Vogelsberg and Weidenau. We see from history that the abbots of this monastery exercised at various periods a great influence in the affairs of the German empire.

In 1752 Fulda was raised by the Holy See to the rank of a bishopric. In 1802, at the time of the deplorable secularization and by virtue of a singular arrangement, the prince of Orange-Nassau, who after Napoleon's fall became king of the Netherlands, received this diocese in partial compensation for the loss of the stadtholderate and of his possessions in the Low Countries. After the battle of Jena Napoleon seized Fulda and gave it a provisional administration until 1810, when he united it, except for the bailiwick of Herbstein, ceded to the grand duchy of Hesse, to the new grand duchy of Frankfurt, which fell to the prince-primate Charles de Dalberg. The Congress of Vienna of 1815 assigned it to the electorate of Hesse.

We have kept Fr. Giry's narrative, after revising and completing it.

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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SAINT WIVINA, VIRGIN, FOUNDRESS OF THE ABBEY OF BIGARDEN, IN THE DIOCESE OF MALINES

1170. — Pope: Alexander III. — King of France: Louis VII, the Young.

Solitude is the way that must first be followed to arrive at purity; it is the necessary safeguard for preserving that virtue. — *Saint Bonaventure.*

St. Wivina was of the noble house of Oisy, one of the most illustrious of Flanders before the dismemberment of Artois under the reign of Philip Augustus. Her father and mother were powerful according to the world, but they were still more commendable for their virtues. They took very particular care of their child, seeking to inspire her with piety and the fear of God rather than with the love of riches and of the world; and immediately after her birth they offered her to the Lord. At her baptism she received so great a fullness of grace that she preserved it for the rest of her life. From her earliest years the seeds of all the Christian virtues were remarked in her: she did not yet have the use of reason, and already pleasures, games and generally all the amusements of which that age is capable seemed to her worthy of contempt. She was drawn to good before she knew it, and sighed only for Jesus Christ, whom she already called her Spouse. So holy a childhood was regarded by everyone as a prodigy; it spread so good an odour through all Flanders that her praise was on every lip and she was proposed as a model to all young girls: it was foreseen from then on that she would one day be a great Saint.

After so happy a beginning, St. Wivina made new progress in virtue every day and became more and more established in it; her lights also increased in proportion. She had scarcely reached the age of fifteen when she understood all the dangers to which one is exposed in the world, and how difficult it is to live there with some agreeableness and to be flattered there without drinking in all its false maxims and departing from those which the Gospel prescribes; she dreaded nothing more, and she already groaned at being, as it were, engaged in it by her birth. Her rare beauty, which drew upon her the gaze of all the most flourishing youth of the country and of the neighbouring provinces, became suspect to her; all the other gifts of nature which were united in her with those of fortune had already seemed to her fragile and very contemptible goods, but now she began to fear them. Nothing, however, frightened her so much as that inner war which we feel within ourselves and which the Apostle calls the Law of sin: our Saint took the generous resolution of forestalling this domestic enemy and of overcoming it before being attacked by it. She therefore armed herself against her innocent flesh and afflicted it, at so tender an age, by fasts and vigils. Under her costly clothes she hid rough hair-shirts and all the other instruments of penance which could weaken her. The infirmity of her body was her whole strength, and she continued thus in the practice of severe penance for the rest of her life.

It was not enough for our Saint to live like an angel in the midst of a corrupt world; she wished also to follow the example of the holy patriarch Abraham, and to go out of her father’s house to withdraw to some place that Providence would be pleased to prepare for her. She clearly foresaw that the carrying out of this design would be very difficult: her great youth, the danger of setting out quite alone or of opening her mind to some of her companions without being discovered, the difficulty of escaping the watch of the persons charged with guarding her — all these things were so many obstacles that must have seemed insurmountable to her. She knew besides that her parents would be inconsolable and that they would make such great searches the moment she disappeared that it would be almost impossible for her to escape their diligence; but Wivina was already filled with the Spirit that had animated the holy patriarch whom she had resolved to imitate. She hoped against hope, to use the words of Scripture, and believed that God, who had inspired her with the design of withdrawing, would furnish her with all the necessary means. She had with her a holy girl who served her with great affection, who never left her, and in whom she placed all her confidence. They often talked together of the nothingness of human greatness, of the falseness of pleasures and of the dangers to which one is exposed in the world. One day she told her of the design she had conceived of withdrawing.

Enteware — that was the name of this virtuous girl — was no doubt surprised, but she did not dare contradict her mistress. She had, moreover, an inclination for retirement and penance; so she had no difficulty in making up her mind, and she promised to further her design and to accompany her.

The world, which dreaded the consequences of so generous a resolution, made use of its ordinary artifices to prevent its execution; but St. Wivina was unshakeable and as firm as a rock. A young lord of the country, called Richward, conceived so violent a love for her that day and night he thought only of the means of satisfying his brutal passion. He neglected no occasion of captivating her heart and had very advantageous proposals made to her, which her parents seemed quite disposed to accept, and this made the temptation still more violent. At last he pressed his suit himself and spoke to her in terms capable of melting the most unfeeling hearts; but all these approaches greatly displeased our Saint. She let nothing of this appear, however, and contented herself with making him understand that he was asking something impossible and that all his efforts would be useless. “I am,” she said, “the spouse of Jesus Christ; I bound myself to him from my tenderest youth, and I will have no other spouse. You cannot therefore think of me without offending him, for he is a jealous spouse.” These words were accompanied by great gentleness, though uttered with much firmness; but they were like a thunderbolt to the young lord. He withdrew without insisting further, and conceived such grief at this refusal that a few days later he fell sick almost to death. The physicians had already given him up when St. Wivina was told of his illness. She appeared deeply moved by it, and, as though she had been guilty of the disorder of his heart, she imagined herself to be the sole cause of his misfortune; she then shed a torrent of tears, fasted on bread and water, redoubled all her usual austerities, and spent several days and nights in continual prayer to obtain at least his conversion. “I hope, Lord,” she said, “that you will hear me, unworthy as I am; for you do not will the death of the sinner, but that he be converted and live.” Richward soon felt the effects of this humble and fervent prayer and in a very short time found himself out of danger. His mind was enlightened, he wept for his disorders, grace took possession of his heart and stifled the impure flames with which he had burned. He loved St. Wivina with a chaste love and made it his glory to become her disciple. For he was scarcely recovered when he followed the salutary counsel she gave him to withdraw into some solitude and there weep for his wanderings.

The danger from which our Saint had just escaped made a strange impression on her mind. She could not think without shuddering of the importunate pursuit of which she had been the object. The diabolical devices set in motion to seduce her gave her so frightful an idea of the danger to which her chastity had been exposed that she no longer dared appear before a man, dreading such attacks more than death. A light glance, an indifferent word, a needless visit — everything became suspect to her; and, without thinking of the great victories she had won on this occasion, she was occupied only with her own weakness, attributing everything to the grace of God, of which she found herself most unworthy. On the other hand, the example of him whom she had just seen within a hair’s breadth of his ruin, and his life of penance, made her reflect seriously on her own conduct, and were new motives which decided her to carry out without delay what she had long resolved. Although she was still only twenty-three, she accused herself of cowardice for having delayed so long, and imagined that she was resisting the attraction of the Holy Spirit. Unable at last to remain any longer in so violent a state, she left her father’s house and went out with Enteware, to abandon herself for the rest of her days to the care of Providence, to unite herself more intimately with her Spouse, and to serve him in perfect detachment from all earthly things.

St. Wivina and her companion stopped near a spring, whose waters have since then been very salutary for all kinds of illnesses, in a very solitary place, though not far from the city of Brussels. As this place was surrounded by woods, they built there a little hermitage of tree branches, where they remained for the space of three years, unknown and without any dealings with men; they spent the days and nights there in the almost continual exercise of prayer and penance. The place still keeps today the name of Grand-Bigard.

Our Saint would gladly have spent the rest of her days thus in obscurity; but God had other designs. So pure and austere a life was soon known in the surrounding country, and people came in crowds to her hermitage. The pious visitors were at first frightened by her extreme poverty, for she had brought from her father's house only a psalter, which was preserved in her monastery: she had no furniture, and the ground served her for a bed. She lived only on herbs and roots that she found in the woods, and drank only water that she drew from the spring of which we have already spoken. Yet under an exterior so wild in appearance some traces of her greatness were still to be seen. She had a majestic air that made her respected; her words were words of life, and she always accompanied them with so great a gentleness, even when inveighing against vice, that they always produced some effect even in the most hardened hearts. Those who came to hear her never went away without being consoled; and there were a great number of girls of every age and condition who, the first time they had seen and heard her, could not bring themselves to leave her and, without consulting their own weakness, proposed to her to follow her example.

Whatever attraction St. Wivina had for solitude and the exercise of contemplation, she bore this great concourse of people with patience, because her charity for her neighbour was without bounds. Far from repelling the girls of whom we have just spoken, she wished to profit by their good dispositions to win them to God and keep them with her. For that a monastery had to be built, and the place seemed suitable enough; but the undertaking appeared bold for a girl who had renounced everything; it was, besides, in some fashion to re-enter the world that she detested. She foresaw also that she would be obliged to leave her solitude from time to time, to go to Brussels where the court was, and to present herself to the prince to ask his consent and protection.

Enteware, whom she no longer regarded as a servant but as her own sister, encouraged her on this occasion; together they made extraordinary prayers and fasted for three days, to be the more sure of the will of God. At last the resolution was taken, and St. Wivina went out with her companion for the first time after a retirement of three whole years. They went to Brussels, to Godfrey the Bearded, count of Brabant. He had already heard of our two solitaries and was delighted to see them; he granted them the place they asked for to build a monastery, but he wished moreover to bear himself all the costs of constructing the new building; for this purpose he assigned her large revenues and allowed the Saint to make new acquisitions.

The letters of foundation having been issued, St. Wivina returned promptly to Grand-Bigard, laid the foundations of her monastery and arranged, as the work advanced, all that was needed to establish strict regular observance there. But as she greatly distrusted her own lights, she would establish nothing before consulting some person of integrity who had experience of the monastic life. The abbot of Afflighem seemed to her such a man. She obtained the count's permission to put herself under his direction and to submit her monastery to his discipline. Shortly afterwards she made profession of the Rule of St. Benedict, and all her daughters followed her example.

It seems that God wished to reward our Saint a hundredfold for having left everything to consecrate herself to his service, by placing her at the head of a holy and numerous community. This dignity, which she had not sought, brought no change in her conduct: she remained equally poor in her clothing and in her cell, equally humble and detached, equally penitent. We have already remarked that in her retreat she lived only on wild fruits or roots; she lived in much the same way as abbess. She contented herself each day with a little barley bread and drank only water; sometimes she even spent whole days without taking food. Such examples made a great impression on all the nuns; they tried to imitate her and led a life more angelic than human. Our Saint believed, however, that it was not enough for a superior to instruct those whom Providence had entrusted to her by example alone, but that she was also obliged to instruct them by her words; and this she did with great zeal, nourishing them with the truths that God has deigned to reveal to us in holy Scripture.

During the government of her community she knew so well how to arrange her time that she always found some for prayer, not to speak of what she stole from her rest; and even in the occupations that are usually

most distracting she always kept the presence of God. It is to this spirit of prayer and mental prayer that we must attribute the profound humility of this Saint; for it is in prayer that we converse with God, and that, contemplating the great perfections of that infinite Being, we are penetrated with our own nothingness and with the vanity of all that is beneath him.

St. Wivina's humility knew no bounds: she could not bear the marks of respect and deference that the most distinguished persons sometimes showed her, nor understand the blind submission that all the nuns displayed on every occasion to whatever she seemed to require of them. She had so low an opinion of herself that she never took a meal, however light, without accusing herself of gluttony and sensuality. If her body, wasted by almost continual fasts and weakened by some long labour, seemed to give way and to ask for rest, this need appeared to her cowardice; in a word, she found great motives for humiliation in her most innocent actions.

God willed to try our Saint for some time; and indeed something would have been lacking to her virtue had it not been exercised by some trial. He permitted the spirit of division to creep into her holy house, where until then charity had always reigned. She noticed estrangement and a lack of confidence in some of her daughters. They disapproved of her great austerities, saying that they were excessive, that their abbess, with all her virtue, lacked discretion; that this virtue is nevertheless the mother of the others, the mystical salt figured in Scripture by the salt required for the sacrifices; and finally that so great a fervour could not possibly last. They did not reflect that our Saint had already kept up the same manner of life for several years, that her first retreat, all she had done since, and all the other circumstances of her life from her birth had had something supernatural about them, which showed clearly that she was guided only by the inspiration of God; and finally that her docility, her distrust of herself and her profound humility were very evident proofs of it.

St. Wivina had light enough to perceive at once that all these murmurs came from the prince of darkness, who wished to trouble her and to halt all the advantages she was gaining over him every day. She warned her daughters of it with great gentleness, exhorted them to distrust themselves, and, to persuade them that it was an illusion, she said to them: "God has sustained us until now, my very dear sisters, in our holy practices; I established nothing without first taking counsel of virtuous persons experienced in the spiritual life. Let us not dwell on these evil thoughts, which make us consider what we do for our Spouse; but let us regard ourselves as unprofitable servants. The sweetness with which he never ceases to fill us every day amply repays the little sacrifices we make him. You had so much fervour at the beginning: why do you check that great zeal, and why, after being so submissive, do you abandon yourselves to murmurs unworthy of spouses of Jesus Christ? Take up again your first vigour and return to the happy state from which you have fallen." These words made some impression on the minds of the more moderate; but God willed to convince them all and to show them, by a striking miracle — changing water into wine — that he approved the conduct of his faithful servant.

St. Wivina had many other assaults of the prince of darkness to sustain, but she always triumphed over them. He was forced to admit as much, in a transport of despair, to a holy solitary whom he had thought to seduce in his cell. He added, moreover, that he had travelled over the whole earth without finding anyone so opposed to him as Wivina and her companion; that they made him desolate, and from time to time shot at him as it were sharp arrows that pierced him to the quick. One day he put out all the lamps of the church, in order to disturb at least once the holy night offices; but our Saint, according to her custom, had already anticipated the hour, and made his wicked designs useless by the efficacy of her prayer, which had the power to light a wax candle that served to relight all the others.

St. Wivina had already been abbess of the monastery she had founded for thirty-four years when it pleased God to take her from this world, to give her the reward due to her merits. She was attacked by a slow fever which wore her down little by little; and feeling at last that her final hour was approaching, she summoned all her daughters, and with an assured countenance, which seemed more cheerful than usual because she looked

upon death with the eyes of faith, she tried to console them by inspiring them with great confidence in God. She recommended to them above all to preserve great union among themselves, and that fraternal charity which is the mark of true Christians. Then, having received the last sacraments with great sentiments of devotion, she passed from this life to a happier one on 17 December 1179, at the age of seventy.

St. Wivina is represented: (1) with a church on her hand, as foundress of a church; (2) holding a book and a candle which an angel is lighting, while the devil flees.

Veneration and Relics

The precious death of St. Wivina was followed by a great number of miracles. The blind, the dumb, the deaf, the lame — in a word, persons afflicted with every kind of disease — came in crowds to her tomb and obtained their cure there. Before being buried, her body was long exposed to the veneration of the people, who flocked from all sides and even from the most distant regions; it gave off a heavenly perfume, most sweet and agreeable. St. Wivina was buried with great solemnity in the unfinished church of her monastery, beside the high altar. This building having been completed about the year 1177, Alard, bishop of Cambrai, consecrated it the same year. After the ceremony of dedication he charged the abbot of Afflighem, Arnulf, to carry out the elevation of our Saint's body on the following Sunday. The translation of these precious relics took place amid a great concourse of the faithful and was accompanied by several striking miracles, which inspired everyone with new confidence in the Saint's merits. In 1804 these precious bones were placed in the church of Notre-Dame-du-Sablon at Brussels.

St. Wivina was particularly invoked against burning fevers, swellings of the throat, plague, pleurisy, eye complaints and every kind of infirmity and illness, and also against the diseases of horses, cows and other animals. A great number of miracles have come to confirm the faithful in their belief in the powerful protection of their holy patroness. A Confraternity was erected under her invocation, with the aim of practising various works of piety and charity, of being better able to share in the merits of the Saint, and of obtaining her powerful help in sickness. Pope Urban VIII granted several indulgences to the members of this Confraternity.

Taken from a very old pamphlet printed at Brussels under the title: *La vie et les miracles de sainte Wivine*, by a nun of Bigarden.

SAINT OLYMPIAS, OR OLYMPE, OF CONSTANTINOPLE, WIDOW

(About 410.)

Olympias, one of the glories of the Church of the East, was born of an illustrious family at Constantinople about the year 368. Orphaned at a still tender age, she was entrusted to the care of Theodosia, who was a perfect model of piety and who made her ward another self. When the girl had grown up — since she was of rare beauty, had every quality of mind and heart, and possessed great wealth — she was sought by the most illustrious matches of the Empire. She was married to Nebridius, prefect of Constantinople, then steward of the estates of Theodosius the Great; but she became a widow at the end of two years.

From then on Olympias resolved to consecrate herself wholly to the Lord. In vain every means was tried, even threats and persecutions, to bring her to a second marriage; the young widow remained unshakeable. Resolved to practise the virtues recommended to widows by the Apostle, she gave herself to the exercises of prayer and penance, never eating meat and taming her flesh by rigorous and continual fasts. Modesty, candour, simplicity and gentleness shone out in all her conduct, and her charity became boundless. "Her alms," says St. Chrysostom, "were like a river open to all the world, which flowed to the ends of the earth and whose abundance enriched even the Ocean."

Yet this virtue, so pure, was, like all great virtues, subjected to hard trials. A prey to painful illnesses, she was also the target of black calumnies and infamous persecutions. “You know,” St. Chrysostom wrote to her, “the advantage of sufferings; you have therefore reason to rejoice that you have lived from your youth in afflictions, and have thus walked on a road of laurels and crowns: a single one of your many afflictions would have sufficed to fill a soul with spiritual riches.” The virtue of Olympias was the admiration of the whole Church; the holiest bishops held her in singular veneration, and several kept up a correspondence of letters with her.

One of the most dreadful tribulations for this noble and holy soul was the exile of her admirable director, of her incomparable bishop, St. Chrysostom. She was one of the last to part from the great doctor so shamefully persecuted; at the moment of his departure she had to be torn from his feet, which she was bathing with her tears.

After that, Olympias was cruelly persecuted by the agents of the empress, the hateful enemy of the courageous archbishop. Nothing could induce her to communicate with the intruded successor of her exiled pastor. Summoned before the prefect of Constantinople, condemned to a fine, banished from the city whose poor lived on her alms, she saw a great part of her goods confiscated and publicly sold, and a community of women, virgins or widows, who lived under her direction, dispersed.

Undaunted under the blows heaped upon her, Olympias submitted with incomparable gentleness to every suffering of mind, heart and body, blessing, after the example of Job and of Lazarus, the hand which from heaven was thus purifying her soul and preparing for her an immortal diadem. She was crowned with it about the year 410.

St. Olympias is represented distributing alms.

M. l’abbé Chapia: *La Vie d’une Sainte pour chaque jour de l’année.*

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[1] We have given the life of St. John of Matha at 8 February (vol. II, pages 387–400).

[2] Daughter of Blessed Pepin of Landen and of Blessed Itta, Begga (or Beggue) married Ansegisel, son of St. Arnulf, who from mayor of the palace had become bishop of Metz. Of this marriage was born Pepin of Herstal, stock of the Carolingian race. Ansegisel having been killed while hunting, Begga resolved to spend the rest of her life in retirement and the exercises of penance. On her return from a pilgrimage she had made to Rome, she built at Andenne seven chapels, to represent in some sort the seven principal churches of Rome. Near these chapels she founded a monastery of the same kind as the one which her sister St. Gertrude governed at Nivelles.

It is claimed that the Béguines of Flanders took their name from St. Begga; others believe they were so named after a holy priest called Lambert, surnamed le Bègue (the Stammerer), who commended this institute and led a great number of young women to embrace it. — Abbé Pétin; Godescard; Fr. Smet, of the Society of Jesus.

[3] See the life of St. Ignatius, patriarch of Antioch, at 1 February (vol. II, pages 160–166).

[4] Our holy abbot is patron of Bourbriac and of Saint-Briac (Ille-et-Vilaine, arrondissement of Saint-Malo, canton of Pleurtuit). His tomb is still seen in the parish church of Bourbriac, which was formerly that of his monastery. The Northmen burned this house in 878; but the relics of St. Briac were preserved. This church still possesses them: they are enclosed in a reliquary of tortoise-shell adorned with silver bands; the ecclesiastical superiors have recognized their authenticity, and every year, at various times, they are exposed for five days to the veneration of the faithful. A great number of epileptics claim the Saint’s protection to be delivered from their infirmity, and visit the church of Bourbriac on the day of the patronal feast, which is celebrated on the third Sunday of July. — Dom Lobineau and Abbé Tresvaux, *Saints de Bretagne*.

[5] Towards the end of the 9th century the body of St. Maxentiolus was taken from his monastery and translated to the abbey of Tournus (Saône-et-Loire); but when peace was concluded with the Northmen (920), the holy relics were restored to the priory of Cunault, except a few bones which were kept by the monks of Tournus.

The feast of St. Maxentiolus was formerly solemnized at Cunault with the greatest pomp. It was chiefly in public calamities that recourse was had to our Saint. In times of drought all the neighbouring parishes went in procession to the church of Saint-Maxenciole de Cunault, singing hymns in honour of the patron of the parish. The Saint’s shrine, fixed to one of the pillars of the church between the choir and the sanctuary, was then taken down, and at once the procession set out across the fields desolated by the scourge; almost always God rewarded the faith of this people by a wonder.

The venerated bones of St. Maxentiolus did not escape the sacrilegious profanations of the Huguenots (1562). Having seized the village of Cunault, these heretics pillaged the church of Notre-Dame and that of Saint-Maxenciole; but, finding the shrine of the Blessed not worthy of their avarice, they threw it into the Loire with the bones it contained; and one of them even broke one of its side

boards with a blow of an axe before giving it up to the mercy of the river. But, to the great astonishment of all, the shrine floated quietly down to the village of Trèves (Maine-et-Loire, canton of Gennes), where the religious of Cunault came in procession to take it up. Even today the shrine of the Blessed bears the mark of this impious folly. — Rev. Fr. Chamard, *Saints personnages de l'Anjou*.

[6] We have given the life of St. Gregory the Wonderworker at 17 November.

[7] See her notice at 30 December.

[8] We have sketched the notice of Blessed Delphina of Signe at 26 November, vol. XIII, page 624.

[9] See the notice of St. Eusebius of Vercelli at 15 December.

18 December

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY

At Philippi, in Macedonia, the birth into heaven of the holy martyrs Rufus and Zosimus, who were of the number of the disciples through whom the primitive Church was founded among the Jews and the Greeks. Their blessed combats are described by St. Polycarp in his Epistle to the Philippians. 107. — At Laodicea, in Syria, the martyrdom of Saints Theotimus and Basilian. — In Africa, the holy martyrs Quintus, Simplicius and some others, who suffered during the persecution of Decius and Valerian. 3rd c. — In the same place, St. Moyses, martyr. — Also in Africa, the holy martyrs Victor, Victorinus, Adjutor, Quartus and thirty others. — At Mopsuestia, in Cilicia, St. Auxentius, bishop, who, having formerly been a soldier under the emperor Licinius, preferred to give up his military insignia rather than offer grapes to Bacchus. Afterwards he was made bishop, and, having made himself commendable by his merits, he died in peace. 4th c. — At Tours, St. Gatian, first bishop of that city, who worked many miracles there and fell asleep peacefully in Our Lord. 1st c.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED

In most of the dioceses of France and Spain, the feast of the Expectation of the Delivery of Our Lady, which continues to be celebrated until Christmas. Instituted in 654. — In the dioceses of Angers, Bayeux, Le Mans and Rennes, St. Gatian, first bishop of Tours, cited in the Roman martyrology of this day. 1st c. — In the former Benedictine abbey of Sainte-Colombe-lès-Sens (founded about the year 620 by King Clotaire II), St. Flavit, priest. 630. — In the diocese of Metz, Saints Dignus, Bodagisil (Arnoald, Buèle), and Undo or Oudon (Ulto), confessors.[1] 6th c. — At Furnes, a town of Belgium (West Flanders), St. Winebald (Gombaud, Guinebaud), abbot of Heidenheim, in the Palatinate of Bavaria. 760. — In the former Benedictine abbey of Fontenelle or Saint-Wandrille, in the diocese of Rouen, St. Desiderius, monk, son of St. Waning, founder of the monastery of Fécamp (Order of St. Benedict), in the same diocese. His relics are believed to have been translated from Fontenelle to Ghent during the incursions of the Danes, and to have remained in the latter city. About 700. — At Bordeaux, Blessed Vigorosus, confessor, of the Order of St. Dominic. Before his death Our Lord appeared to him and announced that all his sins had been forgiven, not only as to the guilt but also as to the punishment. Numerous miracles came to make his tomb illustrious. 1264.

MARTYROLOGIES OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS

Martyrology of the Camaldolese Order. — The feast of the Expectation of the Delivery of the Blessed Virgin Mary. 654.

Martyrology of the Cistercian Order. — The same as among the Camaldolese.

Martyrology of the Order of Discalced of the Most Holy Trinity. — The same as among the Camaldolese.

Martyrology of the Order of Friars Preachers. — The same as among the Camaldolese.

Martyrology of the Three Orders of St. Francis. — The same as among the Camaldolese.

Martyrology of the Order of Friars Minor. — The same as among the Camaldolese.

Martyrology of the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. — The same as among the Camaldolese.

Martyrology of the Order of Hermits of St. Augustine. — The same as among the Camaldolese.

Martyrology of the Order of Capuchin Minors of St. Francis. — The same as among the Camaldolese.

Martyrology of the Order of Discalced Carmelites. — The same as among the Camaldolese.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS

In the deserts of the Thebaid, St. Paul the Simple, anchorite, whose life we gave at 7 March. 4th c. — Among the Hebrews, Judas Maccabaeus, chief and governor of the Jewish people. 161 before Jesus Christ.

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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JUDAS MACCABAEUS, CHIEF AND GOVERNOR OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

161 years before Jesus Christ. — King of Syria: Demetrius Soter.

Et de praeliis Judae narrabant omnes gentes. And all the nations told of the battles of Judas. — *1 Macc. iii, 26.*

At the time of the terrible persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes (174–164 before Jesus Christ), while faithful Israelites preferred death to apostasy (witness the seven Maccabee brothers, whose martyrdom we have described at 1 August), others sought refuge in the caves and the mountains to escape the cruelties of the tyrant. Such was Mattathias. A witness of the abominations that defiled the holy city and the temple, he withdrew to the mountains near Modin (a town of Judaea, in the tribe of Dan, between Joppa and Lydda). He was then far advanced in age and had five sons, all worthy of him: John, Simon, Judas called Maccabaeus, Eleazar and Jonathan. “Woe is me,” he cried in the transports of a holy zeal, “why was I born, and why have I lived so long, to see the ruin of my country, the oppression of my people, the overthrow of the holy city!” And then he rent his garments; his sons followed his example; they covered themselves with haircloth, condemned themselves to harsh penance, and poured out their grief in sobs.

The persecution soon reached Modin and even the caves and neighbouring mountains. Antiochus sent officers to force them to offer incense to the idols. There were cowards who consented; Mattathias and his sons were unshakeable. The envoys pressed them and promised them honours and riches; but the intrepid old man raised his voice and said to them firmly: “Though all the powers together should bow in obedience to Antiochus, and all Israel, abandoning the laws of its fathers, should prostitute itself to these detestable superstitions, my brothers, my sons and I will remain faithful to the law of our fathers.” He was finishing these words when a Jew, cowardly and faint-hearted, came forward and prepared, to the scandal of the whole town and of the assembly, to sacrifice. Mattathias saw this enormous sacrilege with horror; inflamed with the sacred zeal of the law, he struck the apostate Jew with his sword, overthrew the officer who was forcing him to sacrifice, broke the profane altar, and, running through the town, cried with a loud voice: “Children of Israel, all you who have zeal for the law and wish to stand firm in the covenant of the Lord, follow me, under the protection of the God of hosts!” And at once he withdrew with his sons to the mountains he had just left. The signal was heard; a good number who were sincerely the Lord’s followed his example and withdrew into the desert. Soon the little band grew and formed an army; Mattathias and his sons were at its head. The most dangerous enemies were brethren who had been so base as to embrace idolatry; so Mattathias, at the head of

his brave men, set out to pursue and slay those wicked apostates. Along his way he overthrew the idols, burned the profane altars, had the children circumcised who were not yet so, drove the idolaters and profaners far from the land, and restored the holy law. Thus he began the liberation of Judaea. But the zealous old man could not long withstand such great fatigues. Seeing clearly that death was approaching, he called his sons and addressed to them these memorable words, worthy of a priest of the living God, of a generous Israelite and of the best of fathers: “Now is the time of the dominion of the proud, a time of chastisement, of ruin, of indignation, of wrath. As for you, my sons, show yourselves full of zeal for our holy law; die, if need be, in its defence… Arm yourselves with invincible courage, be men of heart: the law for which you fight will be your glory, your crown.” Having spoken thus, Mattathias blessed his sons, and shortly afterwards his soul was gathered to those of his fathers. He was a hundred and forty-six years old.

Mattathias being dead, Judas was the one of his sons who took his place. He began by reforming his men; he wanted only pure soldiers, soldiers who, like himself, were upheld by unshakeable confidence in God. He was thus able to gather six thousand brave men; with this little army he prepared to fight formidable enemies, and became the terror of all the wicked. Apollonius, governor of Samaria, alarmed at his progress, assembled a large army and advanced by forced marches against Judas. Judas marched to meet him, killed him with his own hand; and his brave men, animated with new courage, made a terrible slaughter of the enemy and remained masters of a rich booty. The victorious general kept for himself the sword of Apollonius, which he afterwards used in all his battles.

Seron, another governor of Coele-Syria, hastened to repair the defeat of Apollonius: Judas rushed fearless into the midst of the enemy, his brave men imitated him, and the victory was theirs. Antiochus, learning of the successes the Jews were gaining over his troops, fell into a strange rage. He ordered a large army to be raised to crush the rebellious Jews at a single blow. He would have marched in person against this formidable enemy; but, obliged to make an expedition into Persia, he left to Lysias, a prince of the royal family, the task of carrying out his tyrannical design against the Jews. Lysias chose to lead the expedition Ptolemy, Nicanor and Gorgias, the most distinguished generals of the kingdom. But they met the same fate as those before them. The victors plundered the camp of the Syrians, where they found immense riches; and the money of the Tyrian and Sidonian merchants, who had come to buy the Jewish captives, fell into their hands. Lysias, reproaching himself for having entrusted his generals with the mission of exterminating the Jews, raised a still more formidable army; but he was beaten like his predecessors and fled to Antioch with spite and rage in his heart.

Judas seized the moment of peace that was given him to fulfil a duty very dear to his heart, that of re-establishing the worship of the true God. He gathered his brethren and said to them: “Now that our enemies are defeated, let us go up to the temple and set about purifying this holy place.” But what a sorrowful spectacle met their eyes! The holy places abandoned and deserted, the altar profaned, the gates thrown down, the court full of thorns and shrubs, the dwellings of the priests destroyed. Then they rent their garments, uttered cries of grief, covered their heads with ashes, prostrated themselves face to the ground, and the mournful sound of the trumpets was heard far and wide. Meanwhile Maccabaeus ordered the men of his army to hold in check the Syrians who were still masters of the citadel. Then he chose priests — but priests without blemish, such as the Lord wished — and at once they set about purifying the holy places. Soon incense burned on the altar, the lamps lit the sanctuary, the loaves of proposition were placed on the table, the veils were hung before the Holy of Holies, and the sacrifices prescribed by the law were offered on the new altar. All the arrangements were also made for the great ceremony that was being prepared, the Dedication. It was celebrated in the year 165 before Jesus Christ, on the very day on which, three years before, the temple had been defiled by the infamous dedication that Antiochus Epiphanes had made of it to Olympian Jupiter. This feast lasted eight days. The people were drunk with joy and could not contain the expressions of their gratitude.

The nations neighbouring Judaea saw with spite the great advantages that Judas Maccabaeus was gaining. Then began a series of battles, or rather of victories, linked together and following one another with extraordinary rapidity. Nothing could compare with the vigilance and activity of Judas: he was everywhere and faced all his enemies; he beat them and crushed them with a handful of soldiers. God is the support of the weak; he gives the victory to those who fear him.

Meanwhile Antiochus had not succeeded in his expedition. He was returning, covered with confusion, by way of Babylon to Antioch, when he learned of the rout of his generals. At this news he flew into a fury and resolved to avenge on Judas and his fellow citizens the affront he had just suffered in Persia. At once he had his chariot driven forward by forced marches. He had said in his pride that he would go to Jerusalem and make it the sepulchre of all the Jews. But behold, the hand of the Lord struck him: he was suddenly torn by cruel pains in his bowels — just punishment of the tyrant who had invented unheard-of tortures to tear the bowels of his subjects! This first blow only made him more furious. He breathed nothing but fire and flames against the Jews, and urged those who were driving him to hasten the march. In the headlong rush of his course his chariot overturned and broke; the fall was so violent that the tyrant's body was crushed and all his limbs bruised. And behold, this proud man found himself humbled to the ground, carried dying in a litter, presenting to all a striking testimony of the power of God, which was manifest in this chastisement. From the sores of the half-rotten body of this impious man came forth a multitude of worms, and the flesh of this living corpse fell away in shreds, consumed by the excess of the disease; so fetid an odour rose from it that his whole army was infected by it. This impious man died, a horror to his friends, an object of execration to his soldiers, hated by all good men and detested even by the wicked.

At the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, his son Antiochus Eupator was proclaimed king through the efforts of the governor Lysias. The new king continued to persecute the people of God. Timothy, already beaten several times, entered Judaea with a considerable army. The Jewish general awaited him resolutely. As was his custom, before the battle he had recourse to prayer: he led his brave men to the temple; then all put on their armour and marched far from the city to meet the enemy. Arriving in its presence, they took a little rest until sunrise. Then they came to blows; the fight was stubborn, and the victory seemed to lean to neither side. But suddenly there appeared, in the sight of the enemy, five men coming from heaven, of menacing aspect; they were mounted on horses richly caparisoned and all shining with gold. These heavenly horsemen put themselves at the head of the Jewish battalions and seemed to serve as their guides. Two of them rode at the sides of Maccabaeus, protecting him with their arms and defending him from the enemy's darts; and all five hurled flaming darts against the Syrians, which fell on them like lightning, blinding some, burning others, and spreading confusion and disorder everywhere. Twenty thousand enemy soldiers were left on the field, besides six hundred horsemen. Timothy fled to Gazara, among the Philistines. He was slain there in a cistern where he had hidden.

After Timothy came Lysias himself, with a still more formidable army: eighty thousand men, not counting a numerous cavalry and more than eighty elephants. Heaven visibly protected Judas, as in the preceding battle, and the Syrians were routed. Lysias asked for peace; unhappily it was not of long duration.

Judas was then obliged to fight a host of battles against the governors of the neighbouring countries, who harassed him. Then he attempted to take the citadel of Jerusalem, still in the power of the Syrians. At this news Eupator assembled a formidable army: a hundred thousand foot, twenty thousand horse, besides thirty-two elephants trained for battle and three hundred chariots armed with scythes. The king put himself at the head of the army. Then Judas abandoned the siege of the fortress, assembled the people and ordered prayers. Then, gathering his soldiers, he exhorted them to fight to the death, giving them as their war-cry: *The victory of God!* On the very first night he chose the bravest of his army and fell with them upon the king's quarters. Four thousand Syrians perished in this first action, and the largest of the elephants was killed. Judas had wished to throw the enemy army into confusion and terror; he succeeded beyond his hopes.

The next day the enemy prepared for a general engagement. The trumpets sounded; the elephants were shown the juice of grapes and mulberries to rouse them for battle. Each animal carried a great wooden tower, firmly fastened; in each were thirty of the most valiant men, who shot from it a hail of arrows, and an Indian drove the beast. All the inhabitants of the surrounding country were terrified at the sight of this countless multitude of men, horses and elephants, under whose feet the earth trembled. Judas boldly attacked this frightful army in the plains of Bethsura (tribe of Judah). He threw himself on his enemies like a furious lion and at once put a great number of them out of the fight. The battle was continuing fiercely when a brave soldier named Eleazar made himself famous by a daring exploit, a self-sacrifice and a courage truly heroic. This intrepid man, seeing an elephant larger than the others and magnificently adorned, believed that it carried King Antiochus. Instantly he made the sacrifice of his life, set off sword in hand, killing right and left everything that stood in his way, reached the magnificent animal through a hail of arrows and darts, slipped under its belly and pierced it with great sword-strokes. The elephant fell, and in its fall crushed those it carried, together with the generous Israelite. In spite of this prodigy of valour, Judas and his men, exhausted with fatigue and unable to hold out any longer against so formidable an army, decided to withdraw into Jerusalem. Eupator came to besiege them there; the city could not hold out long. Judas withdrew into the temple, where he was courageously resisting the efforts of the besiegers, when suddenly Eupator learned that a certain Philip had seized Antioch. This decided him to set out again for his capital; he made peace, embraced Judas, recognized him as chief and prince of the Jewish nation, and, pleased with his negotiation, left Jerusalem.

Meanwhile Alcimus, raised to the office of high priest by Antiochus but rejected by the people because of his impiety, went to Demetrius Soter, who had just succeeded Eupator, impudently slandered Judas and his family, and contrived so well that Demetrius sent one of his generals against him. When that general failed, the famous Nicanor took his place and took the field with a large army. This general, knowing the courage and valour of Judas, instead of trying the fortune of arms asked for peace and obtained it. These two great men lived together on terms of close familiarity; but Alcimus, jealous of this good understanding, set out for Syria and began his criminal invectives again. The king, exasperated, wrote to his general, blamed his conduct severely and enjoined him to seize Maccabaeus as soon as possible and send him prisoner to Antioch. Nicanor was dismayed; but, self-interest prevailing over friendship and justice, he thought only of carrying out the king’s orders. Judas had forestalled him and fled to Samaria. The Syrian, in despair at having missed his prey, went up to the temple, where the priests were at that moment busy offering sacrifices. “If you do not deliver Judas to me in chains,” he said to them, stretching out his hand against the temple and uttering execrable oaths, “I will destroy this building to its foundations, I will overthrow its altar, and here shall stand a temple dedicated to Bacchus.” After these blasphemies he withdrew; and the priests, terrified, raised their hands to heaven, imploring the help of the Protector of the nation. Meanwhile the blasphemer was assembling his troops and advancing against Judas. Judas had only three thousand men to oppose to him; but, strengthened by the help of God, he did not draw back. The battle took place; it was terrible. At last this handful of brave men, strengthened by a wholly divine power, overthrew their enemies and killed thirty-five thousand of them.

When, after the battle, the heroic warriors of Judas were returning, congratulating one another on the victory, they recognized among the dead the enemy general, clad in his armour. Then a great cry rose throughout the army, mingled with confused applause, and all, as if by agreement, began to sing the praises of God in the Hebrew tongue. Judas had the blasphemer’s head cut off, and his right hand also, and on reaching Jerusalem he showed them to all the people, recounting the wonders God had worked on their behalf. He had the head hung from the top of the fortress; and the hand which the blasphemer had stretched out so insolently against the dwelling of the Almighty was fastened opposite the temple. As for the tongue, instrument of blasphemy, it was cut into small pieces and given as food to the birds. Thus was the Lord avenged and his glory fully repaired.

Meanwhile Demetrius, angered at the defeat of his general, sent Bacchides and Alcimus at the head of numerous troops to invade Judaea. Judas had with him only three thousand warriors: he counted on these intrepid men, on these men who had just exterminated Nicanor and his formidable army. But God had designs whose depths we are not permitted to sound. At the sight of the enemy army these warriors lost confidence; fear seized their hearts; they basely abandoned their post, leaving their general at the enemy's mercy with only eight hundred men. Judas almost fell into discouragement; but soon the general reappeared, whole and greater than ever. "Come, my brothers," he said to those who had remained faithful to him, "let us march against the enemy and fight them." And as they hesitated: "God keep us from fleeing before them," cried the intrepid general; "but the moment has come: let us die bravely for our brethren and not tarnish our glory." He spoke, and with his men he hurled himself on the enemy, broke the right wing and put it to flight; but, surrounded by the left wing, he fell after a bloody and stubborn struggle. Jonathan and Simon, both brothers of the general, took up his body and carried it to Modin, where he was buried with magnificence in the tomb of his fathers. At the news of this death all Israel was in great mourning. "How is the mighty man fallen," they said with tears, "the great-hearted warrior who led to victory, who saved the people of Israel!"

Merveilles de l'histoire du peuple de Dieu (Régis Ruffet, 1866).

Mgr Paul Guérin, Les Petits Bollandistes (7th ed.) — English translation (draft)

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SAINT GATIAN, FIRST BISHOP OF TOURS

1st century.

Huc ades monstris scelerum fugandis, Praesul, o nostras miseratus oras; Qui prior Christo nova templa condis Et struis aras.

Happy land of Tours! Gatian was moved by your misfortunes; his feet trod your soil, and error sank into the shadows, while the God of truth saw temples built and altars raised to him. — *Proper of Tours.*

St. Gatian, a disciple of the Apostles and first bishop of Tours, was sent to that city at the same time as St. Trophimus to Arles, St. Martial to Limoges, St. Saturninus to Toulouse, St. Paul to Narbonne, St. Austremonius to Auvergne and St. Denis to Paris. The world was still plunged in the darkness of idolatry, for it was only a short time since Jesus Christ had ascended into heaven. Gatian found the inhabitants of his city of Tours given to every kind of superstition: to the divinities of their homeland they had added the gods of mighty Rome, whose rule they endured. No sooner had he recognized the depth of the darkness in which these poor idolaters were plunged than he sought effective means of drawing them out of it. He began with very familiar Gospel lessons, in which he made them clearly understand the vanity of idols, the impossibility of a plurality of gods, and the falseness of the superstitious worship they paid to the divinities they were obliged to adore. Having thus dispelled the errors of paganism, done away with all the vain ceremonies of the country and destroyed in their minds all the false ideas they had conceived about the gods of the empire, he set before them the lights of the Gospel faith, announced to them the true God, and proved to them his unity and truth. He then led them down into the knowledge of the three Persons of the Holy Trinity; he made them understand the necessity of the mystery of the Incarnation and the coming of Jesus Christ on earth; he spoke to them of the Saviour's second coming as judge, who would one day reward the merit of those who had done well during their life and condemn to eternal punishment those who had done evil. At the same time he accustomed them to the worship of the true God, wisely substituting Gospel practices and exercises for the superstitious ceremonies to which they were attached.

It would be difficult to explain here in how many ways the most stubborn of the country opposed the designs of our zealous missionary, whether by interrupting his instructions, by denouncing him to the magistrates, or

by ill-treating him and threatening to put him to death. So this prudent Apostle, following the counsel of Jesus Christ, would go and hide in a grotto hollowed with his own hands in the rocks that line the northern bank of the Loire, where the illustrious abbey of Marmoutier later arose. Surrounded by brushwood and brambles, this place was difficult of access, and the Apostle could easily escape there from the hatred of the pagans and gather his few neophytes. Even now the pious pilgrim can visit this grotto, almost in ruins, which was the cradle of Christianity in Touraine. St. Gatian had dedicated this little oratory to the Virgin Mary, Mother of God. The history of his life assures us, too, that at the times when he was forced to withdraw into caves and distant forests, he was nevertheless followed by a great number of his disciples, and even returned on certain days to the towns and villages to sustain the faith of the new Christians, repeat to them the truths he had announced and confirm them in their belief.

Having to do with very rude men, little capable of penetrating truths as lofty as those of the Gospel and as attached to the worship of idols as they were, it would have been very difficult and almost impossible for the holy Prelate to bring his holy undertakings to completion had he not been favoured with special help. But two things wonderfully sustained his work: his life, more angelic than human, and a great number of miraculous prodigies that accompanied his preaching. The holiness of his conduct, the harshness with which he treated his body, his fasts, his vigils, his continual prayer, his disinterestedness, his extreme kindness, his prudence in all he undertook, his patience in bearing insults, calumnies and threats, his profound humility — all virtues hitherto unknown to these peoples — this combination of so many perfections led these minds to recognize that there was something extraordinary in this man, of which they had never yet seen an example. So, although the holy bishop was deprived at the beginning of the consolation of seeing great fruits of his mission, the precious seed he had sown nevertheless went on to yield a very abundant harvest, which he had the joy of gathering. Two of the most obstinate found themselves compelled to yield and to approve in our holy apostle a way of life and a doctrine that could not be rejected; and the first disciples already won, who no longer left our Saint but followed and accompanied him in his retreats, his journeys and the other exercises of his missions, afterwards reported to their hardened fellow countrymen the whole ordering of the holy life of him whom they acknowledged as their master, and so completed the conviction of these stubborn men and opened their eyes to see the light that was offered them.

To the power of the divine word Gatian added that of miracles; and it was chiefly the extraordinary works he performed that astonished and checked those who contributed most to the persecution directed against the new faithful. Indeed, there was no illness to which he did not bring some cure, and no demons over which he did not make himself master and which he did not drive out by exorcisms. The mere sign of the cross was the most usual and most powerful means he used on these occasions. This sovereign dominion, which St. Gatian exercised so easily over the powers of hell, compelled the most incredulous to confess that the religion of one who had so great an authority was the true one, which must be followed. It was then, therefore, that the persecution slackened, that conversions became more frequent, that the worship of idols was neglected, that the pagan ceremonies were despised and the altars abandoned and demolished. The esteem and authority the holy prelate had acquired at length prevailed so far in the minds of most men that there was freedom to erect other altars and little oratories where those who had embraced the faith could assemble. In the surrounding villages, as in the city of Tours, suitable places, which were called little churches, were built for the exercise of the functions of the true religion: as many as eight are counted. It was in these holy places, consecrated by the prayers of our famous missionary and by the continual exhortations he gave there, that those who had embraced the faith of Jesus Christ were formed in Christian practices and ceremonies, and were given the instructions, counsels and means necessary to persevere in the confession of the true religion. There they learned to sing the praises of the true God; there clerics were trained to be raised to the dignities of the Church; there priests were ordained to uphold the glory of the priesthood and exercise the ecclesiastical functions; there the sacraments were administered, and there the faithful assembled at least on Sunday to receive the nourishment necessary for the new state they had had the happiness to embrace.

It must be added here that St. Gatian, from whose vigilance nothing escaped, had the foresight to have a cemetery made outside the city, in which care was taken to bury the faithful who had died, all the more because the edicts of the emperors then forbade Christians to bury their dead within the walls of the city.

At length our holy prelate, having gloriously fulfilled all the duties of his mission, being of a very advanced age, weighed down by the burden of Gospel labours, having provided for all the pressing needs of the churches he had founded, and having no more desires except for heaven, felt with happiness the approach of the moment of rest and the hour of reward. One day the holy apostle, overcome with fatigue and old age, was lying on his bed; a light sleep had just come over him when Jesus Christ, appearing to him, woke him and himself presented to him his body as viaticum, to strengthen him at that supreme moment when he was about to leave this life. Illness followed close upon this divine visit, and made such rapid progress that seven days later, on the fifteenth of the calends of January [18 December], Gatian was in heaven.

St. Gatian is represented: (1) celebrating Mass or the office in a kind of grotto (he was indeed the first to raise altars to the true God and to found Christian oratories in Touraine); (2) gathering the faithful in underground places because of the persecution; (3) in a group with the first apostles of the Gauls: St. Trophimus of Arles, St. Paul of Narbonne, St. Saturninus of Toulouse, St. Denis of Paris, St. Austremonius of Auvergne, St. Martial of Limoges.

Veneration and Relics

St. Gatian was buried outside the city, in the cemetery of the poor, on the spot where there later arose the church of Notre-Dame-la-Pauvre, which, proud and happy to possess such a treasure, was afterwards called by the faithful people Notre-Dame-la-Riche.

Many years having passed, and the see having remained vacant for a long time after the death of blessed Gatian, the people had forgotten the place of his burial. St. Martin learned it by a special revelation, and he then had the body of the holy bishop carried into his principal church amid an immense concourse of people. Animated by great devotion to his illustrious predecessor, he often went to pray to him; he never left his episcopal city, nor ever re-entered it, without prostrating himself before his tomb. Now one day he came there as usual and prayed with many tears; then, before withdrawing, he said to the most glorious St. Gatian: “Man of God, bless me.” And at once a voice came from the tomb, and these words were distinctly heard: “Servant of God, I pray you, bless me.”

Another translation of the Saint’s relics took place when the Northmen fell upon France and caused extraordinary devastation there, ruining the towns and burning the churches and other sacred places where they knew there were bodies of holy martyrs or confessors deposited. For fear, then, that the body of St. Gatian might be involved in these ruins, the shrine was taken out of the great church and carried first to Maillezais (Vendée), in Poitou, and from there into Gallia Belgica, as far as Béthune (Pas-de-Calais), to the monastery of Saint-Prix.

Finally this precious deposit was entrusted to the religious of the monastery of Saint-Vaast in the city of Arras, where it remained until all the disasters of war were ended by the conversion of the Northmen to the faith of Jesus Christ. At that time these precious remains were restored to the city of Tours, to which they belonged, some part however being left to the religious of Saint-Vaast in gratitude for the care they had taken to guard this rich treasure. The history of this translation records that other places too were favoured with some particles of these holy relics, because they had also been kept in those places through which they had passed: which allows us to reconcile the various churches that glory in possessing the holy deposit of which we speak, by saying that several different places have some particles of it. The feast of the translation of the relics of this holy apostle is kept on the second day of May. It was an archbishop of Tours named Juhel de Mathefelon who instituted it in the 13th century, as the continuators of Bollandus remark in the first volume for May, where they seem to suppose that some translation of lesser solemnity was already being celebrated;

this may have been the feast of the translation of our Saint's body made by St. Martin when he took it from the cemetery of the poor to give it a place in the great church.

Devotion of the people to St. Gatian increasing day by day, it was judged fitting in the year 1354 to erect a Confraternity, together with a foundation carrying the obligation of celebrating every day of the year a Mass in honour of the Saint and for all those who have the advantage of belonging to this Congregation. It would not be easy to relate here in detail all the help that has been received by invoking this illustrious apostle of Touraine, nor the miracles worked to raise and increase the glory of this incomparable servant of God. King John having been taken captive, the queen his mother made a vow to obtain her son's freedom and took St. Gatian as her advocate with God in this matter; she was not disappointed in her expectation, for the king recovered his freedom shortly afterwards, which led this illustrious princess to proclaim everywhere that she owed this grace to St. Gatian, in whom she had placed all her confidence. Under the reign of Charles VI, when the English were besieging the city of Tours very closely, the inhabitants made a vow and prayers at the tomb of their holy apostle and protector to be delivered from the sad plight to which this siege had reduced them; they too were heard at once and delivered by means of an honourable peace, concluded soon afterwards between the besiegers and the citizens.

The relics of St. Gatian, apostle of Touraine, had in part escaped the sacrilegious fury of the Huguenots, who committed so many excesses at Tours in 1562. These precious fragments perished during the Revolution of 1793. The metropolitan church nevertheless possesses rather considerable particles of them, given to it in 1827 by the church of Saint-Vaast at Arras, at the request of Mgr Augustin-Louis de Montblanc, archbishop of Tours.

St. Gatian is especially invoked for the speedy recovery of things lost or stolen. The feast of our Saint is marked on 18 December in the martyrologies of Ado and Usuard, as in that of France.

We have taken this life from the lessons of the new Breviary of Tours and from other memoirs of the same church that were communicated to us. — Cf. *Dissertation sur l'époque de l'apostolat de saint Gatien, premier évêque de Tours, et sur les Origines des Églises de France*, by Abbé Rolland.

SAINT FLAVIT, OR FLAIVE, PRIEST, ANCHORITE IN CHAMPAGNE

630. — Pope: Honorius I. — King of France: Dagobert I.

Condescension is the daughter of charity. We must condescend in everything, but only as far as the altar — that is, to the point where God is not offended: those are the bounds of condescension. — St. Francis de Sales.

Flavit was from Italy and of a family of standing according to the world. During an incursion of the Lombards, about the year 568, he was taken prisoner by raiders and brought into Champagne, one of the finest provinces of France, where he was sold as a slave. A gentleman of Champagne named Montan bought him for the sum of thirty deniers and took him to his castle in the village of Marcilly-le-Hayer, near Troyes. Flavit soon won his master's heart. Young and handsome, gentle and affable, witty and modest, he commanded esteem and respect without seeking it. So Montan, no longer regarding him as his slave, gave him the military habit with the right to wear the sword, and made him his steward and the keeper of his castle.

Flavit showed himself worthy of the trust placed in him. Never was a servant more docile or more faithful, never was a friend more devoted than Flavit was to the man whom Providence had made his lord. The reason was that above all he had the fear of God, the Master of masters; that, a perfect Christian, he applied himself to cultivating every virtue in himself.

This desire for perfection made him triumph over a dangerous temptation. Captivated by his outward charms, Montan's wife wished to draw him into evil. But he resisted courageously, and, seeing that she did not cease to press him, he imitated the prudence of the holy young man Joseph, leaving her room at once and leaving her in vexation and rage at having failed in a criminal design.

While he was giving God a thousand thanks for having delivered him from so great a danger, this wicked woman, angered against him, accused him to her husband of having tried to violate her. Montan believed her very lightly; for, without examining further the truth of this accusation — against which the blessed slave did not think fit to defend himself, so as not to dishonour his mistress nor set division between her and her husband — he took from him the office he had given him, with all the military insignia, and condemned him to the vilest labours. Flavit bore this affront with patience, consoling himself with the good testimony of his conscience, which reproached him with nothing; and, far from taking revenge on his master, who treated him so unjustly, he strove to make his property prosper and to increase his flocks by the care he brought to everything belonging to his charge. Moreover, finding himself withdrawn into the fields, he applied himself more assiduously to prayer and to meditation on divine truths; and as charity toward the poor is inseparable from the love of God, poor as he himself was, he shared with beggars the little that was given him for his keep. Often too, when he had nothing to give them, he lent them his arms to carry wood from the forest for them, or to do them a thousand other good offices.

Montan soon noticed that his flocks were multiplying in a prodigious manner in the hands of so faithful a shepherd, and this servant's edifying conduct raised serious doubts in his mind about his wife's complaints. Having recognized Flavit's innocence, he made amends for his wrongs, gave him his freedom and put him at the head of his other servants. To attach him entirely to his service and take from him any thought of returning to his own country, he compelled him to marry, and had him wed a wise and virtuous young woman named Apronia. Flavit, who had consecrated himself for ever to Jesus Christ with the resolve to keep his body chaste and his soul far from every sensual desire, married her only under constraint, and with the confidence, founded on God's help, that he would persuade her to live with him only as a sister with her brother. And in fact he did persuade her. Their exercises, besides the necessary labours of their condition, were to fast, to keep vigil, to pray, to console the afflicted, to correct sinners and to help the poor with the little goods God had given them. Flavit, to do so more abundantly, cleared a spot in the forest where he pastured his flocks, ploughed it and sowed it, intending to distribute to the needy whatever he might gather at harvest. Some envious persons reported this to his master, and so decried this act of charity to him that they persuaded him that his servant was helping himself to his property as he pleased and disposing of it at his whim. He therefore came to him in anger, reproached him for his prodigality, told him he was on the way to ruining him, and demanded an account of the flocks he had entrusted to him. Then the Saint, without a word in reply but calling on God in the depth of his heart, gave two or three blasts on his horn, and at that very hour so great a number of beasts — cattle, sheep, ewes, goats and lambs — were seen running up from every side that the master, astonished to find himself so rich without knowing it, begged his pardon for having believed his slanderers so easily, and asked him to take for himself from the flocks whatever he pleased. Flavit humbly thanked him for his kindness and contented himself with taking one sheep, to sell it and give the price to the church of Saint-Étienne at Sens.

This was not the only persecution he suffered at his master's hands. Once more this over-credulous man let himself be so stirred up by the suggestions of his wife, who hated the Saint, that he left his house in a fury and went to the forest intending to beat him. As he was already raising his hand and his stick to strike him, God showed that he was the protector and just avenger of the innocent; for at that moment Montan fell from his horse and was gravely injured. The Saint hastened to lift him up; but as the loss of blood caused Montan a burning thirst, Flavit, inspired by the Holy Spirit, struck the ground with his staff, and at once a spring of living water gushed forth, which restored Montan to health. This miraculous fountain still exists today in the

woods of Marcilly, near Chanteloup, under the name of the Fountain of Abundance. Until the 18th century there was a chapel on this very spot, and the inhabitants of the neighbouring districts still come on pilgrimage to fetch water from the fountain of St. Flavit to be cured of fever. Now only the ruins of the oratory are to be seen; a cross has been planted where the altar stood — a mark of gratitude from an inhabitant of Villemaur, miraculously cured of a very grave illness.

This prodigy made Montan understand what injustices his excessive credulity had led him to commit. He wished to repair his fault, and offered Flavit, together with the deed of his freedom signed with his own hand, as much property as he might wish to possess. But Flavit, distrustful of riches, accepted only his freedom and a plot of ground large enough to build a cell on the banks of the stream he had so marvellously brought forth from the soil.

From then on he resolved to lead a more perfect life. Wishing to embrace the ecclesiastical state, he advised his wife to consecrate her virginity to God and to withdraw into a monastery. Apronia, who in her husband's company had made great spiritual progress, welcomed this counsel, and both went to Sens, to St. Lupus (Loup), who gave the veil to Apronia, raised Flavit to the honour of the priesthood, and then sent him back to the hermitage he had built for himself, intending to end his days there.

The wholly angelic life of the devout priest was the admiration of those who witnessed it. To the fasts, the mortifications and the continual prayers that had until then filled his time, he added the reading of the sacred books and the instruction of the people. People came to him from the most distant parts to hear his word, and above all to be cured of illnesses of every kind; and God showed the holiness of his servant before the eyes of all by granting him to work countless miracles. He raised several dead persons to life, among them the son of King Clothaire, cleansed lepers, made the lame walk and restored health to every kind of sick person. At last, full of days and merits, he died on 18 December 630, under the episcopate of Ragnegisil, seventeenth bishop of Troyes.

Veneration and Relics

The body of St. Flavit was first buried in his oratory at Marcilly, then transferred later to the monastery of Sainte-Colombe-lès-Sens and to the Benedictine priory of Villemaur, which was built in the 8th century and bore the name of Saint-Flavit.

We know of no translation of this Saint's relics before the 14th century. The first took place on 6 July 1359: some particles of St. Flavit's body were carried to Troyes and placed in the same shrine as the relics of St. Lupus, bishop, under the rule of Jean Chailley, eighteenth abbot of Saint-Loup. Nearly a hundred years later a terrible fire consumed almost the whole church of Villemaur and a great part of the district. The bones of the Saint that had been rescued from the fury of the flames were then gathered with great care and enclosed in a wooden shrine on 1 July 1450. This reliquary, in the form of a Gothic chapel, is very remarkable: it bears the date 1420, and in the compartments of its two faces presents the various episodes of the life of St. Flavit.

On 29 December 1628 Pierre de Marcq, prior of Villemaur, solemnly opened this shrine and found in it "several bones wrapped in a linen cloth and in a piece of rose-coloured taffeta, with a certificate attesting that these bones are indeed those of St. Flavit".

Twelve years later, on 4 May 1640, Mgr René de Breslay, eighty-third bishop of Troyes, wishing to satisfy the devout desires of the Carmelite nuns recently established in his episcopal city, took three bones from the shrine — "namely two from the head and one from the arm" — and gave them to these religious, permitting them to keep the feast of their translation on 17 December. It is to be believed, however, that this bishop kept something of them in the treasury of his see, for in 1650, on 11 September, Mgr Malier du Houssay, his successor, consecrating three altars in the church of Charmont, placed relics of St. Flavit in one of them,

together with those of St. Stephen, St. Urban and St. Sebastian.

In the following century, as it was feared that the ancient shrine would fall to pieces with age, a new one was made, also of wood, and on 29 May 1718 the precious relics were placed in it “without taking anything away from them”.

It is in this last shrine that the remains of St. Flavit still lie. As for the one dating from the 14th century, it too is to be seen at Villemaur; but it has been stripped of its finest ornament.

The story of St. Flavit is on every tongue at Marcilly-le-Hayer, whereas it is almost unknown in the village that bears his name, of which the Saint is now only the secondary patron. Despite the indifference of our age, the inhabitants of Marcilly and its neighbourhood have kept great confidence in their holy patron, and several times they have received its reward. We borrow from the *Life of St. Flavit* by M. Lorey, former parish priest of Marcilly, a fact which he says is attested by the oldest people of the district, who witnessed it:

“A man named Laurin, a landowner at Le Mothois, a hamlet of Marcilly, had long lost the use of his legs and could move only with the help of two crutches. One day it came into his mind that he who had raised the son of Clothaire to life would surely restore to him too the use of his limbs if he went to wash in the Fountain of Abundance. He set out, invoking St. Flavit with all the zeal a sick man can put into asking health of one who has the power to give it, or at least to obtain it. He dragged himself along as best he could; no doubt he was long on the road; but scarcely had he plunged into the water, scarcely had he finished his prayer, when the movement of his legs returned and he was able to go home without crutches. In memory of this miraculous cure, which he attributed to the protection of St. Flavit, he hung his crutches on a tree that shaded the fountain. They stayed there until age brought them down piece by piece.”

Villemaur has kept the memory of St. Flavit only by a cross set up in the middle of the woods on the road to Planty, near which is a large stone called the Stone of the Ten Fingers: the inhabitants are convinced that its marks are the prints of St. Flavit’s fingers.

The feast of this Saint is fixed on 16 December in the martyrologies of Saint-Loup, Montier-la-Celle and Sainte-Colombe; but it is celebrated on the 18th at Marcilly and at Saint-Flavit. The translation is solemnized on the Sunday within the Octave of the Ascension.

To compose this biography we have used the *Vie des Saints du diocèse de Troyes* by the Abbé Defer.

FEAST OF THE EXPECTATION OF THE DELIVERY OF OUR LADY

Instituted in 654. — Pope: St. Eugene I. — King of France: Clovis II.

Ipse erit expectatio gentium. — The nations will wait with longing for their deliverer. — Genesis xlix, 10.

This feast was established on this day by the Tenth Council of Toledo, held in 654 in the time of King Recceswinth and of St. Eugene III, bishop of that see, in honour of the Annunciation of Our Lady and of the mystery of the Incarnation of the divine Word: because the 25th of March, on which these mysteries were accomplished, usually falls in Lent or in the Easter solemnity, when the Church is taken up with other ceremonies, they could not be celebrated with all the attention due to them. So the Council speaks in a decree reported by García de Loaysa, Ambrosio de Morales, Francisco Padilla and Juan Tamayo Salazar in his martyrology of the Saints of Spain. St. Ildephonsus, Eugene’s successor, confirmed this institution and ordered that the feast should be called the Expectation of the Delivery of Our Lady, because it was to be kept eight days before her adorable childbearing. It has become very celebrated in all the churches of Spain, and it has also been given the name of Our Lady of the O, because it is on this day, at first Vespers, that the singing begins of those celebrated antiphons called the O’s, which invite the eternal Wisdom to come upon earth and deliver the human race, lost and ruined by sin.

For the rest, one may say that the birth of the divine Word is a feast of all the ages, and that it is as old as the fall of the first man; for scarcely had he fallen when God said to the serpent in his presence: “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel”; and this word, spoken by the mouth of Him who is called the True and the Faithful, was the first assurance of our reconciliation. From that moment the Patriarchs and the holy Fathers did nothing but wait for, hope for, ask for and foretell the coming of the Saviour who was to procure us so great a benefit. With this all the Scriptures of the Old Testament are filled; this is why the Messiah is called now the Desired of all nations, now the Desire of the everlasting hills. This is why Our Lord said to his disciples, in St. Luke, chapter x: “Blessed are the eyes that see the things which you see; for many kings and many prophets have desired to see them, and have not seen them.” And elsewhere he assured the Jews that Abraham had had a holy eagerness to see the day of his coming, that he had seen it in spirit and had rejoiced exceedingly.

In this blessed expectation and noble hope, Jacob, giving his blessing to his children, foretold that the sceptre would not depart from the line of Judah, nor sovereignty from his family, until he who was to be sent should indeed come; and he then added: “I will look for thy salvation, O Lord.” With the same view, when God wished to send Moses to deliver the people of Israel and give them the law, that humble lawgiver answered him: “I beseech thee, Lord, send him whom thou wilt send.” The Prophet-King says with a like eagerness: “Lord, stir up thy might and come to save us; show thy face and we shall be saved. As the hart panteth after the fountains of water, so my soul panteth after thee, O God!” Solomon his son, speaking of the eternal Wisdom that was to give itself in this mystery, makes this prayer about it to the eternal Father: “Send her, Lord, I pray thee, out of thy holy heavens and from the throne of thy majesty, that she may be with me and may labour with me.” And Tobias the elder, on his deathbed, where he gave prophetic instructions to his son and spoke only in oracles, cried out with admirable tenderness: “My soul, bless the Lord, because the Lord our God hath delivered Jerusalem his city from all her troubles. Happy shall I be if there remain of my seed to see the glory of Jerusalem.”

Those whom we call more particularly the prophets showed no less eagerness. “Send forth,” says Isaiah, “send forth the lamb, the ruler of the earth. Drop down dew, ye heavens, from above, and let the clouds rain the just; let the earth be opened and bud forth a Saviour! O God, that thou wouldst rend the heavens and come down at once! that the mountains would melt away at thy presence!” Jeremiah is of the same mind. “A king,” he says, “shall reign, and shall be wise, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth; and this is the name that they shall call him: the Lord our just one. He is my portion and my inheritance; therefore will I wait for him.” All the other Prophets have like transports of ecstasy, above all the divine Daniel, who for this deserved to be called the man of desires: *Vir desideriorum*. After the captivity of Babylon prophecy seemed extinct among the Jews, but good men did not cease to sigh continually for the Messiah. Witness the young Maccabees with their holy mother; the just Simeon, who was waiting for the redemption of Israel; Anna the prophetess, who departed not from the temple and passed her days and nights there in almost continual fasting and prayer; St. Joachim and St. Anne, father and mother of the glorious Virgin; and Zachary with Elizabeth, the parents of St. John the Baptist.

But if all the Saints of the Old Testament desired the birth of the Saviour of the world with ardour and eagerness, what must have been the longings of her whom he had chosen to be his mother — who knew better than any other the need the human race had of him, the infinite excellence of his person and the incomparable fruits he was to bring forth on earth, and whose faith and charity incomparably surpassed those of an Abraham, a Moses, a David, an Isaiah, a Jeremiah and all the other Prophets? Truly her desire was so great that we have no words to express its merit; but no one can conceive what her joy was when she saw that at last her longings, and those of all the angels and all men, were fulfilled — and fulfilled in her and through her, since she was about to bring into the world the hope of all nations, him on whom heaven and earth fixed their eyes as on their deliverer.

These great things are the object of today's feast. They will be found treated at greater length in Louis of Granada, Luis de la Puente and the other books of devotion. What we have said suffices to stir up the fervour of Christians at this feast and to bind them to enter into the designs of the Church when she sings with such solemnity the antiphons at Vespers, which are so many burning arrows and flaming desires that she sends up toward heaven to draw down from it life and eternal light.

This article is by Father Giry.

SAINT WINEBALD, ABBOT OF HEIDENHEIM, IN THE PALATINATE OF BAVARIA

(About 760.)

St. Winebald[1] was the son of Richard, an Anglo-Saxon prince, and the brother of St. Willibald and St. Walburga. The father, wishing to make a pilgrimage to Rome, took his two sons with him; but he died at Lucca about the year 722 and was buried in the church of San Frediano. Winebald and Willibald continued their journey. The second, after spending some time in Rome, undertook the journey to the Holy Land. The first, who was of weak constitution, stayed in that city, where he studied for seven years. He then received the clerical tonsure and consecrated himself wholly to the service of God. Having returned to England, he persuaded several of his relatives and friends to accompany him on a second pilgrimage which he made to Rome. When they had arrived in that city, they embraced the religious state there.

St. Boniface, a kinsman of St. Winebald, came to Rome in 728. He persuaded our Saint to follow him into Germany to share his apostolic labours. They went together into Thuringia. Winebald was ordained priest and charged with the government of seven churches in that country. St. Willibald, having been made bishop of Eichstätt (Bavaria), drew his brother into his diocese. Winebald withdrew into the woods of Heidenheim. There he cleared a certain piece of land, built some cells, and soon afterwards had a monastery built. Later he founded another for women in the neighbourhood, and its government was entrusted to St. Walburga. He continued to labour with zeal for the conversion of the idolaters, who more than once made attempts on his life. But he did not on that account neglect the care of his community; he maintained in it the spirit of prayer, humility and mortification; he suited his instructions to the state of each of the brethren; he encouraged the weak and spurred on the perfect; he was the first to practise the virtues he recommended to others.

God tried him by various illnesses. When his health did not allow him to go to the church, he said Mass in a private chapel adjoining his cell. Once he was so ill that his life was despaired of; but he recovered his health through the intercession of St. Boniface, to whom he had a great devotion. Feeling his last hour approaching, he exhorted his disciples to perseverance and fervour. He died on 18 December 760, at the age of sixty, after being abbot for about ten years. His disciples carried his remains to the church, spent the whole night in prayers and hymns, and then placed the precious relics in a tomb the holy abbot had had prepared for himself some years before.

About sixteen years after Winebald's death (776), Willibald raised from the ground the body of his brother, which had remained incorrupt, and placed it in a shrine enriched with gold and silver. When in the 12th century the church of Heidenheim was consumed by fire together with the shrine, the Saint's relics were nevertheless saved; and when the church had been rebuilt, they were buried again, in 1358, in the new choir. It is said that in the 16th century they were transferred to Scheer, in Franconia, on the lands of the lord of Truchsess, to preserve them from the profanation to which they were exposed in those troubled times. It is further affirmed that as early as 1109 a part of them, with those of St. Willibald and St. Walburga, came to Furnes (West Flanders), where this translation is celebrated every year on 1 May.

The monastery of Heidenheim was destroyed by the partisans of the so-called Reformation.

Godescard, revised and corrected.

[2] Bodagisil, who is commonly regarded as the father of St. Arnulf, bishop of Metz (18 July), and stock of the Carolingian dynasty, belonged to one of the most illustrious and ancient families of the Frankish nation. St. Fortunatus, bishop of Poitiers, praises his immense charities, the gentleness of his manners, his justice and his integrity in governing the provinces entrusted to him. St. Gregory of Tours likewise praises his probity and says that he died full of days. Bodagisil was governor of Marseilles, and at the same time of Germany. It was doubtless during his stay in Germany that he married Oda, of an illustrious family of the nation of the Suevi, who is usually given as the mother of St. Arnulf. He lived in the castle of Lay-Saint-Christophe, near Nancy, where the holy bishop of Metz was born. Drawn by the desire of a higher perfection, he resolved to leave the world. Having separated from Oda by mutual consent, he withdrew into a wilderness not far from the village of Hilariacum (since Saint-Avold), and there built a monastery and a church, which took the name of Saint-Martin-aux-Chênes or of Glandières, and later of Longeville-lès-Saint-Avold (Moselle). He was accompanied in his retreat by two noble persons, Dignus and Undo, who also endowed the new monastery. Arnoald lived there very holily and died in 588. His body was buried in the church of Glandières, where his memory has remained precious. — *Local notes.*

[1] Alias: Guinebaut, Gombaut.

19 December

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY

At Alexandria in Egypt (today Iskanderieh), St. Nemesius (or Nemesion), martyr: first falsely accused of brigandage and brought before the judge, who sent him away acquitted, he was soon afterwards, during the persecution of Decius, denounced as a Christian before the judge Emilian; the latter, after twice putting him to the torture, had him burned with brigands; and so he became like the Saviour crucified between two thieves. 250 or 253. — At Nicaea (today Iznik), in Bithynia, Saints Darius, Zosimus, Paul (or Paulillus) and Secundus (or Secundinus), martyrs. 4th c. — At Nicomedia, the holy martyrs Cyriacus, Paulillus, Secundus, Anastasius, Syndimius and their companions. 4th c. — In Mauretania, St. Timothy (or Timoleon), deacon, who, after a long and cruel imprisonment for the faith of Jesus Christ, was thrown into the fire, where he consummated his martyrdom. 4th c. — At Gaza, in Palestine, the martyrdom of Saints Meuris (or Meura) and Thea. 3rd c. — At Auxerre, St. Gregory, bishop and confessor.[1] 530. — At Orleans, St. Avitus (Adjutus), abbot, illustrious for the gift of prophecy. Date uncertain. — At Rome, St. Fausta, mother of St. Anastasia, commendable for her nobility and her piety. End of the 3rd c.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED

In the diocese of Beauvais, St. Prothasia, virgin and martyr at Senlis. About 282. — In the diocese of Cambrai, St. Nicasius, archbishop of Reims and martyr, whose life we gave at 14 December. 5th c. — In the dioceses of Châlons and Viviers, St. Eusebius, bishop of Vercelli, whose notice we sketched at the 15th of this month. 370. — In the diocese of Fréjus, St. Antony of Pannonia, monk of Lérins, of whom we shall speak at 28 December, the day on which he is cited in the Roman martyrology. About 526. — In the dioceses of Laval and Nantes, St. Gatian, first bishop of Tours, whose life we gave on the preceding day. 1st c. — In the diocese of Sens, St. Gregory, bishop of Auxerre, cited in the Roman martyrology of this day. 530. — In the diocese of Tarbes, St. Austindus of Bordeaux, archbishop of Auch and confessor, whose life we gave at 25 September. 1068. — In the diocese of Tours, St. Anianus of Vienne, bishop of Orleans and confessor, whose life we gave at 17 November. 453. — In the diocese of Nancy, St. Apronia (Aprona, Evronia), virgin, whose notice we sketched at 15 July. About 420. — In Franche-Comté, St. Ribert or Ribier (Ribarius), seventeenth abbot of Saint-Oyend, in the diocese of Saint-Claude.[2] End of the 8th c. — In Holland, St. Megingoz (Mégaude, Mengors, Mangors, Mégengozes), count of Guelders. With his wife Gerberga he founded the convent of Bellich or Vilich, near Bonn (Rhine Province), of which their daughter Adelaide was the first abbess. Our Saint was buried in the church of that monastery. 1001. — At Sens, St. Honulf or Honnou, bishop (of which see is not known), whose relics were carried into the diocese of Arras. 761. — In the diocese of Marseilles (since 1870), Blessed Urban V, pope. 1370.

MARTYROLOGIES OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS

Martyrology of the Order of St. Basil. — St. Melania the Younger, who, having left Rome with Pinianus her husband, went to Jerusalem and embraced the religious life in a monastery of women, while her husband likewise entered a monastery of men: both ended their lives by a holy and happy death.[3] 439.

Martyrology of the Three Orders of St. Francis. — On the island of Bastia, near Assisi, in Umbria, Blessed Conrad of Offida, confessor, of the Order of Friars Minor, remarkable for his virtues of prayer, humility and charity. God glorified him during his life and after his death by almost countless miracles. He died on 4 December [*sic*], and his body was translated to Perugia, where it is held in great veneration. 1306.

Martyrology of the Order of Friars Minor. — The same as above.

Martyrology of the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. — St. Pontian, pope and martyr, whose memory is celebrated on 19 November.[4] 235.

Martyrology of the Order of Discalced Carmelites. — St. Eusebius, bishop of Vercelli.[5] 370.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS

Among the Greeks, on the Sunday before Christmas, memory of the death of ADAM and EVE. — Among the Friars Preachers, Blessed Cecilia of Ferrara, widow, of the Order of St. Dominic. After eight years of marriage, and by mutual consent, she separated from her husband, who also entered the Order of St. Dominic. She lived thirty years in the cloister, ever persevering in prayer and in exact observance of the rules of the religious state. During her life God granted her countless graces, among others that of seeing the divine child Jesus as he was at Bethlehem after his birth. After her death she worked several miracles and so merited the veneration of the faithful. 1311.

ADAM AND EVE

Year of the world 930. — Before Jesus Christ 3124.

Above these countless mighty bodies, of every kind, Brought to life at thy voice, Man was set by thy high wisdom To lay down his laws. — J. Racine.

In the beginning God created heaven and earth. He stretched out the firmament like a pavilion of azure; he sowed through space the shining sand of the stars; he gave the sun a diadem of fire and clothed the moon in a soft and gentle brightness. His hand cast verdure and flowers over the face of the earth; it hollowed out the prison where the Ocean sleeps and seethes with the fury of a captive and the docility of a subject; it sent forth living beings, divided into numerous commonwealths, to people and gladden the plains of the air, the waters and the fields. But in all the splendour of its wealth and its adornment the universe was like an empire without a master and a temple without a pontiff: it was awaiting a prince at whose feet it might pour out the abundance of its treasures, an interpreter who would turn into prayer the harmonious concert of creatures and raise their blind homage to the dignity of an act of love. So God completed his work, and man, priest and king, entered the universe.

A word of command had brought forth the rest of things, for those things, after all, could only obey God without mind and publish his glory without heart; he had said: “Let there be light!” and there was light. But a word of counsel brought forth man, because man was to be armed with moral freedom, capable of a consenting fidelity and master of his destiny; that is why God said: “Let us make man to our image and likeness, and let him have dominion over the fishes of the sea, the fowls of the air, the beasts, the whole earth and every creeping creature that moveth upon it.” And he shaped a little clay, breathed over this work of his hands a breath of life, and put into it an intelligent and free soul: man appeared, and he was named Adam, because he was kneaded from the slime of the earth. Brother of the angels by his spiritual nature, first of

visible beings by the beauty of his form, he is, so to speak, the horizon of the world, which finds in him the completion and the summary of all its splendours. Made to the image and likeness of God, he bears on his brow some indefinable reflection of the uncreated glory, and in his gaze a kind of revelation of the eternal wisdom; his smile is like a flash of the happiness of heaven; his bearing declares superiority, and his heart nourishes the deep feeling, the hunger and thirst, of the infinite. See: he is about to stamp on material nature the seal of his own intelligence; the marvels of the arts will blossom under his hands like flowers under a sunbeam, and the elements will learn to bow their vanquished and disciplined forces before his genius. The Godhead itself will deign to speak to him with a friendly mouth, and he will bear the weight of that awesome converse; and, lifting up to himself and covering with the honour of his personality all this mute universe, he will pay the debt of creation by sending up to heaven the fragrance of a prayer full of love and the exquisite praise of a spotless life.

Adam was still alone in the immensity of his empire. He took solemn possession of it by giving names to the animals, his servants: at a divine command they passed before him and received, each according to its kind, names suited to their nature. But none of them was like man, nor able to understand his communications and answer them. Something therefore was lacking to the fullness of Adam's life, because in fact he was not made to be alone, and his mind and heart needed the brotherly sympathy of another mind and another heart; besides, one might perhaps do without a friend in misfortune, but never in happiness.

And the Lord said: "It is not good for man to be alone; let us make him a help like unto himself." Yet he did not create woman as he had created man: he formed her not from coarse slime but from a clay already purified and ennobled. He sent a deep sleep upon Adam, and from that hard casing which covers and protects the heart he took a bone and made of it the woman: for he is the author of life as he is the master of death; matter grows supple between his fingers, and nothingness itself quivers and comes alive under his breath. Thus, doubtless to signify that woman would be the honoured companion, and not the slave or the mistress, of man, the Creator formed her from a bone taken from that region of the body where beats the organ of generous feelings — a kind of sanctuary inhabited by all that man cherishes and respects, and closed to all that man hates and despises.

When God had thus built up Adam's rib into a woman, as Scripture says — so as to depict, by that grand and austere style, all that there is in woman of admirable proportion and magnificent order — when he had finished the new creature, likewise made to his image and likeness, he brought her to Adam. She was pure and gracious, and her innocence equalled her beauty: for no disorder had yet marred the works of God or turned their spotless simplicity into peril. Adam came out of the ecstatic sleep in which his soul, touched by the light from on high, had contemplated what God was doing; he recognized himself in the woman; future ages unrolled before his eyes, and he uttered these words full of knowledge and mystery: "This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called by a name that signifies man, because she was taken out of man." "Wherefore," adds the Lord, either by himself or by Adam's mouth, "a man shall leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh." Thus it was that the union of man and woman was contracted and established, by the inspiration and in the presence of God: a sweet community of thoughts and feelings, a reflection of the eternal union that gladdens the divine Persons, a prophetic image of the august nuptials which the Word was one day to celebrate with human nature. So marriage received from the beginning a character of unity and indissolubility by which it escapes the dark reckoning of the senses and of selfishness, and rises to the merit of a religious act and the sublimity of a tender and delicate devotedness. By stripping it of that twofold seal which consecrates and strengthens it, the pagan peoples had degraded it in their laws and debased it in their morals; the Christian religion has restored to it its original conditions of purity and glory.

Having blessed the man and the woman, God communicated fruitfulness to them, a glorious outflowing of his creative power, and constituted, as it were, the dowry of the first marriage: "Increase," he said, "and

multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, and rule over the fishes of the sea, the fowls of the air and all living creatures that move upon the earth." Then he assigned them for food the herbs and the fruits of the trees. If we keep to the terms of the biblical account, and above all compare them with the permission God gave Noah after the Flood to eat the flesh of animals, we should think that in the beginning the human race lived only on vegetables, plants, roots, seeds and fruits. This does not mean that it was not made to live on flesh as well; it supposes only that beings are not obliged to exercise all their faculties everywhere and always. The happy fertility of the earth, the savour of plants and fruits, the robust constitution of the first men, perhaps the scarcity of animals and the need for them to reproduce — all explains and justifies this abstinence imposed on the early ages. Everyone knows, besides, that the peoples have kept the memory of a simple and frugal life which they place at the origin of the world; they have sung in fine verse the sobriety of our forefathers, who, eating only to appease hunger, were content with unprepared foods that rich and submissive nature spread of herself at their feet.

God saw all the things that he had made, and they were very good. Since the various beings did not overstep the natural limits of their faculties, balance and harmony reigned in creation. All nature seemed to smile on man; the sky was serene, labour without fatigue; the animals bent docilely to the order of their king; as the soul obeyed God faithfully, it exercised an easy sway over the body, its companion and subject: all moved within the plan traced by the Creator's wisdom. This peace did not last long, but it left indelible traces in the imagination of the peoples: like exiles recalling in banishment the lost joys of their homeland, all have given their regrets and devoted their songs to that age of innocence and happiness which they called the golden age. Only, sensualism made them forget or misunderstand the greatest marks of order that God had stamped upon his work: they depict little but mild and pleasant seasons, animals peaceable under man's hand, the earth bringing forth everything without tillage; some add to this picture certain traits of the moral beauty in which the infant world took pride, such as simple meals, moderate desires, and that equity of which they complain that only a remnant is now found in the ways of pastoral life. But what is gravest escapes them; the Bible, on the contrary, seizing upon an astonishing feature of the present disorder, reveals to us the vanished order by the most expressive sign, when it teaches that the human body, clothed in holiness, knew none of those shameful insolences: "They were both naked," it says, "and were not ashamed." For originally nothing was to bow the august face of man in confusion; modesty, like repentance, is the virtue of a wounded nature that feels itself weak, not the privilege of an innocent and invulnerable nature; modesty is like a veil the soul spreads over its ruins.

The man and the woman, created in the perfect age of life, rich in the gifts of nature and grace, were placed in Eden, or the earthly paradise. The true situation of that enchanted garden is not settled: writers are divided in opinion, and place it, some in Armenia, others in Palestine, others again in the plains of Chaldea. What remains certain is that it must be placed in Asia, in those regions where, on ruins heaped up by wars and centuries, and despite the changes that have degraded the globe and altered the seasons, the traveller still admires examples of astonishing fertility, wonderful sites, and a pure sky full of those warm and brilliant hues of which our climate offers, so to speak, only a cold and pale reflection. Eden had been planted from the beginning; there were in it all kinds of trees fair to the eye and all kinds of fruits pleasant to the taste; an abundant spring watered it and divided into four rivers. The verdure, the flowers and the perfumes, the purity of the light and of the skies that refreshed man's senses, were like the image of the higher joys in which his soul lived. He did not yet know disobedience or misfortune; keeper of the earthly paradise, he worked in it for recreation and not as painful toil. Alas! the garden and the happiness have vanished: of the one, some traces remain in the great and rich nature of the East; of the other, we have kept a melancholy memory which nothing can soothe or efface.

Eden had two trees remarkable above all the others. There was the tree of life, so named because it was to communicate immortality to man — for God attaches his gifts to whatever he wills, the noblest things to the

humblest conditions; and there was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which was perhaps so called only because, by touching it against the divine prohibition, man came to know all the good he had just lost and all the evil he had just brought upon himself. Now God said to man: “Of every fruit of this garden thou shalt eat; but touch not the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil; for in the day that thou eatest of it thou shalt die the death.” And this precept was intimated to the woman too. The blind elements of the material world become what an invincible force makes them and go where it drives them; but spirits must be governed by laws which they can defy because they are free, but which they are inexcusable to break because they are able to fulfil them. As absolute Master, God gave a commandment; infinitely wise, he took a sensible object as the matter of his precept, because of our composite nature; in his goodness he gave an easy order, since life was to be easy had it not ceased to be innocent.

Freedom, then, made evil possible; something made it seductive: rebellion became visible, armed itself with specious language, and came to assail inexperienced man. There existed other intelligent and free creatures, but not bound to bodies; God had put all these pure spirits to the test, and several had fallen. Like stars escaped from the force that held them in their orbit and cutting a new path through unknown space, they escaped from the hands of God in a kind of dreadful flight, and the dream of their independence turned into the turmoil and pain of an inexorable remorse. Deserters from light and love, they fell into darkness, the natural punishment of spirits, and into hatred, the harshest chastisement of hearts. From the depth of his misery one of these fallen angels saw man’s happiness and grew jealous of it. He took the form of the serpent, to slip into the heart he meant to seduce and lay waste at their source all those joys whose sight was hideous to him. Certainly he could have wrapped himself in any other form; but there are secret relations of analogy between things seen and things unseen, and it is doubtless in consequence of that law and by a providential disposition that the tempter, instead of appearing in the form of some noble or majestic animal, borrowed the form of the serpent; for there is some image of fraud and cowardly perfidy in the manner of that reptile, which advances only by crawling and kills as one caresses.

Moved by the evil spirit, the serpent approached the woman without her taking fright, because the animals were then in natural subjection to their masters; it spoke to her without her being astonished, because, after all, an animal that struck the air with articulate sounds could not seem an exception when all things, still new and unexplored, must have been reckoned equally simple or equally wonderful. And the serpent said to the woman: “Why hath God forbidden you to eat of every fruit of paradise?” It did not approach Adam, for fear of being too easily discovered and repulsed: no doubt it dreaded having to contend with that circumspect character, jealous of the initiative and forewarned by the consciousness of its strength against every outside influence. It addressed itself to the woman — a delicate and lively constitution, set in motion by the least shock, the lightest breath; a soul inclined to expansive confidences and to trust because it needs support; an intelligence lit by a heart, and so clothed with all the charm, but also with all the changeableness, of feeling.

Instead of using her power over the serpent to cover its question with silence and contempt, instead of avenging the insult offered to the lawgiver, the woman came down from her dignity as queen and argued: “Of the fruit of the trees that are in paradise we do eat,” she said; “but of the tree which is in the midst, God hath commanded us that we should not eat of its fruit nor touch it, lest perhaps we die.” The answer was neither generous nor loyal: it expresses fear, not gratitude or love, and it wraps in a form of doubt — “lest perhaps we die” — the positive threat of the Lord: “You shall die the death.”

So the tempter was emboldened: “No,” it answered, “you shall not die; on the contrary, God knoweth that in the day you eat of this fruit your eyes shall be opened, and you shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” No lie could have been told with more assurance. Between two contradictory words, one belonging to God and the other to the serpent, the choice was easy; but the first was full of terror and imposed restraints, while the second held pleasant promises and flattered the instincts of independence. So evil disguises itself to our eyes in the colours of good; it cleverly sets against the yoke of virtue and the gravity of duty the image of a

pleasure that resembles freedom and happiness — too like those fires that flicker at night over the marshes and lure the traveller to set foot in their depths.

The woman had inclined her ear too complacently toward the serpent; she had ill defended her heart against the desire and the hope of knowing everything; a beginning of revolt declared itself in the region of the intellect; pride had just passed there. The shock spread to the senses, the companions and subjects of the soul — as one sees servants' faces brighten with the joy or darken with the sadness painted on the face of a respected master; they became seditious in their own way. The woman looked at the forbidden tree; its fruit seemed to her good to eat, fair and delightful to behold; it was the last blow dealt to a fidelity already shaken and tottering. The fascinated senses reacted on the mind that had not governed them discreetly, and the mind was overcome. The woman took the fruit and ate it.

From then on the serpent thought itself surer of the woman than of itself: it withdrew and let her appear. That nature, a moment ago so weak to resist, would become mighty to conquer; she would bring down the man, whom the father of lies dared not try to deceive: for man is upheld by a natural pride in his struggle against all that is strong, and betrayed by his heart in his struggle against all that is gentle and frail. So Adam was led at first by complaisance rather than determined by any reasoning; to grieve by a refusal his only and dear companion no doubt seemed to him bitter and cruel; he felt himself giving way, and his softened heart succumbed, dragging his mind down in the fall: the woman gave of the fruit to her husband, who ate of it as she had done and obeyed the same lures of pride and sensuality.

At once the eyes of the guilty pair were opened — but not to those glorious lights the serpent had led them to hope for: it was an awakening that took away the illusory riches a dream had brought. Nakedness, until then covered by the simplicity and candour of innocence, became a kind of unbearable burden. The soul ceased to reign as mistress in its empire; something shameful appeared to it in the works of God, and it recognized its own degradation in that broken balance. The two guilty ones covered themselves with fig leaves woven together as a girdle.

Such was the first crime that sullied the earth; in it all later crimes have their original cause and their type. The fault was committed; justice must take its course. God came to try the case of our fallen forefathers; a sensible form revealed his presence: the guilty pair heard in Eden as it were the sound of his walking. It was toward evening. The man and the woman, who had shielded themselves with leaves against their own gaze, withdrew in terror among the trees of paradise to escape the face of the Lord. But the voice of the Lord reached them: "Adam, where art thou?" There was still more compassion than wrath in that word, as if God had cried: "Your flight and your fears reveal your fault; from what honour you have just fallen, and into what ruin you are cast down!" An echo of that merciful and stern voice still resounds today among men, and all who have done wrong hear it: it is remorse. After violations of the prescribed order, duty disregarded and virtue wounded rise up in the conscience like a spectre. In vain the soul tries to appease it or flee it; it pursues the soul, clings to it and torments it, and when the soul withdraws into the fullness of a sensual life, as if to defy the household spectre there, it seizes it even in the arms of pleasure, and sometimes casts it into dark terrors with that avenging word: "Where art thou?"

Adam answered: "I heard thy voice in paradise, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." And God said: "Who told thee that thou wast naked, but that thou hast eaten of the tree whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldst not eat?" The Lord addressed himself first to the principal culprit. Stronger and greater in his origin, Adam became the more ungrateful in disobedience; more will be asked of him to whom more has been given. Adam replied: "The woman whom thou gavest me to be my companion gave me of the fruit, and I did eat." Thus he would shift the responsibility for the fault back onto God, as though God had robbed him of intelligence and freedom by giving him a companion. Then, instead of sparing the shame of a confession to her whom he had loved and willingly followed into revolt, instead of extending over her the generosity of his repentance, he selfishly abandoned her and crushed her under the

weight of a cowardly accusation.

Perhaps it must be said that there is more uprightness in the woman's confession. For when she had been accused of drawing the man into rebellion, God said to her: "Why hast thou done this?" She answered simply: "The serpent deceived me, and I did eat." Yet her avowal, too, is not marked by that powerful repentance which merits and obtains great pardons. At last the judge pronounced sentence. He said to the serpent: "Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed among all the beasts of the earth; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and earth shalt thou eat." So what was natural to the serpent was assigned as a memorial of the attempt in which it had served, and its food, dragged through dust and mire, recalled its punishment. And God added: "I will put enmities between thee and the woman, and thy seed and her seed; she shall crush thy head, and thou shalt lie in wait for her heel." The tempter was thus struck in himself as well as in the animal he had used: cursed by the human race instead of receiving from it the honours granted to the good angels; an enemy full of cunning and malice, but crushed by the son of the woman and laid low in the dust to which the victory of the incarnate Word has reduced him. And, a thing singularly remarkable, most of the ancient nations were persuaded that the serpent concealed some dark and evil-working spirit; they attributed marvellous faculties to it and paid it a worship inspired by terror — so lasting was the memory of its treachery, and so mighty the curse of God!

The Lord said also to the woman: "I will multiply the anguish of thy conceptions; in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children; thou shalt be under thy husband's power, and he shall have dominion over thee." And indeed pain was attached for ever to fruitfulness, and what would have been only the glory and joy of mothers became for them a peril and sometimes a torment. And, contrary to the order first instituted, the woman fell into a state of subjection to her husband, whose gentle superiority soon turned, and for a long time, into a harsh and jealous domination. Nothing equals the despotism and degradation which one half of the human race laid upon the other almost everywhere for forty centuries; we dare not express otherwise what woman was in pagan morals and laws. Even today she has not been raised from that degradation among the peoples who have not yet learned, from the worship of the cross, respect for weakness; only the Christian peoples, by according woman an affectionate veneration, have protected her against her own frailty and against the hard tyranny of man: under the protection of the morals and laws that the Gospel has made to flourish in the world, she can practise freedom without usurpation and submission without abasement.

And God then said to the man: "Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife and hast eaten of the fruit which I had forbidden thee to touch, cursed is the earth for thee; with labour shalt thou draw thy food from it all the days of thy life. Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; thou shalt eat the herbs of the earth; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken; for dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." Toil with weariness and humiliation in death — the punishment and the remedy for the sensuality and pride of our forefathers — such was the lot assured to all the sons of Adam.

Doomed to death by divine sentence, and knowing that other men were to come from him, Adam gave his wife the name of Eve, which signifies life, because she was to be the mother of all the living. Then both clothed themselves in the skins of beasts, God aiding their intelligence and inspiring the first effort of industry, which came to soften the ills of existence and to stamp the most common and indispensable things with the character of comeliness and beauty: a secondary creation in which man remakes, after the image of his mind, and transfigures the matter made subject to his needs. Finally God said, with a kind of fatherly irony: "Behold Adam is become as one of us, knowing good and evil; let us therefore take heed lest he put forth his hand and take also of the fruit of life, and eat, and live for ever." And amid these holy and awesome mockeries he drove the guilty pair out of the garden of delights, and the entrance remained barred by a cherub, an angel of light armed with a sword of fire. It is since that day that life, changed into a dark exile, resembles a painful sleep in which sorrow rocks us, while we await death, which is the awakening.

Meanwhile Eve brought a son into the world, and, as if to console herself for her own mortality, she gave him the name of Cain, saying: “I have gotten a man through God.” She then had a second son, who was called Abel, that is, vanity, no doubt to mark the frailty of life. Now Cain, out of envy, killed his brother; then, cursed by God, he ceased to dwell with his father and mother and withdrew toward the eastern region of Eden. God consoled the mourning of Adam and Eve by sending them a son in place of the one they had just lost so sadly. Eve named him Seth, to signify that all her hopes were henceforth founded on him; and in fact he was just like Abel, and his posterity followed the precepts of the Lord, while that of Cain walked in the way traced by his unhappy father. Adam and Eve had several other sons and daughters, who were joined in marriage and so propagated the human race — God making all men come from one same source, so that they might ever remember, despite the distance of times and places, that they are all brothers, and that difference of interests, habits and laws ought not to divide those who are united by the so sweet and so strong bond of a common origin.

Adam lived nine hundred and thirty years. The longevity of the first men is generally attributed to the strength of their constitution, to the natural qualities of the foods they drew from the still young earth, and to their simple and frugal life. It must be added that Providence willed to govern the world with wisdom as it had created it in love, and that it entered into its designs to preserve men for a long time, both for the rapid multiplication of the species and for the instruction of the new races: for the patriarchs had many children, and, laden with several centuries, they seemed halted on the threshold of the tomb to bear witness to the history of the ancient days before several assembled generations. As for Eve, nothing precise is known about the time of her death; it is an opinion supported by very ancient traditions that she spent some years more on earth than Adam. Some, especially those who place Eden in Palestine, think that our first parents were buried on the mount of Calvary, near which, as is known, stretches the valley of Josaphat, where souls will come to attend their final judgment. Might there not indeed be, for things as for persons, reserved destinations? And would it not be fitting that the solemn drama we call the life of mankind — which by the unity of its action will fill the whole series of ages — should show in one same place the three great scenes of which it is composed: the fall, the redemption and the judgment?

Christian poetry has often clothed in the pomp of its language the memorable events that fixed the destiny of mankind: Tasso sang the *Seven Days* of creation; Vida, Sannazaro and others less famous have painted in graceful colours some of the scenes of the garden of delights. But the masterpiece of poetry on this fruitful and difficult subject is Milton’s *Paradise Lost*. Great power of invention and great brilliance of imagery cover, or at least balance, most of the reproaches that literature perhaps has the right to make against that learned and austere composition. Eve innocent appears gentle and majestic, adorned with grace and nobility; Eve guilty becomes fearful and puts guile into her speech, but she remains powerful by her tears, and God has left in her fall some reflections of her first glory, which create about her a respect mingled with fear, like an angelic guard.[1]

The arts have anticipated or imitated poetry. Drawing, painting and sculpture have often and happily retraced the chief details of creation, and particularly the story of our first mother. The catacombs, the Sistine Chapel, the Vatican, the doors of the Florence baptistery, the Campo Santo of Pisa, the portals of Reims and Strasbourg, the windows of our ancient churches, the Gothic Bibles and Missals reproduce some features of Eve’s life: her creation, her temptation, her fall and her penance. Fra Angelico of Fiesole, Ghiberti, Nicola Pisano, Cimabue, Michelangelo, Raphael — painters or sculptors — have depicted on immortal canvases or carved in stone the joys and the misfortunes of Eden. Among all these brilliant marvels of

Christian art, perhaps first place must be given, for composition, fitness and fine expression of the heads, to the well-known picture by Domenichino. In it one sees God reproaching the man for his disobedience, Adam accusing his wife, and Eve casting the blame on the serpent; this threefold action is rendered with exquisite feeling, and the spectator involuntarily shares the anxiety of our forefathers as they await from the mouth of

their great judge the sentence they deserve; yet the judge's justice does not efface his mercy, and one guesses that presently there will be two roads to heaven: innocence and repentance.

Les Femmes de la Bible, by the late Mgr Darboy, archbishop of Paris.

BLESSED CONRAD OF OFFIDA, PRIEST, OF THE ORDER OF FRIARS MINOR

1306. — Pope: Clement V. — King of France: Philip IV, the Fair.

Felix pauper rebus, sed virtutibus dives. Happy the man who is poor in riches but rich in virtues. — Thomas à Kempis.

Like a fair sky all strewn with stars, the province of the Friars Minor of the March of Ancona was once adorned with devout and holy friars, who, like shining stars, gave light to the Seraphic Order and to the whole world by the light of their teaching and the brightness of their example. Among them was Blessed Conrad.

This admirable zealot for evangelical poverty and for the observances of St. Francis was born at Offida, a considerable town in the diocese of Ascoli (Italy). His parents, deeply virtuous, brought him up in piety, and he responded wonderfully to their care and to the prevenient graces with which God favoured him. Scarcely fifteen years old, and already all on fire with the love of God, he entered the Seraphic Order, where from his novitiate he was remarked for his humility and his lofty contemplation. Among his fellow novices Conrad divined a Saint, Blessed Peter of Treia. He formed with him a sweet intimacy which, being founded solely on supernatural motives, was all the more lively and lasting.

After his profession Conrad was put to the study of theology, in which he showed distinction, and then he was raised to the priesthood. But he so loved the hidden life that he asked, as a signal favour, to be employed in the kitchen and in the labours of the quest. His entreaties could not be refused, and for more than fifteen years, given over to these obscure and toilsome labours, he divided his moments between contemplation and work.

The excess of his humility sometimes kept him from going up to the holy altar to offer the divine Sacrifice. He was rebuked for this abstention by a holy soul whom he directed, Blessed Benvenuta of Ancona, a tertiary. "You are wrong to act so," she exclaimed one day; "I saw on the altar the adorable majesty of the Son of God, who was inviting you and waiting for you; He showed displeasure at your timidity. Approach Him with more confidence." That day, in fact, Conrad had not dared to go up to the altar, for fear of being distracted by a funeral service that was to take place.

The servant of God's high reputation for holiness led his superiors to send him to the friary of Mount Alverna, a friary for ever famous for the miracle of the Stigmata and for the stay made there in turn by St. Bonaventure, St. Anthony of Padua and the other chief Saints of the Seraphic Order. The superiors took great care to place in that blessed spot only religious eminent in virtue. Conrad there devoted his days and nights to contemplation and to the austere practices that go with it. In return he received there a great many extraordinary favours: frequent apparitions of the glorious Virgin Mary, of the holy Angels, of several Saints, and more particularly of Blessed Giles, companion of St. Francis. In short, one may say of our Saint what Holy Scripture says of Moses, that "he spoke with God as a man speaks with his friend," and that "all his conversation was in heaven."

All these wonders spread the fame of our Saint far and wide. The many pilgrims to Alverna all asked to receive Brother Conrad's blessing and commended themselves to his prayers. Rather than remain exposed to the eager homage of the multitude, the humble Conrad preferred to leave the sanctuary where he had been favoured with so many graces. O humility of the Saints! He obtained from the Father General leave to go to

the friary of Sirolo, and on the very day of his arrival he miraculously delivered a woman possessed by the devil. Conrad foresaw that the throng of people to him was about to begin again; so he spent the night in prayer, and at daybreak he left secretly and went to join his faithful friend Peter of Treia at the solitary friary of Forano, in the March of Ancona. One day Brother Conrad went deep into the wood near the friary to give himself to divine contemplation. Brother Peter followed him at a distance, wishing to witness what would happen to his friend. It was the feast of the Purification of Mary, and Conrad was asking the divine Mother to obtain for him a little of the sweetness the old man Simeon had felt when she laid the holy Child Jesus in his arms. Granting the prayer of her faithful servant, Mary suddenly appeared, surrounded with light and bearing the divine Child in her arms. She came up to Brother Conrad and gave him the Saviour. In possession of this ineffable treasure, the happy friar covered the Son of the Virgin with kisses and pressed Him to his heart, and in that moment he felt as though melted in divine love and plunged into an ocean of inexpressible sweetness. Brother Peter, who was watching this ravishing sight from afar, himself felt great consolation from it. The friendship that already closely united these two holy friars grew so much that they seemed to be no more than one heart and one soul. So they agreed to confide to each other all the consolations God should deign to grant them.

Conrad was also employed in preaching, and in this difficult ministry he appeared all the more eloquent because his example supported his teaching. “It is an eternal truth that we must carry the cross; but,” says a famous orator (Bourdaloue), “this truth, though eternal, has not the same grace in everyone’s mouth. It is not for all sorts of persons to preach the cross.” This grace of which Bourdaloue speaks our Saint possessed in an eminent degree. His hearers, listening to him speak of the narrow way, let themselves be easily persuaded, because they saw in him a man crucified to the world, a man dead to himself, in short a model of that life of renunciation and fervour whose necessity his sermons made them feel. Moreover, he appeared surrounded by the halo of miracles and adorned with the gift of prophecy; and so he wrought marvellous fruits of salvation in souls.

A perfect observer of his Rule, Conrad applied himself so closely to walking in the footsteps of St. Francis that the surviving companions of that holy Patriarch delighted to proclaim Conrad the living and faithful copy of their Father. A passionate lover of poverty and humility, for more than fifty years he wore the same habit, all worn and patched. He always walked barefoot, without sandals, and with his eyes cast down.

While, in spite of his advanced age, Conrad was preaching a mission at Bastia, on the lake of Perugia, full of days and merits, he fell asleep in the Lord on 12 December 1306.

Pope Pius VII, by a brief of 21 April 1817, solemnly approved the cult paid from time immemorial to Blessed Conrad, and allowed the whole Order of St. Francis to celebrate his feast on 19 December. This feast is celebrated on 12 December by the secular clergy of the cities of Perugia, Assisi and Offida.

Taken from the *Annales franciscaines*.

BLESSED URBAN V, POPE

1370. — King of France: Charles V, the Wise.

Blessed Urban, wise reformer of the clergy and of the religious Orders; intrepid defender of the rights and the liberty of the Church; ardent propagator of the Gospel among the infidel nations, pray for us. — Litany of Blessed Urban V.

William de Grimoard, who was to make his family name forgotten and immortalize that of Urban V, was born at the castle of Grisac, in the diocese of Mende, high in the Cévennes, in 1310. His godfather was St. Elzéar of Sabran, and from his tenderest years he showed himself worthy of having been held at the font by such hands. While still a child he so loved prayer, and so little cared for frivolous amusements, that his

astonished mother said to him: “My son, I do not understand you, but it is enough for me that God understands you.” Gifted with a lively mind, he studied letters, philosophy and law with an application that made him progress rapidly in all these sciences. The famous schools of Montpellier and Toulouse counted him among their most distinguished pupils, though he never let himself be drawn into the disorders then too common among students: his fidelity to God and his assiduity in his religious duties protected him against the corruption of the age.

The nobility of his family, the loftiness of his mind, the range of his learning and the affability of manner that won every heart assured him a brilliant future. But while still young he renounced the world in order to satisfy, undivided, the noblest aspirations of his soul: the love of study and piety. He embraced the Rule of St. Benedict and made his religious profession at Marseilles, in the monastery of Saint-Victor. Everyone knows how large a place ecclesiastical learning held in the life of the Benedictine monks. Their name cannot be spoken without recalling the immense services they have rendered the Church and the countless masterpieces of patient erudition they have left us. But William de Grimoard did not shut his youth in the cloister solely to surround himself with manuscripts and savour the quiet sweetness of learning; it was above all God that he sought in solitude, and he served Him with a fervour that made the most austere practices of monastic life seem easy to him. Already at that time he was distinguished by his tender devotion to the most holy Virgin; his confidence in our good Mother only grew with the years, and the many sanctuaries he later raised in her honour are a touching witness to the devotion he had vowed to her.

Religious profession, which had interrupted young William’s studies, did not prevent his resuming them some time afterwards, and he did so with fresh successes that astonished his masters themselves. He had scarcely won the title of doctor of canon law when his superiors, struck by the brilliance with which he had passed his university examinations and by the extent and solidity of his learning, decided to let him follow his inclination for teaching law. That was henceforth to be the chief occupation of his life until he was raised to the sovereign Pontificate: the universities of Toulouse, Montpellier, Paris and Avignon in turn saw him drawing to his chair multitudes of hearers, whom he taught with great depth of doctrine and charmed by the interest of his speech.

In spite of his attraction to teaching, William de Grimoard had more than once to break off the course of his learned lectures to fill the high posts for which his learning and virtues seemed to have destined him. Becoming successively vicar-general of the bishops of Clermont and of Uzès, he was for the prelates who had honoured him with their confidence a collaborator, or rather a friend, as faithful as he was helpful.

Putting into practice what he had taught from his chair about the close and perfect union the vicar-general must have with his bishop, he was seen to second the zeal of the pastors who had attached him to themselves with unalterable loyalty and disinterestedness proof against every test, never seeking himself. So the Lord blessed his ministry: while his sincere and persuasive word produced the most abundant fruits of salvation, the people, filled with admiration for his virtues and above all for his inexhaustible charity to the poor, already venerated him as a true servant of God and as a Saint.

So many merits drew upon William the attention of Pope Clement VI, who named him abbot of Saint-Germain at Auxerre and soon afterwards chose him as legate in Italy, entrusting him with a mission of the highest importance. It was nothing less than to bring back under the authority of the Holy See the usurped provinces and cities, and, by pacifying Rome and the Patrimony of St. Peter, to prepare the way for the return of the Papacy to the predestined city where it ought to reside.

At that time Rome was even more desolate than in these latter days. For, great as her misfortunes are at this hour, they can scarcely give an idea of what she suffered in the middle of the fourteenth century. Several rival factions disputed her possession; she endured in turn the excesses of popular tyranny and the horrors of anarchy. For a moment the bold Rienzi gave her a regular government; but the tribune, intoxicated by

success, dreamed of restoring the Roman Empire. The resistance his senseless plans met made him cruel. He shed blood; the people rose; trembling before the riotous crowd that had lately acclaimed him on the Capitol, he was ignominiously killed. The petty despots who followed him inherited only his faults. Raised to power by popular caprice, they were overthrown the next day. Italy was nothing but a battlefield, Rome nothing but a den of bandits. The Papacy, which alone could restore her happiness, was waiting for the moment when the success of its legates would allow it to return to the tomb of the holy Apostles.

It does not fall within the limits we have set ourselves to relate in detail the various legations of William de Grimoard. Considering him merely as an ordinary statesman, one would have to acknowledge that he displayed eminent qualities in them; but his virtue raised him higher still. The historians of his life agree that in all his dealings he carried the sense of justice to the highest degree, and that the uprightness and truthfulness that governed all his negotiations were his surest skill. They also pay tribute to the firmness and heroic courage he showed towards the invaders of the domains of the Holy See, and notably before the threats and violence of the terrible Bernabò Visconti.

While these happy events were gladdening the old age of Innocent VI, the abbey of Saint-Victor fell vacant by the death of Stephen de Clapiers; the Pope at once appointed William de

Grimoard, to whom he wished to show his gratitude and who had for some time been back at Avignon. With what happiness did the devout Benedictine return to the tranquillity of monastic life! He found again at last that dear abbey where in his youth he had consecrated himself to God and towards which, amid the agitations of public life, he had never ceased to turn his eyes. As a simple religious he had been remarked at Saint-Victor for his perfect regularity and obedience; become superior, he was no less distinguished by the wisdom of his government.

William had no more ardent desire than to labour for his sanctification in the calm and silence of that devout retreat; but the holy Abbot’s merit had already shed too much lustre for the sovereign Pontiff to agree to leave him long hidden in the cloister. Innocent VI, judging William’s presence necessary in Italy, had just entrusted him with a new mission, and our Blessed one had already reached Naples when the death of the Pope became known.

The cardinals met in conclave, according to custom, but they could not agree to elect one of their number; they then resolved to choose the new Pope from outside the Sacred College, and soon their unanimous votes fell on William de Grimoard, abbot of Saint-Victor, who was still in Italy. Only one person was saddened by this election, and that was its object; but all Christendom rejoiced and acclaimed it. “So God takes pity on those He loves,” exclaimed on this occasion one of the greatest poets of Italy; “so He wills to bring back the golden age and restore to its ancient see the Church He has let wander so long to punish the crimes of men.” Bowing his head beneath “the yoke of apostolic servitude,” William de Grimoard took the name of Urban V. He made his entry into Avignon on 31 October 1362, and was consecrated and crowned on the following Sunday, 6 November.

As soon as he had ascended the chair of St. Peter, the new Pope set himself three designs worthy of his great soul: to bring the Papacy back to Rome; to reform morals, notably by combating ignorance; and lastly to spread the Catholic faith far and wide. Without binding ourselves to chronological order, we shall consider in turn what Urban V did to carry out these three great thoughts.

The ever-renewed rivalries that armed the little Italian republics against one another and made every lord the captain of bands always ready to fight formed an apparently insurmountable obstacle to the return of the Papacy to Rome. Above all it was necessary to give unhappy Italy back the blessings of peace, to reconcile rival cities and to bring together enemies thirsting for revenge. Urban V, determined to pursue so noble an aim, continued as Pope, with the same perseverance and energy, what he had done shortly before as the envoy of Innocent VI. He therefore charged the general of the Friars Minor, Mark of Viterbo, to go from city

to city preaching peace and to bring the party leaders to make it sincerely. “We exhort you,” he himself wrote to Galeazzo Visconti and to the Marquis of Montferrat, “we beseech you to be pleased to consider the multitude of evils that war produces and to dispose yourselves to make an honourable peace.” Mark of Viterbo’s mission bristled with difficulties: the captains of bands promised peace when they felt threatened, but soon began the war again. To stop the shedding of blood, which had flowed for so many years, Urban V accepted arrangements with these tireless fighters. His condescension bore happy fruit. Italy at last found tranquillity again, and the illustrious Cardinal Gil (Aegidius) Albornoz, to whom, after the Pope, the chief honour of this pacification belongs, was able to give the Papal State those famous constitutions which governed it for several centuries and which, from the cardinal’s name, were called the Egidian Constitutions. Then the old names of Guelphs and Ghibellines disappeared. The old parties faded away; there was now but one people, subject to the authority of the sovereign Pontiff and longing with all its heart for his return to Rome. Urban V received at Avignon an embassy sent by the Romans to entreat him to hasten his departure. Great was his joy at receiving the assurance that the Papal State, completely pacified, was sighing for his presence and that the independence of the Vicar of Jesus Christ would no longer be threatened there! Yet it was not without the most painful efforts that he made up his mind to leave France: he had never forgotten that she was his fatherland and he was deeply attached to her; moreover, his departure would separate him from his old father, a hundred years of age, whom he had brought to Avignon to surround with his care and tenderness.

But in Urban’s heart the fulfilment of duty had long since prevailed over sacrifices. Meanwhile his venerable father died; he wept for him like a good son, and at last, the preparations for his journey being complete, he left Avignon on 30 April 1367. He went to Marseilles and waited in the abbey of Saint-Victor for the assembling of the galleys sent to form his escort.

It was on 19 May that Urban V left the shores of Marseilles, blessing the city and the land of France, where the persecuted Papacy always found a hospitable refuge. On learning of the so ardently desired return of the sovereign Pontiff, Italy thrilled with gladness. At Genoa, at Corneto, at Viterbo, the people flocked to his route, waving olive branches and raising these cries of joy a thousand times repeated: “Praised be Jesus Christ! Long live the Holy Father!” After a stay of some months at Viterbo to settle various affairs, Urban V made his solemn entry into Rome: it was Saturday, 13 October 1367. An immense crowd, drunk with happiness, preceded and followed the procession; it was a true triumph. Everywhere banners waved and joyful acclamations rang out. People never tired of gazing at the Pontiff whom Rome had found again after losing him so long, and whom she needs to possess in order to be truly Rome. Urban V went to the basilica of St. Peter and prayed at the tomb of the holy Apostles. His eyes filled with tears. He thanked Providence for having at last brought him into the city chosen by God to be the dwelling of the Vicar of Jesus Christ, and, thinking of the long exile of the Papacy, he murmured as his tears flowed: *Super flumina Babylonis illic sedimus et flevimus, cum recordaremur Sion*: “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and wept, when we remembered Sion.”

In bringing the Papacy back to Rome, Urban had accomplished one of the chief designs he had set himself. His stay in the Eternal City allowed him to labour more effectively than anywhere else in the world for the reform of morals and the propagation of the faith.

From the first days of his pontificate, grieved at the relaxation of morals, the fatal consequence of the wars that were shaking all Europe, he strove to remedy it. Princes gave the example of every crime. Soldiers, selling their swords to the highest bidder, no longer knew fatherland, discipline or sense of duty. Moral corruption, spreading like a contagious disease, had invaded every class of society; the clergy themselves and the monks were not exempt. The disorders were such that many terrified men believed the world was about to end. The greatness of the evil did not discourage Urban V. He began by attacking the abuses that had crept into the pontifical court, so as then to labour more boldly at correcting the morals of clerics and faithful. The

high rank of the guilty never prevented the holy Pope from rebuking them for their faults and exhorting them to change their lives: thus he acted towards Peter the Cruel, King of Castile; towards Peter, King of Cyprus; and towards Casimir, King of Poland. He extended the reform to a great number of monasteries, but we must make special mention of the work of renewal he accomplished at Monte Cassino. The illustrious abbey has kept a grateful memory of it and regards him as its second founder.

Urban V also published numerous decrees for the correction of morals, and to secure their execution he repeatedly ordered the holding of provincial councils and saw to it that they were held. Among his most useful ordinances may be cited those he issued against usurers, against the plurality of benefices, against luxury, against immodesty in dress, and against men of war who lived by murder and pillage instead of observing the laws of honour and military discipline. He contributed as much as Du Guesclin to delivering France from those dreaded armies of mercenaries called the *routiers* or Great Companies.

Urban V's solicitude extended to all the needs of religious and of civil society, the two being then so closely united. What added to the effectiveness of his tireless efforts was that he preached even more by example than by word. People admired the austerity of his life, the delicacy of his conscience and the fervour of his piety. Far from seeking pomp, he made modesty and simplicity reign in his palace. All his life he wore the monastic habit, and the people were moved to see him at public festivals dressed like a humble monk. To the end of his days he kept the habits of mortification and frugality he had formed by observing the Benedictine Rule with scrupulous fidelity. Love of the poor was one of his chief virtues. When dishes less plain than usual were served at his table, he had them carried to the needy. Every day during his meals he asked those admitted to his presence whether they knew of unfortunates whose misery no one relieved; and he hastened to send those abandoned poor money, food and clothing. Sometimes these, abusing his charity, came to his audiences to beg fresh favours. The cardinals, out of prudence, wished to keep them away; but the Pope called these poor people, listened to them patiently and never sent them away without some proof of his affection.

To consolidate the moral reforms that his example and word so eloquently commended, Urban V applied himself to spreading instruction and fostering sound studies: he rightly regarded ignorance as one of the chief causes of the corruption of morals.

With lords who thought so little of learning that they boasted of not being able even to sign their names, the people would have been sunk in barbarism if the Church had not taught them the most essential truths. Urban V revived the love of study everywhere. He restored to the University of Paris its former lustre, gave it wise regulations and helped it to become that powerful corporation whose doctors were more than once consulted by popes and kings. Extending his care to the then so disinherited lands of the North, he founded the University of Cracow for Poland, and shortly afterwards the University of Vienna for Austria. To give striking proof of the value he set on the progress of letters and sciences, he maintained at his own expense more than a thousand students in the various universities of Europe, providing their food and supplying them with books and clothing. At Montpellier he founded the college of Saint-Germain for sixteen Benedictine students of law, and the college of Saint-Matthieu for twelve students of medicine from the Gévaudan, and took their upkeep upon himself. He established a school of chant at Toulouse and entrusted to skilled masters the teaching of music to young boys who were to sing during the solemn Mass in the university church.

Thus, by multiplying the sources of instruction and opening the higher schools to studious youth, Urban V continued the tradition of Albert the Great, of Thomas Aquinas and of all those great men of the thirteenth century whose brows shine with the double halo of genius and holiness.

If such were the works of the blessed Pontiff for reforming morals and combating ignorance, with what ardour did he not labour to make the light of faith shine more brightly! For to him may well be applied the Psalmist's words: *Zelus domus tuae comedit me*, "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up."

We shall shortly recall his tireless efforts to convert the infidels and to bring back to the Church the heretics and schismatics who had separated from her. But we cannot forget what he did for our Catholic lands to preserve religion in them; for to this thought must be referred the many churches and monasteries he built or restored.

The abbey of Saint-Victor, so dear to the holy Pontiff, was bound to claim his attention first, and in fact he had considerable works carried out there. Most of them have disappeared amid the misfortunes of the times; yet the remains of the old fortifications he raised round the monastery can still be seen today. The present apse of the church of Saint-Victor is the one he had built, and one may henceforth venerate the remains of the tomb in which his sanctified bones rested for several centuries. At Montpellier he had a great church built under the invocation of St. Benedict and St. Germanus, now the cathedral. At Mende he likewise rebuilt the cathedral on a grandiose plan, and he founded besides two collegiate churches in the same diocese. One of them was at Bédouès, a little town near his birthplace, where his family's tomb was.

What should we not have to add if we wished to make known what the holy Pope did in other lands? We must, however, mention, if only for the record, the countless works of rebuilding and restoration he carried out at Rome and in Italy. In the more than sixty years of the Papacy's absence almost all the churches of the holy city were falling into ruin; even the basilicas, notably those of St. Paul and the Lateran, were in the greatest dilapidation. Urban V resolutely set to work; under his powerful impulse everything soon changed in appearance, and the holy places became more worthy of the majesty of Him to whom they are consecrated.

The recognition the blessed Pontiff made of the sacred heads of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul was an occasion of immense consolation to his piety; he wished himself to show them to the Roman people. During his pontificate Urban V approved several religious Orders. The most celebrated, by reason of its foundress's name, is that established by St. Bridget: the holy widow came herself to Rome from the depths of Sweden and obtained the approbation she sought. These works, done in the midst of the faithful flock, did not suffice to satisfy the holy Pontiff's zeal. The Lord had put the flame of the apostolate in his heart, and he needed to pour out its ardour on the peoples sitting in the shadow of infidelity, schism and heresy. He sent missionaries into Wallachia and Lithuania. The religious to whom he entrusted the evangelization of Bulgaria baptized more than two hundred thousand persons in a short time. A Franciscan bishop and twenty-five religious of his Order spread through Georgia and the neighbouring countries. Urban V created an archbishop of Cambaluc, or Peking, and sent him with several Friars Minor into China and Tartary. He even wrote to the dreaded Tamerlane to commend to him the preachers of the Gospel who were travelling through his vast empire, and to thank him for having shown himself favourable to the Christians living under his rule.

But nothing equals our Blessed one's efforts to end the baneful schism that had separated the Greek Church from the centre of unity. The Emperor of the East, John Palaeologus, yielding to his pressing entreaties, came to Rome with the Empress Helena Cantacuzene. After many conferences with the sovereign Pontiff he abjured the schism on St. Luke's day, 18 October 1369, and solemnly made profession of the Catholic faith. This event filled Urban V's heart with joy. He announced it to the Christian world and besought the Greeks to imitate the example the emperor had just given them. "If God granted us this grace," he told them, "that under our Pontificate the Latin Church and the Church of the East might be reunited after being so long separated, we would gladly close our eyes to the light and say with the holy old man Simeon: Now, Lord, let thy servant depart in peace, for my eyes have seen thy salvation." A great religious movement stirred the other Orientals. The patriarch of the Nestorians came from Mosul to Rome to bow beneath the Pope's blessing, and several princes of Albania and Moldavia abjured the schism and returned to the bosom of the Catholic Church.

Unhappily there were peoples who resisted every effort made to bring them to the true faith. These were the Muslim peoples: proud of their rapid successes, they nursed the hope of subjecting the whole earth to the law of Mahomet. Urban V foresaw the dangers threatening Christendom. He heard, so to speak, the noise of the

Ottoman squadrons about to hurl themselves on Constantinople. He would have liked to prevent such a disaster and to arm all the princes of the West against the common enemy. As early as Good Friday of the year 1363 he had proclaimed the crusade against the Turks and besought Christians to go and bring prompt help to their brethren of the East. The King of France, John the Good, and the King of Cyprus, Peter of Lusignan, had received the cross from the sovereign Pontiff's hands and sworn to deliver the Holy Sepulchre. It seemed that the old cry, "God wills it! God wills it!" was about to ring through all Europe as in the days of Peter the Hermit and Godfrey of Bouillon; but the death of the King of France upset all Urban V's plans, diminished the number of crusaders and delayed their departure. When Peter of Lusignan left the port of Venice he took with him only twelve thousand men. This little army performed prodigies of valour and took Alexandria by storm. But this brilliant feat of arms was without result. Discouragement soon seized the crusaders, and most of them returned home. Urban V redoubled his entreaties to the Christian princes; they remained deaf to his voice. They would not forget their private quarrels to league together against the formidable enemy who was about to fall on Europe after subjecting Egypt and Palestine to his iron yoke.

What help France and England could have brought the Christians of the East if they had united their forces! But these two rival nations were fighting fiercely, the one for the integrity of her territory, the other for the increase of her power. If Urban V extended his solicitude to all the peoples of Europe, he did not forget that France was his fatherland. His heart was broken when he learned that French blood was flowing in heroic combats. God, no doubt, had given France a great captain, the Constable Du Guesclin, and in Guyenne as in Brittany our enemies were falling back before his victorious arms; but every success was dearly bought. Already the cannon, which the progress of civilization ought to have abolished and has only perfected, was heaping corpses on the battlefield. Urban V resolved to interpose between the Kings of France and England. He hoped they would not dare continue the struggle when he himself begged them to lay down their arms. That was one of the chief motives that decided him to leave Rome, although weakened by illness: he wished to persuade the two most powerful kings of Christendom to conclude a treaty of peace and to league together against the Muslims. Death did not allow him to accomplish this work of pacification.

Welcomed at Marseilles with transports of joy, he could go no farther than Avignon. Feeling his end near, he wished out of humility to leave the apostolic palace and had himself carried to his brother's house, at the foot of those lofty towers where he had received so many honours. He asked that the doors be opened and that the people be allowed to pass round his bed. "They must be able to see," he said, "how Popes die!" After receiving the sacraments of the dying and commending his soul to God, he breathed his last holding the cross in his hands. It was Thursday, 19 December 1370, about three o'clock in the afternoon. He was in his sixty-first year.

The news of the holy Pope's death spread rapidly and caused general affliction; but at the same time there arose throughout Europe as it were a unanimous chorus of praise, telling again the holiness of his life, the immortal works he had accomplished and the greatness of his faith and charity, whose effectiveness had been felt to the ends of the earth.

VENERATION AND RELICS

The solemn obsequies of the blessed Pope took place three days after his death amid a great concourse of people; and that very day God was pleased to make the holiness of His illustrious Pontiff shine forth by wonders of every kind. Urban V's body was buried before the altar of the basilica of Notre-Dame des Doms at Avignon. Eighteen months later, on 31 May 1372, his venerable remains were exhumed and translated to Marseilles, where the religious of Saint-Victor placed them in a magnificent tomb. Excavations have just been made in that church, but their lack of success is beginning to make it feared that the Vandals of '93 scattered his relics.

The people spontaneously paid this holy Pope the honour given to the Saints. His image was engraved everywhere; the sacred nimbus adorned his brow, and the title of Saint or Blessed was inscribed beneath. This devotion made such rapid progress that four years after Blessed Urban V's death the walls of the church of Saint-Victor were literally covered with ex-votos.

His canonization was requested of Pope Gregory XI, his successor; but the agitations of the time prevented him from pursuing the matter. The request was renewed to Clement VII, who sat at Avignon, and this pontiff entrusted several prelates and other capable persons with the inquiry into his virtues and miracles. From all the information then gathered a long report was drawn up, the original manuscript of which still exists at Rome in the Vatican Library. Fresh troubles that arose were the reason why the Holy See could not at that time pronounce a definitive judgment.

Nevertheless, devotion to Blessed Urban V has always persevered; and although across the long space of five hundred years it has suffered much from the injuries of time, quite respectable traces of it have remained to our own day. That is why our Holy Father Pope Pius IX, at the request of some twenty bishops of France and Italy, has deigned to confirm in a canonical and solemn manner the cult paid to our Blessed one. The pontifical decree is dated 10 March 1870. His office is said in the diocese of Marseilles, with double rite, on 19 December.

We have taken this biography from the Pastoral Letter of Mgr Charles-Philippe Place, Bishop of Marseilles, on the occasion of the confirmation of the cult of Blessed Pope Urban V (December 1870). — Cf. *Vie du bienheureux Urbain V, pape*, by the Abbé Charbonnel (Marseilles, Mabilly, 1871).

ST. PROTHASIA OR PROTAISE, VIRGIN AND MARTYR AT SENLIS (ABOUT 282)

The end of the third century was the age of the Church's great struggles and great triumphs. Driven from hearts, the devil could not allow Christianity to establish its reign there without raising the most violent storms against it. The effects of the jealous fury he inspired in the emperors Diocletian and Maximian were cruelly felt throughout the Church of Gaul. Rictiovarus, one of those princes' most implacable ministers, was charged by them to labour at extinguishing in the lands of the Beauvaisis the very last sparks of the faith. Arriving at Senlis, this madman hastened to seek out the Christians in order to make them apostates or martyrs. It was then that God raised up in that city a young girl named Prothasia, whose faith and unshakable firmness revived the courage of the people evangelized by St. Regulus (Rieul). Prothasia, it is said, was a native of Senlis. From her tenderest years she had inclined her ear to the lessons of wisdom and her soul to the inspirations of grace; and so she soon showed all the virtues that adorn the young girl brought up in the school of Jesus Christ. Having learned from the holy Scriptures that chastity is a treasure enclosed in vessels of clay, she surrounded herself, to keep it, with the triple rampart of humility, prayer and penance, thus showing by her example to Christian youth the means of escaping the defilements of the world. Not content with giving the divine Master all the powers of her heart, she wished besides, sighing after the glory of martyrdom, to shed for Him the last drop of her blood. Her desires were granted: seized and brought before Rictiovarus, she was ordered to sacrifice to the gods of the empire. The tyrant, to whom the wonders of grace were unknown, thought he would win a quick and easy triumph over the young Christian's faith; but God, who fought with her, foiled his treacherous efforts: Prothasia trampled the idols underfoot and openly adored Jesus Christ. Her reward was not slow in coming; she received the same day the double crown of virginity and martyrdom. By her heroic devotion she showed her fellow citizens the excellence of the faith and the sacrifices a Christian must be ready to make to defend it. The torture and death of Prothasia took place about the year 282.

The remains of the virgin martyr were gathered up by the faithful of Senlis and buried near the tomb of St. Regulus, where they rested until the twelfth century. In 1191 they were solemnly translated into the cathedral church, which had just been rebuilt on a much larger plan. Formerly several feasts were celebrated in her honour in the diocese of Senlis, in the months of May and October. Her name was often invoked in the holy offices; it was even given to a fountain and a street of the city. During the days devoted to her cult, as in times of public calamity, her relics were carried in procession. Out of respect for her memory, King Philip Augustus (1180–1223) had a chapel built and dedicated to her in the cathedral. The priest who served this sanctuary enjoyed several privileges, among others that of celebrating holy Mass in the presence of the kings of France whenever they came to live in their palace at Senlis.

Vies des Saints du diocèse de Beauvais, by the Abbé Sabatier.

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[1] Successor of St. Theodosius (508–515), St. Gregory, whose acts are unknown to us, is regarded as the twelfth bishop of Auxerre. Quite recently a translation of his relics was made in the catacombs of Saint-Germain at Auxerre. — *Local notes.*

[2] Du Saussay relates that his body was carried into Normandy and laid at Saint-Valery in a priory dependent on the abbey of Fécamp, where in his time it was held in great veneration. He adds that five parishes of the diocese of Rouen had chosen him as their patron. — *Saints of Franche-Comté.*

[3] We shall give the life of St. Melania the Younger at 31 December, the day on which she is cited in the Roman martyrology, which is also that of her death.

[4] We sketched the notice of St. Pontian at 19 November (vol. XIII, p. 606).

[5] See the notice of St. Eusebius of Vercelli at 15 December.

[6] Milton's *Paradise Lost* has been translated by Mgr P. Guérin (Paris, Hachette, 1867).

20 December

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY

The Vigil of St. Thomas, apostle. — At Rome, the martyrdom of Saints Liberatus and Bajulus. — At Alexandria, the holy martyrs Ammon, Zeno, Ptolemy, Ingenes and Theophilus, soldiers, who, being on duty at the tribunal and seeing that a Christian under torture was beginning to waver and was near to denying the faith, did what they could by gestures and looks to raise his courage; and, as all the people cried out against them for this, they sprang into the midst of the assembly and loudly confessed that they were Christians. Their victory was a triumph for Jesus Christ, who had inspired them with so magnanimous a resolve. 249. — At Geldube (in Thrace), St. Julius, martyr. 4th c. — In Arabia, the holy martyrs Eugene and Macarius, priests, who, for having rebuked Julian the Apostate for his impiety, were cruelly ill-treated and covered with wounds; then, having been banished to a vast desert, they were put to death there by the sword. 362. — At Antioch, the birthday in heaven of St. Philogonius, bishop, who from an advocate was called to the government of that Church, where he began the combats for the Catholic faith against Arius with St. Alexander, bishop, and other faithful ministers, their colleagues; after which, full of merits, he fell asleep peacefully in Our Lord. St. John Chrysostom delivered an excellent panegyric in his honour on his feast day. 322. — At Brescia, St. Dominic, bishop and confessor. About 612. — In Spain, the death of St. Dominic of Silos, abbot, of the Order of St. Benedict, very celebrated for his miracles for the deliverance of captives. 1073.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED

At Hautvillers (Marne, arrondissement of Reims, canton of Ay), in the diocese of Reims, St. Malou, priest and confessor. Date uncertain. — In the former abbey of Luxeuil (*Luxovium*, founded by St. Columban), in the diocese of Besançon, St. Ursicinus, monk. 7th c.

MARTYROLOGIES OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS

Martyrology of the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. — St. Eusebius, bishop of Vercelli, whose memory is celebrated on 1 August and 14 November.[1] 370.

Martyrology of the Order of Friars Preachers. — In Spain, the death of St. Dominic of Silos, abbot, of the Order of St. Benedict, very celebrated for his miracles for the redemption of captives. 1073. — The Vigil of St. Thomas, apostle.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS

In Germany, Blessed Peter Canisius, apostle of that country. 1597. — At Certaldo, in Tuscany, Blessed Julia della Rena, recluse. 1367. — Among the Friars Preachers, Blessed Peter of la Cadireta, martyr, of the Order of St. Dominic. Born at Moià, like Blessed Pons of Planella, he was martyred like him by the heretics, at Urgel (Catalonia), where he had founded a convent of the Order. He was stoned to death like St. Stephen. Since his death his relics have been placed on an altar in the church of St. Dominic at Urgel; until 1823 the stones used for his martyrdom had even been kept. At that time they were scattered by the revolutionaries. Nevertheless, the Blessed one's body could be saved from their profanations, and he is still honoured today on the altar just mentioned. This blessed Martyr is represented holding the palm in one hand and in the other some stones in a fold of his cope. 1277.

ST. URSICINUS OR URSANNE, ABBOT, IN THE DIOCESE OF BASEL, SWITZERLAND

7th century.

Via quaedam est ad perfectionem simplicitas. Simplicity is as it were a road that leads to perfection. — St. John Chrysostom.

St. Ursicinus, commonly called St. Ursanne, was one of the disciples of St. Columban and lived with that great man in the monastery of Luxeuil. Formed under the eyes and by the example of this holy abbot, Ursicinus made rapid progress in the ways of evangelical perfection and formed a very close friendship with him. When St. Columban was obliged to leave his abbey through the intrigues of Queen Brunhild, Ursicinus, who was so tenderly attached to him, could not bring himself to abandon him. He sacrificed his rest and his health, and, had it been necessary, he would even have sacrificed his life to follow his holy friend; but the treacherous Brunhild, not willing even to leave Columban the comfort of having a friend with him, induced King Theuderic II to have Columban taken under escort to Nantes, to be sent back from there to Ireland. Ursicinus had not the heart to return to Luxeuil; but, following the example of St. Deicolus, who had chosen a solitude where the monastery of Lure was later built, he withdrew into the mountains of Switzerland and preached the faith to the peoples of that country. Soon, however, overcome by his inclination for retirement, he went and settled in a frightful solitude on the banks of the Doubs, in that part of the country which then belonged to the duchy of Alsace. There he led a very mortified life: his bed was the hollow of a rock; his food a few wild fruits or roots, and his drink the water of the river near which he had settled. He sought, as far as lay in him, to keep [*printed* "replace"] the rule of Columban, and he went even far beyond the austerities it prescribes. Following the lessons he had received at Luxeuil, he applied himself to crucifying his flesh, curbing his disordered desires and subduing his passions. Ordering his inner life in this way, he established peace in his heart and kindled there lively sentiments of humility, gentleness and all the Christian virtues. He took care to animate all his exercises and all his actions with that interior spirit which gave value to all his undertakings: this interior spirit is the foundation of true virtue; for without it one builds only on sand, and the most rigorous austerities sometimes become harmful if they are not directed by this principle.

Ursicinus had renounced the world, and he had found heaven in his solitude. His extraordinary love of retirement won him the gift of prayer and contemplation in the highest degree. The exercises of penance had

such charms for him that he often devoted whole nights to them. So intimate a union with God had brought him to an absolute mortification of the senses and of all the faculties of the soul: hence that unalterable tranquillity which bespoke a man accustomed to master his passions. The peace of his soul showed itself on his face in a gentle serenity and a wonderful grace. Those who had discovered him were struck with admiration at finding in so frightful a solitude a man who resembled an angel rather than a mortal. But such is the ascendancy of virtue over even the wildest hearts that scarcely had Ursicinus made himself known when he found himself surrounded by disciples ready to walk in his footsteps. Although our Saint had wished to live alone and without witness, he nevertheless consented, out of love for his neighbour, to the request of the faithful and received several into his cell. When later the report of his holiness had spread through the country, a great number of Christians came forward and begged as a favour to live under his direction. Ursicinus received them, and, supported by the gifts made to him, he built a church which he dedicated to the Prince of the Apostles, and a small monastery. This church later gave birth to a little town which took the name of Saint-Ursanne: it belonged to the temporal domain of the bishops of Basel, having been given to them by Rudolph III, King of Burgundy.

Ursicinus lived like a father among his fervent anchorites. He cherished them as his children and carried them all in his heart; he guided their faltering steps and taught them to bear the yoke of the Lord. In their needs and temptations they turned to him as to the oracle of heaven, and the blessed abbot led them as by the hand towards the heavenly fatherland. He noted with keen pleasure the progress they made in good and constantly encouraged them in it. One of the virtues that most characterized our Saint was a happy simplicity of heart, the essential mark of a disciple of Jesus Christ. The Saviour assures us that no one can enter the kingdom of heaven unless he becomes like a little child and roots out all the disordered affections of his heart, so as to attain the simplicity natural to early childhood.

History relates that the Lord rewarded His servant’s virtues with extraordinary graces and gave him the gift of miracles. The holy man was regarded as the benefactor of the whole district and deserved that name on more than one count. He knew by revelation the day of his death and prepared for it by redoubled fervour. Having gathered his disciples, he addressed a very moving discourse to them and urged them to love one another and to spur one another on to good by the practice of the evangelical virtues. He besought them to be always faithful to their vocation and never to let the devil bring havoc into their community; the devout anchorites, melting into tears, promised it. Ursicinus then asked to receive the last sacraments, which were administered to him amid the canticles and prayers that the whole community sent up to heaven. Thus fortified with the help of the Church, Ursicinus commended his soul to God and bade his children a tender farewell, telling them he hoped to see them all again one day in blessed eternity. At these words his disciples raised lamentable cries and were about to accuse heaven of robbing them of so good a master at a time when they still needed him so much. The dying man consoled them, and, seeing calm somewhat restored among them, he began to recite various psalms, and at last closed his eyes for ever to the light, on 16 December. The year of his death is uncertain; but it may be placed with some foundation after the middle of the seventh century. Ursicinus had reached a very advanced age. His body was buried in the church of St. Peter, where it almost at once drew crowds by the various graces the faithful obtained through his intercession. The church where this venerable body rested later received the name of Saint-Ursanne, and the Blessed one’s tomb was long to be seen near the high altar. The cult of this holy abbot was approved by several sovereign Pontiffs, which led the bishops of Basel to insert his feast in the Proper of the Saints of their diocese.

The little community of Saint-Ursanne grew considerably after the death of its founder: the Rule of St. Benedict was introduced there, and it was long distinguished for its fervour. Several of its religious preached the Gospel with success in that part of Helvetia, which has belonged successively to various masters. The bishops of Basel joined it to their domains and kept it long; today it forms part of the canton of Berne.

Taken from the *Histoire des Saints d'Alsace* by the Abbé Hunckler.

BL. PETER CANISIUS OF NIJMEGEN, APOSTLE OF GERMANY

1597. — Pope: Clement VIII. — Emperor of Germany: Rudolf II.

Abdica te a teipso, ne abdiceris a Christo: repudia te, ut recipiaris a Christo. Renounce yourself, so as not to be renounced by Christ; disown yourself, so as to be received by Christ. — Salvian.

The family of Peter Canisius was one of the most distinguished in Holland; his father, at first counsellor to Duke Charles of Lorraine, was afterwards bailiff of Verdun. It was under the paternal roof that Peter spent his first years in innocence. Then he was sent to Cologne to learn letters. In a short time he had finished his course of humanities and received the degree of doctor of civil law. He then came to Louvain to be initiated into canon law.

These were the worst days of the sixteenth century. Luther had risen up from the bosom of the Church, impetuous, obstinate, proud to excess. Driven by the spirit of evil and rebellion, this man had stripped off his monk's habit and, with anathema on his lips, had vowed the most implacable of hatreds against Catholicism; he had sworn the ruin of the Papacy. Canisius was born at Nijmegen while the apostate monk was burning the bulls of Leo X at Wittenberg.

From then on nothing was to stop the heresiarch. He threw down the gauntlet at one stroke to the Pope and to the Emperor Charles V. The Pope, assisted by Jesus Christ, resists and triumphs; but the emperor, faithful at first, is soon troubled at the sight of the war that threatens him, and, at the price of unhappy concessions, buys the momentary submission of his rebellious subjects. When Luther dies, his work is accomplished; the Reformation has struck deep roots throughout Europe.

They spread rapidly. Germany, which receives them with the greatest favour, is to be their first victim; along with the Catholic faith, the imperial constitution is threatened; the princes, who are no longer obeyed, revolt in their turn against Charles V; blood flows in torrents on every side. The Church gathers herself for an instant: then, assisted by the Holy Spirit, she rises up as one at the voice of her head, and shows herself more living and stronger than ever. To the league formed at Schmalkalden by the Protestants she opposes the Council of Trent. … It is Canisius who is to bring us into the assembly of the Fathers of the Church.

It was there [*sic: the printed text has an ellipsis and passes over his entry into the Society of Jesus*] that the young religious was formed; and his progress in the way of perfection was so rapid that, his novitiate barely completed at Cologne under the direction of Father Peter Faber (Lefèvre), he was judged worthy of the priesthood and at once called to succeed this same Father Faber in the office of superior. We find him again explaining the Epistles of St. Paul to the theologians of the University and the Gospels to the students of the Collège du Mont, and at the same time preparing a new edition of the works of St. Cyril of Alexandria and St. Leo the Great. But suddenly he is called to greater destinies. From this moment begins his struggle against the Reformation.

A great scandal had fallen upon the Church of Germany: the Archbishop of Cologne, Hermann von Wied, had let himself be seduced and drawn into heresy. At the sight of their pastor's treachery the city was indignant; the clergy, the University and the magistrates, jealous to keep the treasure of their faith intact, resolved to ask for the deposition of the guilty man. Yet no one dared go to Charles V and to George of Austria, prince-bishop of Liège, to present so grave a petition. All eyes turned to Canisius: it was he who would be, before the emperor and the cardinal, the spokesman charged to protest against the unworthiness of the culprit. A delicate mission, which shows the esteem already felt for the young Jesuit!

God seconded the envoy of the people of Cologne: the Pope excommunicated Hermann and replaced him by a holy priest.

During his journey the Blessed had met at Ulm Cardinal Otto Truchsess, Bishop of Augsburg. The prelate, struck by his rare merit, resolved to send him to the Council of Trent as his theologian. Ignatius of Loyola, when consulted, replied to the cardinal that his choice could not have fallen better. It was in vain that, on the return of its negotiator, Cologne put forward its claims to him; Canisius had his place marked out among the Fathers of the Council.

A gathering of the Fathers of the Church at that time seemed impossible. The Emperor Charles V, caught between Catholics and Protestants, would do nothing that seemed to favour either side; the King of France did not wish for an assembly in which the Pope would be master; finally, the Pope himself might fear some attempt against his authority: and yet, in the midst of so many difficulties and obstacles, the work of God was accomplished and the faith was saved. An eternal lesson which God has at all times been pleased to give to the bold who would resist His Christ or His Church!

Among the great crowd of prelates and theologians called to the Council by the voice of the Roman Pontiff, Canisius, from the beginning of the sessions, was placed in the first rank. At the moment when, the preliminaries ended, the Council was about to begin its dogmatic sessions, fevers broke out at Trent, and the seat of the assembly was transferred to Cologne [*sic, for Bologna*]. Assisted by the learned Jesuit James Laynez, the Pope's theologian, Canisius was charged with drawing up an exact list of the errors advanced by the heretics on the subject of the sacraments, and with gathering from the monuments of tradition the foundations of the definitive rulings. The expectation of St. Ignatius and of Cardinal Otto Truchsess was not disappointed: each time the young Jesuit raised his voice in the assembly, the Fathers of the Council admired in him the man of God, coming with his noble and touching eloquence to stir hearts and convince minds.

But after the troubles that followed the murder of the Duke of Piacenza, the assembly was dissolved: Canisius was recalled to Rome by St. Ignatius. We shall soon find him again at the new session of the Council.

Ignatius and Canisius were, it seems, eager to know each other better… Who shall tell the outpourings of those two souls! Ignatius initiated Canisius into the secret designs of the Lord for his nascent work, and, who knows? in His sublime goodness, the Most High, tearing away the veils of the future, was perhaps showing them this Society of Jesus embracing the whole universe with the flames of divine love, at once regenerating the old world and converting the new!

Everything, in the time of Ignatius, had still to be founded: masters were needed capable of eclipsing their heretical rivals. It is known that Luther owed part of his power to his ardent eloquence and to his prodigious facility in treating philosophical and religious matters in his mother tongue; the disciples who were to take his place in his teaching imitated him and very quickly acquired that prestige which dazzles weak minds. Ignatius formed masters who soon surpassed the so-called reformers.

Canisius, after five months spent in prayer and study beside his superior, left for Messina; and he who a short time before had sat among the Fathers of the Council had to teach rhetoric. For a year he discharged this task with that devotion and love of duty which made him find charm in the least of employments. He was soon to reappear on a vaster stage.

He was suddenly recalled to Rome to pronounce his solemn vows: this was, so to speak, the completion of the man of God. Peter consecrated himself solemnly and irrevocably to the work of Providence; Ignatius could die in peace: he counted one valiant fighter more in his army of élite.

From now on the professed religious belongs to Germany; we are going to see this true reformer at work.

Duke William had asked for holy masters to raise up public instruction in Bavaria. Canisius, Le Jay and Salmeron, three predestined disciples of the General of the Society of Jesus, received the order to go to Ingolstadt to found a college there. For all their baggage they had the crucifix, the *Spiritual Exercises*, and

the *Ratio studiorum*, or “plan of studies”. With these two little books the Jesuits have moved the world: from the first they draw that superhuman strength which guides them beyond the seas towards the infidel peoples; the second serves them as an unfailing rule in the work of educating youth.

Duke William had nothing but praise for the Jesuits; the most brilliant success crowned their efforts. The University named Canisius its rector; he declined the honour, but Ignatius commanded, and the religious submitted. From that day all prospered: books tainted with heresy were taken from the students, the disputes between masters and pupils died down, and the Blessed’s words rekindled in the hearts of the young respect and love for work. And so the University wished to perpetuate the memory of its rector and inscribed his praise in its annals.

When the six months of his rectorship were over, the apostle of Ingolstadt could give thanks to Him who was pleased to pour out so many favours through his hands.

The report of these marvels spread rapidly through Germany; from every side letters and petitions were addressed to the superiors of Canisius; everyone wanted him. Ferdinand, King of the Romans, supported by the Sovereign Pontiff, obtained his presence at Vienna.

Austria, on his arrival, presented a heart-rending spectacle. The secular clergy, the religious Orders and the schools were infected with the hideous leprosy whose germ Luther had everywhere implanted. The towns no longer had pastors, the sacraments were no longer administered, the religious ceremonies were no longer celebrated. Canisius was at first dismayed at the immensity of the evil, but soon he prostrated himself before God and obtained from Him that Austria should be regenerated.

Canisius multiplied himself: he preached at court, he preached to the people, he catechized the children. Suddenly — a terrible chastisement of God! — the plague broke out in the city; again it was Canisius who was found at the bedside of the dying, tending the bodies and regenerating the hearts of the unhappy Viennese. At last he obtained a jubilee from the Holy Father, and he himself was its preacher; and in the midst of an immense concourse he vindicated the misunderstood honour of indulgences.

At the same time, with the generosity of noble families to help him, he opened a boarding school; the sons of the noblest inhabitants flocked to it. Soon the angelic Stanislaus Kostka, guided by the Virgin Mary, was to come and be formed there in the holy virtues that were to charm the world. Vienna was being reborn to the faith; the King of the Romans wished to reward the zeal of the apostle by offering him the episcopal see of this diocese which he had so happily transformed. Canisius accepted for some time the duty of this heavy charge, but he refused its honours.

We have said it: to the apostolate of the word Father Canisius knew how to join the apostolate of the pen. Let us halt, so to speak, in the middle of his life, to speak of that one of his works which has remained the most celebrated and the most popular: his catechism.

Ferdinand, that prince whom we saw a moment ago so full of admiration for the Blessed, had asked St. Ignatius for a short and solid exposition of Christian doctrine. It was to Canisius, as the most capable, that so important a work was entrusted. This abridgment of Christian doctrine, *Summa doctrinae christianae*, will remain, with the Catechism of the Council of Trent, an eternal monument of the Church’s triumph over error in the time of Luther.

Scarcely had the book appeared when Ferdinand, by a solemn rescript, spread it throughout the empire. Philip II of Spain soon imitated his uncle and had it printed in his states of the old and the new world. It was translated into all the languages of Europe: Russia, Poland, Sweden, Denmark, England, Ireland, Holland and Switzerland for a long time scarcely knew any other elementary exposition of the Catholic faith.

“In 1686,” the Reverend Father Alet tells us, “when the catechism of Canisius was published in Paris by the authority of Mgr de Harlay, it had reached, as the preface states, at least its four-hundredth edition.”

The reason for this success, and at the same time its greatest praise, has just fallen from the august lips of Pius IX in the brief of beatification: “Having noticed that heresy was spreading everywhere by means of little books, Canisius thought there was no better remedy for the evil than a good abridgment of Christian Doctrine. He therefore composed his own, but with such exactness, clarity and precision that there is none more fit to instruct the peoples and confirm them in the Catholic faith.”

Ruled by the sentiments of that extreme humility which characterized him, Canisius had resolved not to make himself known as the author of the catechism; but the secret, perhaps ill kept, was soon divulged, and the Blessed’s fame grew immensely. It was no longer Germany alone that called for his presence: Transylvania, Hungary, Silesia and Poland were soon disputing him.

Named meanwhile Provincial of Germany by St. Ignatius, the Blessed first concerned himself with securing the full establishment of the colleges of Prague, Ingolstadt and Munich; then, just as he was about to go into Bavaria, he was called to the Colloquy of Worms.

The Protestants had asked the lords of Germany present at the Diet of Ratisbon that a certain number of men chosen from the two camps should meet in conference in the city of Worms. The proposal pleased Ferdinand: he wished to humour the susceptibilities of the Lutheran princes, whom he was going to need for the war against the Muslims. Canisius, despite a certain repugnance, went to the colloquy at the wish of his superiors: he found already gathered there old Philip Melanchthon, Luther’s evil genius, Erhard Schnepf, Heinrich “Buttinger” [*so printed*] and Flacius Illyricus [*printed* “Flach Francowitz”], all fierce preachers “of the pure Gospel”. At first — it must be said, and the triumph was only the more brilliant for it — there was little enthusiasm on the Catholic side; the discussions, renewed day after day, led to no real result. The Blessed then had recourse to his great means: he prayed, and an inspiration from heaven came at once to his aid.

It was easy to see that the theologians of heresy did not agree among themselves on the most essential articles. Now the colloquy had been granted only to the adherents of the Confession of Augsburg. He therefore suggested that, to avoid confusion, it would be useful to set aside the doctors who did not accept this rule of faith. It is impossible to say how much this unexpected proposal disconcerted the dissidents. They began to attack one another. The Sacramentarians condemned the Anabaptists, the Anabaptists the Sacramentarians, and so on with the different sects. Melanchthon, despite his great age, had the grief of seeing himself insulted by his disciples. Soon they came to abuse and the most violent outrages, and for a moment it could be feared that there would be a real brawl. At last the most violent got the upper hand, and five who had shown more moderation were obliged to leave the field. They withdrew, leaving in the hands of the president a protest against the unworthy conduct of their colleagues.

The colloquy could not go on under such new conditions. The King of the Romans decided that the assembly was dissolved, and they separated, to the great dismay of the heretics, who blamed Canisius for their defeat. Indeed, friends and enemies agreed that it was to him that the honour of a result so happy for the Catholic cause belonged.

The defeated Lutherans then tried their most shameful weapons against the man already called “the hammer of heretics”: they invented ridiculous fables against him and spread the most infamous calumnies everywhere. The man of God redoubled his patience, despised these attacks, and calmly set himself to multiply against these adversaries acts of the most ardent charity. He was called into Upper Alsace; he went through all its towns doing good and healing the sad wounds which the so-called Reformation was inflicting on the Church.

But the evil was still growing, and it had just reached Poland. The Pope at once sent an apostolic nuncio there; two theologians accompanied him, and one of them was Canisius. On his arrival he found religion in the greatest peril.

This unhappy country was then ruled by the indolent Sigismund. This prince, at the sight of the ravages already caused by the Reformation, assembled a diet at Piotrków. But zeal and enthusiasm were at first lacking in this assembly; Canisius tried again and again to stir up faith in the indifferent hearts, and his efforts were in the end rewarded. Sigismund, spurred on by him, declared solemnly that he would not allow the rights of the Church to be touched in anything.

Meanwhile the sessions of the Council of Trent, for a time suspended, were about to resume their course. Pius IV, the Emperor Ferdinand and the apostolic legates judged by common accord that the presence of Canisius was necessary; they had not forgotten that eloquence, at once so gentle and so firm, which had charmed them at the first meeting of the Council, and they knew too what weight the authority of Canisius carried and what value a decision grounded by him would have.

Arriving at Trent on 14 May 1562, he found the holy Cardinal Hosius, his friend, close to death. But the joy the prelate felt at embracing the man he had so ardently desired to see suddenly restored his health.

When the work of the assembly resumed, Canisius was charged with presiding over a commission which was to revise the Index or Catalogue of condemned books. Several times the holy apostle had to treat before the Fathers the great subject of the Eucharist. It was then that his heart truly overflowed upon his lips. Faith inspired him, and the assembled theologians gave thanks to God who spoke to them through so eloquent a mouth. As for the orator, he wrote on the matter: “I was commanded to speak at the Council; it was to others that success was entrusted. The Lord helped me in view of the prayers of our Society. To Him alone be all the glory.”

The Council finally separated in 1563. It remained now to have its decisions accepted by the princes of Germany.

The Sovereign Pontiff, in his anxiety, did not know whom to charge with so delicate a mission, when he cast his eyes on Canisius; he at once named him apostolic nuncio and sent him to Germany. The task was fulfilled beyond all hope, and soon the lords were seen promulgating the decrees of the Council brought by the nuncio. This mission was nearing its end when Pope Pius V ordered Canisius to go to the Diet of Augsburg, which opened on 24 March 1566.

A new peril threatened the Church. Islam was ready to fall upon Christendom. To turn aside this scourge a powerful army was needed. The Protestants refused to subscribe the subsidies necessary to raise troops. At the Diet it was again Canisius who by his firmness overcame all this resistance, and he was seen to bring about on the part of the Catholics a solemn adherence to the decrees of the Council of Trent.

After so many labours rest seemed permitted; but for the Blessed rest lay in the struggle itself. The Sovereign Pontiff learned one day that the heretical principalities of Magdeburg had composed and published the ecclesiastical annals entitled *The Magdeburg Centuries*. It was an odious pamphlet, full of the most perfidious calumnies against the Catholic Church. The holy Pope, moved by such news, ordered Canisius to refute this biting satire, and the Blessed gave the world the book *On the Corruptions of the Word of God*, a masterpiece of controversy and at the same time a brilliant apology for religion.

Scarcely had the refutation appeared when Gregory XIII sent Canisius on a deputation to the princes of Germany, to urge them to consolidate the establishment of the German College by founding in their country other colleges and seminaries for German youth.

From Germany Canisius returned to Rome to settle the affairs of the foundation of the German College; then he set out again for the Colloquy of Nuremberg, accompanying the Bishop of Brescia. The colloquy was postponed, and while the Blessed thought himself free for a moment, there remained for him one last and magnificent mission.

A petition from the bishops of Basel, Constance and Lausanne had come to point out to Gregory XIII the danger the faith was running in Catholic Switzerland. The Bishop of Vercelli, charged by the Pope with reporting on the state of the country, wrote to Rome that the only means of saving religion was to establish there a college directed by the Fathers of the Society of Jesus. The plan was approved; but when it was learned in Switzerland that the Jesuits were on the point of arriving, Protestants and Catholics united in the most menacing declamations. The calumnies deliberately spread about the Society of Jesus were bearing their fruit. Only one man, it was thought at Rome, is capable of overcoming this resistance. That was to name Canisius. The mere presence of the holy apostle changed the face of the country.

Scarcely had he arrived at Fribourg when the Blessed became the object of everyone's veneration: a college was founded there, and Canisius was pleased to direct it himself. Although rector of the newly opened house, the Blessed still found time to preach, to visit the sick and to convert the dissidents.

The people of Fribourg grew ever more attached to their apostle. One day the Lutherans of Geneva, Lausanne and Basel sent shameful libels against the Society of Jesus to Fribourg. The canton of Fribourg answered these calumnies by binding itself by a solemn oath to keep the Catholic faith always intact.

On 5 August 1596 the buildings of the college had just been finished: they were solemnly inaugurated. At the end of the ceremony the holy old man, leaning on his staff, wished to thank the people of Fribourg for their generous sacrifices and their fidelity: he implored them never to betray their holy faith, and promised them the undying devotion of the Society of Jesus.

It was his *Nunc dimittis*. Desiring nothing more but heaven, the holy old man shut himself up wholly in God. Soon, so that nothing should be lacking to his already so numerous merits, he was struck with a dropsy which made him suffer a real martyrdom. On 20 December 1597, after four months of acute suffering, he declared that his life on earth was at last ended; and the next day, at about three in the afternoon, in the presence of his brethren, he gave back his beautiful soul to God. He was seventy-eight years old; he had spent fifty-four of them in the Society of Jesus.

Scarcely had the news of his death spread when one would have said a public calamity had suddenly fallen upon the city. People pressed in crowds at the doors of the college; they waited anxiously for the remains of the Saint to be exposed to public veneration. At last a *chapelle ardente* was prepared, and the people of Fribourg could come in crowds to kneel by the body of their benefactor. Some remained there motionless, as though waiting for those lips to come to life again and speak holy words to them; others prostrated themselves to kiss with respect the hands and feet of the servant of God; some, wishing at all costs to satisfy their devotion, secretly cut off a lock of his hair; they went so far as to tear his sacred vestments to shreds.

The day after next, the clergy, the Senate and the magistracy had the body removed and paid it funeral honours at the cost of the public treasury in the cathedral of St. Nicholas, where it was buried, with the reservation that the precious remains would be given back to the Jesuits as soon as they had a church to receive them.

The funeral oration of the venerable deceased was delivered by the provost of the Chapter. The people of Fribourg, jealous to perpetuate for ever the memory of Canisius, had an inscription engraved on his tomb recounting in magnificent terms the services which the holy Apostle had rendered to the cause of religion.

The first and most excellent of the virtues of Canisius, the one that breathes, so to speak, through his whole life, is the renunciation of self, the constant immolation of his whole being.

God, it is true, gives to the men He chooses for the accomplishment of His designs what is called a grace of state; but one is worthy of it only in so far as one strives to efface oneself entirely so as to be nothing but a docile instrument in the hands of the sovereign Master. There lies the whole secret of the marvels worked by the Saints we venerate: and who practised this holy self-denial more eminently than Peter Canisius? Have we

not seen him always ready to hasten wherever his superiors, who represent God on earth, called him? In turn he exercises the threefold apostolate of the pen, of prayer, and above all of example; he teaches the people, instructs the young, refutes heresy; at last he is called to treat as power with power with the great ones of the earth; and always and everywhere, in his religious cell as in the pulpit of the churches, at college as at the Council, before kings as at the foot of the throne of St. Peter, we find him humble and submissive to the inspirations from on high.

Humility and submission: these two words sum up the whole work of St. Ignatius, of whom Canisius was one of the first and one of the greatest disciples. The sublimity of the obedience recommended to the religious of the Society of Jesus has often been held up to ridicule. People have mocked the famous *perinde ac cadaver*. But have they reflected that this great precept of submission is the condition *sine qua non* of all authority, divine or human? Can one conceive a kingdom, can one understand an army, without obedience to the head of the government or of the expedition? If hatred of the religious or monastic habit were not the motive of these absurd recriminations, common sense first, and history after, would prove invincibly that submission is the guarantee of all power.

And humility, that virtue which man is given to understand only if he lifts his eyes on high — has it not at all times been the distinctive character of true greatness? Pride, which is opposed to it, as independence is to submission — are not these the two fundamental vices that have brought about the ruin of Protestantism?

Luther and Ignatius are born at the same time: the one preaches revolt against authority, and his first disciples, applying their master's principles rigorously, arrive at impotence and anarchy; the other commends to his children submission to authority, and three centuries only assure his work a longer duration.

A magnificent and living lesson, this perpetual struggle of truth against error! Every age that dawns upon the world attests it; but every age also proclaims more loudly the triumph of that truth, immutable as its principle, which is the eternal good and true, over error, which, despite its forms ever changing from day to day, is nothing but ruin and dust; for it rests only on the false and the evil.

On 20 November 1864 Rome, the eternal city, was in festival. At the sound of the cannon of the Castel Sant'Angelo, in the presence of the whole diplomatic corps, of the cardinals and prelates of the Roman court, of the staff of the French army of occupation, and of an immense crowd of people gathered at the Vatican Basilica, Pius IX ordained that in the eyes of the city and of the world the title and honours of Blessed should be accorded to the Venerable Peter Canisius, priest of the Society of Jesus.

Blessed Peter Canisius is represented with a dog beside him barking at heresy (his Dutch name, De Hond [i.e. de Hondt], means dog; and so the Lutherans, much displeased with his works, called him the dog of Nijmegen).

He is, with St. Nicholas, the patron of Fribourg in Switzerland.

Writings of Blessed Peter Canisius

Here is the list of the writings of Blessed Peter Canisius:

1° Collection of the Works of St. Cyril, Patriarch of Alexandria, 2 volumes. — Canisius dedicated the first to Sebastian von Heusenstamm [*printed* "Havensteim"], Archbishop of Mainz, and the second to his fellow students at Cologne.

2° Collection of the Sermons and Homilies of St. Leo the Great.

3° Martyrology or Ecclesiastical Calendar, in which the feasts of Jesus Christ and of the Saints are marked. The author attends chiefly to the Saints of Germany.

4° Collection of the Select Letters of St. Jerome.

5° Book for Confession and Communion.

6° St. John the Baptist, or the Forerunner of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

7° Explanation of the Epistles and Gospels.

8° Manual of Fervent Catholics.

9° Life of St. Beatus and St. Fridolin, first apostles of Switzerland.

10° Life of Blessed Nicholas, hermit [*Nicholas of Flüe*], with devotional practices in his honour.

11° Life of St. Maurice and his companions, soldiers of the Theban Legion.

12° Meditations on the Gospels.

13° Exercises of Piety.

14° The Christian's Itinerary.

15° The Spiritual Combat.

16° Select Prayers. Extracts were made from them which the Pope's legates had recited publicly at the Council of Trent, with the Litanies of Lent.

17° Sermons for the four Sundays of Advent and for Christmas.

18° Prayer Book.

19° Sacred Meditations.

20° Book of Confessions, on the model of the *Confessions* of St. Augustine.

21° Summa of Christian Doctrine. It is his Catechism that has made him so celebrated. Translations and abridgments of it have been made without number. This catechism has been the source and model of all those that have come since, and it has done infinite good to the Church. We have borrowed what has just been read from M. Adrien de Riancey. — The iconography is taken from the *Caractéristiques des Saints* by the Reverend Father Cahier, and the list of writings is the one given by Paquot in his *Mémoires littéraires*.

BL. JULIA DELLA RENA, RECLUSE AT CERTALDO IN TUSCANY (1367)

Julia was born at Certaldo, a small town in the diocese of San Miniato, in Tuscany. Her parents were noble; but this counts for nothing in the lives of the Saints. She understood early that humility is the foundation of all the virtues, and so she resolved, despite her birth, to become a servant in the house of a man named Tinolfi at Florence. Then, fearing that the service of men would absorb too great a part of the time she wished to consecrate to God, Julia embraced the austere life of the recluses in her native town: her cell was near the parish church dedicated to St. Michael. She never troubled herself about her clothing or her food, content with what the children and charitable persons passed to her through the little window of her narrow retreat. To show her gratitude for the charity of her benefactors, she often gave them flowers of wonderful freshness, and that in every season of the year: did not flowers bloom unceasingly in her cell, at the hearth of divine love? She lived thirty years in this state of penance, and, ripe for heaven, fell asleep in the arms of the Lord on 9 January 1367. Her body was found kneeling in the attitude of ecstasy, giving off a fragrance that perfumed the whole cell. She was given a funeral worthy of the opinion held of her holiness; miracles came to confirm this opinion, and on 22 September 1821 Pope Pius VII approved the cult which the confidence of the faithful had long paid her.

Local notes.

[1] We sketched the notice of St. Eusebius of Vercelli at 15 December.

21 December

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY

At Calamina, the triumph of St. Thomas, apostle, who preached the Gospel to the Parthians, the Medes, the Persians and the Hyrcanians; having afterwards made his way as far as the Indies and instructed those peoples in the Christian religion, he was killed there with lances by order of the king of that country. His relics, first carried to Edessa, were afterwards translated to Ortona. 1st c. — In Tuscany, the holy martyrs John and Festus. — In Lycia, St. Themistocles, martyr, who, during the persecution of Decius, having offered himself in place of St. Dioscorus, who was being sought out to be put to death, was tortured on the rack, dragged over rough places, beaten with clubs, and so won the crown of martyrdom. 249. — At Nicomedia, St. Glycerius, priest, who, after many other torments, was thrown into the fire during the persecution of Diocletian, and so finished the course of his martyrdom. 303. — At Antioch, St. Anastasius, bishop and martyr, who was most cruelly massacred by the Jews under the Emperor Phocas. 609. — At Trier, St. Severinus, bishop and confessor. 4th c.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED

In the diocese of Paris, St. Thomas, apostle, named in the Roman martyrology of this day. 1st c. — In the Autun country, the anniversary feast of the solemn elevation (1119) of Saints Andochius, Thyrsus and Felix, martyrs at Saulieu, in the diocese of Dijon.[1] 179. — Formerly (before the Revolution), at Saint-Denis, in the diocese of Paris, the feast of the special veneration of the hand of St. Thomas, whose fingers entered the wounds of the Saviour. — At Toulouse, St. Honoratus, bishop of that see and confessor. Born in Navarre, he had been sent by St. Saturninus to Pamplona to take care of that infant church, and it was there that he learned of the death of his blessed master. The report of the countless conversions he was working beyond the Pyrenees having reached Toulouse, he was chosen by the clergy and faithful of that city to succeed Saturninus. In the first years of his episcopate the desire to visit the holy Places led him to undertake the journey to the East: St. Honestus, a disciple of St. Saturninus, accompanied Honoratus on this pilgrimage. Their common devotion satisfied, they parted, the one to return to Toulouse in the midst of his flock, the other to Pamplona, where his ministry called him. Several years had passed when Honestus sent to Honoratus an inhabitant of Pamplona named Firmin, a man distinguished by his birth and his rank. No one seemed to him more capable than the Bishop of Toulouse of instructing this young man in the faith and forming him in good morals. Docile to the instructions of his master, Firmin soon showed himself worthy of him. Honoratus raised him to the priesthood, and Firmin later laid the foundations of the Church of Amiens, of which he became the first bishop.[2] 3rd c.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS

Among the Friars Preachers, Blessed Adrian and his twenty-seven companions, martyrs, of the Order of St. Dominic. They were evangelizing Dalmatia with great zeal when the Muslims, bursting into the country, put them all to death by impalement. 13th c. — In Bithynia [*sic; Mount Latmus is in Caria*], St. Paul of Latros (Latmus), anchorite. At first a religious in the monastery of Karya, his love of penance and solitude led him to ask permission to live as a hermit. From then on he shut himself up in a cave on the summit of Mount Latros, where for some weeks he had nothing for food but green acorns, which made him vomit blood. At the end of eight months the abbot recalled him to the monastery of Karya. A little later he allowed him to follow his vocation. For the first three years he suffered great temptations, over which he triumphed by the fervour and constancy of his prayers. A peasant brought him a few small provisions from time to time; but usually he lived on the wild herbs that grew on the mountain. Needing water, he obtained it from God, who made a spring rise near his cave, which has flowed ever since. His name soon became famous; several

persons wished to live under his direction, and a laura was formed near his cave. Meanwhile the desire for a still greater retirement led him to plan crossing to the island of Samos; but, recalled by the entreaties of his disciples on Mount Latros, he yielded to their prayers. The Emperor

Constantine Porphyrogenitus often wrote to him to consult him on important affairs. He also received letters from popes, bishops and several princes. His tenderness for the poor was so great that he gave them all he possessed, even his food and his clothes. Once he wished to sell himself as a slave in order to help some persons who were in need. Feeling his end approach, he dictated Rules for the monks of his laura and fell asleep peacefully in the Lord on 13 December 956.

ST. THOMAS OF GALILEE, APOSTLE, MARTYR AT MYLAPORE IN THE INDIES

1st century.

The unbelief of St. Thomas made him an irreproachable witness of the resurrection of Jesus Christ; the faith of St. Thomas, grown livelier and more courageous after his unbelief, made him a zealous preacher and a glorious martyr of the resurrection. — Du Jarry, *Essais de panégyriques*.

St. Thomas was a Galilean and earned his living by fishing, like the other apostles; but like them he had the happiness of hearing the word of Jesus Christ, of leaving all things to follow Him, and of being chosen, out of the great number of His disciples, to make up the college of the twelve Princes of His Church. The Gospel speaks of him in particular on four different occasions. The first is when, after the death of Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Magdalen, some of the disciples wished to turn their Master from going into Judaea, because the chief priests and Pharisees had conspired against His life; he spoke up generously and said to them: *Eamus et nos, ut moriamur cum eo*: “Let us also go, that, if need be, we may die with him.” The second is when Jesus, speaking to them on the eve of His Passion of the many mansions in His Father’s house and of the place where He was going, added: “You know where I go, and the way you know.” Thomas, to be better instructed in this mystery, replied: “Lord, we know not whither thou goest; and how can we know the way?” The apostle’s answer gave the divine Master occasion to utter that great oracle: “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; no man cometh to the Father but by me. If you had known me, you would without doubt have known my Father also; and from henceforth you shall know him, and you have seen him.” On which the holy Fathers say excellently that He is the Way, because He leads us and we must follow His example; that He is the Truth, because He enlightens us and we must believe His word; and that He is the Life, because He sanctifies us and we shall live eternally only by possessing Him. No one goes to His Father except through Him, because there is no remission of sins but through His satisfactions, no grace but through His merits, and no glory but as a reward of His passion and death. Finally, in knowing Him one knows His Father, because they are but one same substance and one same God, though distinct in persons.

The third occasion, and the most celebrated, was after the resurrection of the Saviour. The evangelist St. John tells us that Thomas was not with his brethren when Jesus Christ appeared to them in the upper room, the doors being shut. They said to him on his return: “We have seen the Lord.” It was therefore right that he should believe so strong, so authentic and so disinterested a testimony; yet he doubted and would not believe it: “Except I shall see in his hands,” he answered them, “the print of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” He remained eight days in this state of mind, ever doubting and ever hoping. But the good Shepherd came to seek His sheep, which was in danger of being lost. He appeared a second time to His Apostles, with whom Thomas now was, and after giving them His peace, as He had done the first time, He turned to this disciple and said to him: “Put in thy finger hither and see my hands; and bring hither thy hand, and put it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing.” Then Thomas, like a man waking from a deep sleep, and passing from unbelief to an ardent and luminous

faith, cried out: *Dominus meus et Deus meus*: “My Lord and my God.” Thereupon the Saviour said to him: “Because thou hast seen me, Thomas, thou hast believed; blessed are they that have not seen, and have believed.”

The Fathers of the Church make excellent reflections on this whole conduct. St. Ambrose, St. Augustine and St. Cyril excuse St. Thomas, and hold that he spoke rather from a holy desire to see his Master than from any doubt or unbelief; but they acknowledge that it was extremely useful to the Church, and even more advantageous than the hasty faith of the other disciples, because, in obliging Thomas to touch the Saviour’s wounds, it healed the wounds of our unbelief and took from us every ground for doubting His resurrection. It is in this thought that another Father says the finger of St. Thomas became the teacher of the world, because it taught it the truth of the flesh of Jesus Christ and the ineffable mystery of His resurrection. Moreover, since what one sees is not an object of faith — for, according to St. Paul, faith is only of things that do not appear to our senses — the holy doctors remark that Thomas saw one thing and believed another: *Aliud vidit, aliud credidit*. He saw his Master’s wounds; he saw His living body; he saw His sacred humanity; but he believed His absolute dominion over all things; he believed His divinity, by which He is consubstantial with His Father; he believed His infinite love for men, which led Him to give Himself wholly to us, and which makes us know that He is not only Lord and God, but our Lord and our God. Thus he had a share in the blessing of those who do not fail to believe though they do not see.

Finally, the Gospel speaks of St. Thomas in particular once more, in an appearance of Our Lord of which this faithful Apostle, having gone fishing [*printed* “prêcher”, to preach; read *pêcher*] with St. Peter, St. James, St. John, Nathanael and two other disciples, had the happiness of being a witness. From that time he shared in the other favours of the apostolic College: he saw the Saviour ascend into heaven; he took part in the election of St. Matthias as apostle in the place of Judas; he received the fullness of the Holy Spirit and all the graces that accompanied that infinite source of heavenly blessings; he preached the Gospel in Jerusalem and in Judaea; he was persecuted, seized and scourged by the Jews; he contributed to the composition of the Creed which we call the Apostles’, in which St. Augustine attributes to him the article of the Resurrection of Our Lord; and finally he divided the whole world with his blessed brethren in order to undertake its conquest.

Setting out from Palestine, he went first towards the East, where, having found the Magi who had been the first to come and adore the Child Jesus at Bethlehem, he told them all that had happened since, in the course of His life, His passion, His death and His resurrection; he baptized them and associated them with the ministry of the Gospel, so that they might labour for the conversion of souls. He sent one of the seventy-two disciples, named Thaddaeus, to Abgar, King of Edessa, to announce to him the law of grace, according to the promise Our Lord had made him while still on earth to have him instructed by one of His disciples. As for himself, he went to carry the faith to the Ethiopians, whom he washed white in the saving waters of baptism, to use the expression of the great St. John Chrysostom.

It is for this reason that the Abyssinians, neighbours of that people and subjects of Prester John, have always had a singular devotion to him as their first Apostle. The Roman Breviary adds that he did the same among the Parthians, the Medes, the Persians, the Hyrcanians and the Brahmins. It is held too that he made his way as far as the great island of Taprobane, or Ceylon, and even into China. Indeed the Reverend Father Athanasius Kircher, a German of the Society of Jesus, in his book entitled *China illustrata*, reports that the Portuguese, passing into the Indies, noticed that the Christians of St. Thomas said in their office, in the Syriac or Chaldaic tongue, the following antiphons: “By St. Thomas the Chinese and the Ethiopians were brought to the knowledge of the truth. By St. Thomas the kingdom of heaven flew and went up into China. The Ethiopians, the Indians, the Chinese and the Persians, O Lord, in the commemoration of St. Thomas, offer their adoration to Thy holy name.”

We must not believe, however, that that famous stone found in China in the year 1625 [*printed* “4625”], on which the whole of Catholic doctrine is set out in Chinese characters, was engraved as early as the time of

our Apostle; for it is certain that it was engraved only in the time of the Tang dynasty, which was reigning in 636. But other, older monuments have been discovered there, by which it is known that the Christian religion was there long before; among others, an iron cross weighing three thousand pounds, whose inscription bears the year of Jesus Christ 239. The Germans also believe that St. Thomas instructed them in the faith; and so, despite all the disorders of heresy, churches dedicated in his honour are still to be seen in the most northerly provinces. Perhaps he did it through his disciples, who, from the Indies or China, may have spread into Tartary and from there into Germany. The Jesuits who have travelled in Brazil (that is, South America) assert that he was in those lands too, and that those peoples keep the tradition of it. This road, however, leading out of the Indies, is quite the opposite of that to Germany and the northern countries. But it is certain that the Providence of God worked great miracles to have the light of the Gospel carried in a short time throughout the whole earth.

Still, it must be admitted that St. Thomas spent the greater part of the time of his preaching in the East Indies, as in the particular nation that had fallen to his lot. Simeon Metaphrastes writes that he entered there poorly clad, wearing long, tangled hair, his face yellow and dried up, and his whole body so emaciated that he seemed rather the shadow of a man than a real man. Abdias the Babylonian relates several marvels he worked there; but, as the Church does not approve that history, we shall not dwell on it.

Some Jesuit accounts say that he began his preaching there with the island of Socotra, where he made some Christians; that from there he passed to the kingdoms of Cranganore, Quilon and Narsinga, on the Coromandel coast, and that he finally went to establish his chief residence at Mylapore, capital of this last kingdom. But Father Athanasius Kircher has given us another itinerary, which he declares was drawn from the archives of the Christians of Mylapore by Father Henry Roth, one of the great missionaries of his Society. This itinerary asserts that the divine Apostle, after travelling through Armenia and Mesopotamia, went to a city of Persia called Soltaniyeh, where he won a multitude of servants for Jesus Christ; that from there he entered the vast kingdoms of Kandahar, Kabul, Kafiristan and Gujarat [*printed* “Cazatarat”]; that he then crossed the mountains of Tibet, near Bengal, and arrived at last by the Deccan in the kingdom of Narsinga and the city of Mylapore; that everywhere he consecrated bishops and priests, and that he even assembled these bishops in Council in that city: of which there are still letters testimonial in the same archives of the Christians.

Moreover the inhabitants of the place tell of several admirable works he did there for the spread of the Gospel. They say, among other things, that when the blessed Apostle had undertaken to build a church there in honour of the true God, Sagamo, king of the country, and the idol priests, called Brahmins, opposed it with all their might. Meanwhile the sea, though ten leagues distant from the city, cast up on the shore a beam of prodigious size, which the king wished to have for a house he was building. He therefore assigned workmen and elephants to remove it and bring it to him; but neither these men, nor these animals, nor the machines that were used for the same purpose, could in any way make it budge from its place. “I offer,” said St. Thomas then, “to drag it alone as far as the city, if it will be given to me to build a church.” The king granted it to him very willingly, believing he would never manage it; but nothing was impossible to the servant of God: he tied his girdle to a knot in the beam and, having made the sign of the cross over it, drew it before everyone as far as the rampart of Mylapore, as easily as if it had weighed nothing.

This miracle was a source of blessings for the country: Sagamo and the other princes his neighbours were converted. The Apostle built the church he had planned and established divine worship in it; and, having set up on a great stone a cross which is still to be seen, and whose marvels the same Kircher has described for us, he foretold to the inhabitants that, when the sea should come to beat at the foot of this cross, God would send them from a distant clime white men who would preach to them the same doctrine he had taught them. The event has since justified this prediction: for when the Portuguese went to the conquest of Coromandel, the Ocean had so far encroached upon the land that it was at the foot of the cross. He worked yet another miracle

which did much to convert the idolaters: a wicked man had killed his own son with the design of accusing St. Thomas of the murder and so stirring up a furious persecution against him; the Apostle raised the boy to life and showed by this prodigy that he had not taken his life.

Such happy successes soon won for this zealous preacher the crown of a glorious martyrdom: for the Brahmins, unable to bear his abolishing the superstitions by which they lived and which gave them credit, conspired together to put him to death; and one day, while he was praying fervently on the stone at the foot of the cross, one of these priests killed him with a thrust of a lance. It is also said that soldiers who accompanied this sacrilegious man, to carry out the murder together, beat him down with stones and pierced him with arrows. His blood spattered the stone and the cross. The Roman martyrology and breviary say that this happened at Calamina. But it must be known that there is no city in the Indies bearing this name, and that Calamina is nothing other than Mylapore, called Calamina, or rather Calurmina, which in the language of Medabar [*Malabar*] means “on the stone” (from *Calur*, on, and *mina*, stone), to express the martyrdom of our Apostle, which he suffered on a stone. This is the judicious remark of Kircher, which he says is founded on the account of the Annals of Medabar.

St. Thomas is represented: 1° unrolling a scroll on which is read this article of the Creed: “He rose again the third day”; 2° summoned by Our Lord to come and probe the wounds which the lance and the nails marked in His members on Calvary; 3° holding either an architect’s rule or measuring rod, or a square, and carrying on his hand the model of a small palace. This is because he was the patron of architects, according to a singular legend that made him arrive in India as a builder; 4° with the lance with which he was pierced by the idolatrous Indians.

In the Middle Ages he was the patron of architects, masons and stonecutters.

Veneration and Relics

The disciples of St. Thomas carried off his body and buried it in the church he had had built; they put in his tomb the iron of the lance with which he had been pierced, the staff he used on his journeys, and an urn full of blood-stained earth. From that time the faith was preserved for a very long time in the country, so that the bishops of the Indies were even summoned to the general Councils of the Church. But in the course of the centuries it grew so weak and admitted so many errors that it was in danger of being entirely ruined, had not a Syrian of great merit named Mar Thoma, that is, Lord Thomas, gone there by an inspiration of God and re-established the almost abolished religion. The good he did there was marvellous, and Christianity became so flourishing there by his means that missionaries went forth from it for the conversion of the other Eastern nations; and this is what gave the name of patriarch of the Indies to the metropolitan of India and China. However, Nestorianism afterwards entered these Churches, and with Nestorianism a strange mixture of all its errors, which in the sixteenth century gave occasion to the kings of Portugal to send missionaries there to purge the threshing-floor of the Lord.

They found there, in 1532, the sacred bones of the holy Apostle in an oratory still standing among the ruins of the city of Mylapore, and they carried them to Goa with marvellous pomp and solemnity. The city of Mylapore then changed its name by order of King John III and took that of São Tomé (Saint-Thomas). In his chapel, at the back of the altar, was placed the stone on which he had been slain. As we find in all the martyrologies two much older translations of the body of St. Thomas — one from the Indies to Edessa in Syria, the other from Edessa to Ortona (Abruzzo Citeriore) — which gave occasion for building very magnificent churches to him, and whose pilgrimage has always been very famous, we must say with Cardinal Baronius that the holy relics of this Apostle were divided, and that one part remained in the Indies, where it was discovered in 1523, and the other was translated very anciently to Edessa. And these different parts have caused it to be said that the body of St. Thomas was in these different places.

France was not entirely deprived of so great a treasure: for before the Revolution there was shown at Notre-Dame de Chartres a notable bone of an arm of this Apostle, and at Saint-Denis the right hand which he put into the side of Our Lord. The reliquary in which it was enclosed was given by John, Duke of Berry, third son of King John; this inscription was engraved on it: *Hic est manus beati Thomae, apostoli, quam misit in latus Domini nostri Jesu Christi* — "This is the hand of the blessed Thomas, apostle, which he put into the side of our Lord Jesus Christ."

This account is by Father Giry; but we have revised and completed it.

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[1] See the details of this solemn elevation in the article "Veneration and Relics" in the life of Saints Andochius, Thyrsus and Felix, which we gave at 24 September (vol. XI, pp. 347–352).

[2] The illustrious basilica of Saint-Saturnin (Saint-Sernin) of Toulouse possesses the relics of St. Fortunatus. The skull and some bones of this holy bishop were placed in 1644 in a silver bust to be carried in processions. This reliquary having been taken in 1794 to be sent to the Mint, the bones remained in a sealed case, and those of the bust in the capsule that contained them. They were verified and recognized in 1807, and placed in 1823 in the gilded wooden bust that now contains them. The tomb of St. Honoratus is still to be seen in the crypts of Saint-Sernin. — *Histoire générale de l'Église de Toulouse*, by the Abbé Salvan; *Histoire des saintes reliques conservées dans la basilique de Saint-Saturnin*, by Alphonse Brémond.

22 December

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY

At Rome, on the Via Labicana, "between the two Laurels", the birthday in heaven of thirty blessed Martyrs, who were all crowned on the same day during the persecution of Diocletian. 303. — In the same place, St. Flavian, former prefect of the city, who, in the time of Julian the Apostate, having been branded on the forehead as a mark of ignominy for having confessed Jesus Christ, and having moreover been sent into exile at the Waters of the Bull (*ad Aquas Taurinas*),[1] gave up his soul to God there while he was praying.[2] 362. — At Ostia, the holy martyrs Demetrius, Honoratus and Florus. — At Alexandria, St. Ischyrion, martyr, who, despising all the outrages done him to force him to sacrifice to idols, was pierced through the middle of the bowels with a sharp stake and died in this torment. 250. — In Egypt, St. Chaeremon, Bishop of Nilopolis, and several other holy Martyrs, of whom some, during the cruel persecution of Decius, fled into the deserts and were devoured by wild beasts; others died of hunger, cold and exhaustion; others fell into the hands of barbarians or robbers, who massacred them; and all were crowned with a glorious martyrdom. 3rd c. — At Nicomedia, St. Zeno, soldier, whose jaws the tyrant Diocletian had broken, his teeth smashed and finally his head cut off, for having mocked him as he was sacrificing victims to Ceres. 303.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED

In the diocese of Bordeaux, St. Delphinus, bishop of that see and confessor, of whom we shall speak at 24 December, the day on which he is named in the Roman martyrology. 4th c. — In the diocese of Clermont, St. Venerandus, bishop of that see and confessor, whose notice we sketched at 18 January. 423. — In the diocese of Le Puy, the feast of the translation of the relics of St. George, first Bishop of Velay, whose life we gave at 10 November. 1st c. — In the diocese of Nantes, St. Alexis of Rome, confessor, whose life we gave at 17 July. 404. — In the diocese of Tarbes [*sic*], St. Vincent, first Bishop of Saintes or Xaintes [*sic*], patron of Dax (*Aquae Augustae*), named in the French martyrology of 1 September, which is the day of his birthday in heaven. About the middle of the 3rd c. — At Vienne in Dauphiné, St. Blidran (Blidramnus), bishop of that see and confessor, already named in the French martyrology of 22 January, which is the day of his death. 719. — At Utrecht, a city of the kingdom of Holland, Blessed Hunger, bishop of that see and confessor. 866. — At Bingen (*Bingium*), a town of the grand duchy of Hesse-Darmstadt, St. Jutta (Juditta), virgin and recluse. She guided in the ways of perfection St. Hildegard (17 September), virgin, abbess of Mount St. Rupert in Germany. 1136. — At Metz, St. Felix II, bishop of that see and confessor. He was honoured in the abbey of Saint-Symphorien, where his remains rested. 731. — At Le Dorat (Haute-Vienne), in the

diocese of Limoges, St. Israel, canon of the collegiate church of Le Dorat, whose life we gave at 13 September. 1014.

MARTYROLOGIES OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS

Martyrology of the Order of Friars Preachers. — At Pisa in Tuscany, Blessed Mary Mancini, who was given to works of piety from her tenderest childhood, and, in the married state, had a heart full of mercy for the poor. Having afterwards entered religion, she ran the way of perfection. 1431.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS

In Lycia, St. Themistocles, shepherd. He was born in the territory of Myra. A Christian pursued by the pagans came to hide on the mountain where he was pasturing his sheep. The persecutors came to arrest this Christian; but Themistocles steadfastly refused to tell them the place of his retreat; he even declared to them that he professed the religion of the man they were seeking. The pagans seized him on the spot and brought him to the governor of Lycia. On his refusal to renounce the faith, the judge ordered him to be torn with whips and stretched on the rack. Then he was dragged naked over stones and iron spikes. He expired in the midst of his torments. 3rd c.

BL. MARY MANCINI OF PISA, OF THE ORDER OF ST. DOMINIC

1431. — Pope: Eugene IV. — Duke of Tuscany: Cosimo the Magnificent.

Transfer in coelum divitias tuas, et erit tibi tolerabile viduitatis onus. Place your riches in heaven, and the burden of your widowhood will become bearable. — St. John Chrysostom.

Blessed Mary, whom the world called Catherine, was born at Pisa towards the end of the fourteenth century. Her father, named Bartholomew, was of the noble family of the Mancini, then famous in Tuscany. Humble and pure, she passed her first years in peace and in the pious cares of the family. While still in the cradle she received from her angel a warning that saved her life. Later the same angel appeared to her in another vision, and from then on a mysterious exchange of prayers, graces and holy counsels was established between her and him.

While still very young, our Blessed was married, and from this union had two daughters who, after a few days of life, flew away to heaven. Her husband himself soon passed from this world to the other. The Blessed had taken a husband not by choice but by obedience; obedience made her accept a second marriage. From it she had five daughters and a son.

Mary knew how to join to her labours as a mother and her duties as a wife the highest contemplation and the widest and tenderest charity. Poor strangers and the sick found in the house of this devout lady the most eager help and the most affectionate care: she loved to fulfil towards the suffering members of Jesus Christ all the duties of charity.

Widowed a second time, and having seen all her children die, she refused earthly alliances from then on and resolved to lead a more austere life. And so she vowed to fast four times a week, to scourge her body with daily disciplines, to allow herself only necessary sleep, on a wooden bed, and to give herself night and day to prayer. To these devout exercises she added manual work, which earned her the food she needed; and often, full of joy, she gave it to the sick and the needy. She asked God unceasingly to conform herself in everything to His holy will.

About this time St. Catherine of Siena came to Pisa: Mary had very intimate relations with her and received salutary counsel from her. At her exhortation she took the habit of the sisters of the Order of St. Dominic who were then called Sisters of Penance, and shortly afterwards she resolved to enter a house of observance. Therefore, having gathered for this pious purpose all the money she possessed, she withdrew to the

monastery of the Holy Cross, where she always showed great zeal for the observance of the Rule. For, as all the nuns lived on their own incomes, Mary led a common life with six companions who were in her charge and whom she directed with prudence. Her love of perfection made her leave this convent to pass with Blessed Clare into that of St. Dominic, which Peter Gambacorta, Clare's father, had just founded.

Then, together with some companions burning with the same ardour, she made every effort to enforce the strict observance of the Rule; and such was her zeal that at the death of Blessed Clare the nuns elected her prioress. A thousand marvellous things are told of which the cloistered life of our Blessed was full: heavenly visions, strange and terrible assaults of hell, heroic excesses of penance, immense charity, tender and generous compassion for the poor souls in purgatory. At last, advanced in age, she flew away to heaven in the year 1431.

Her body, taken from the tomb some years after her death, was placed on the altars and became the object of a perpetual cult. The Sovereign Pontiff Pius IX, after consulting the Sacred Congregation of Rites, approved it canonically, and granted to the whole Order of Friars Preachers, as well as to the diocese of Pisa, the privilege of a Mass and an Office in honour of Blessed Mary.

We have made use of the *Année dominicaine* in composing this biography.

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[1] This place is quite near Civitavecchia. Between Tolfa and Civitavecchia there are still to be seen hot springs which are believed to be those that were called *Aquae Taurinae*.

[2] We spoke of St. Flavian in the life of St. Bibiana or Viviana, his daughter, at 2 December (vol. XIV, p. 23).

23 December

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY

At Rome, the martyrdom of St. Victoria, virgin, who, during the persecution of the emperor Decius, having been betrothed to a pagan named Eugene, and being willing neither to marry nor to offer sacrifice to idols, after several miraculous deeds which won many virgins to God, was pierced to the heart with a sword-stroke by an executioner, at the request of her betrothed. 253. — At Nicomedia, the birthday in heaven of twenty blessed Martyrs of Jesus Christ, who came to this honour through very great torments, to which they were condemned during the persecution of Diocletian. 303. — In the same place, the execution of Sts. Mygdonius and Mardonius, of whom one was burned and the other buried in a pit, during the same persecution. It was at this same time that a deacon of St. Anthimus, Bishop of Nicomedia, was martyred; he was carrying letters to the Martyrs when he was arrested and stoned by the pagans, who thus opened to him the entrance into the rest of the Lord. — In the island of Crete, the holy martyrs Theodulus, Saturninus, Euporus, Gelasius, Eunician, Zeticus, Cleomenes, Agathopus, Basilides and Evaristus, who were beheaded during the persecution of Decius, after suffering cruel tortures.[1] 250. — At Rome, St. Servulus, of whom St. Gregory the Great writes that, from his youth to the end of his life, being paralysed, he lay under a porch near the church of St. Clement. At last, invited by the angels, who accompanied his death with a heavenly harmony, he went to enjoy the glory of paradise. God very often works miracles at his tomb. 570.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED

In the dioceses of Cologne and Verdun, St. Gregory of Spoleto, martyr, cited in the Roman martyrology of 24 December. 303. — In the diocese of Beauvais, St. Ivo of Auteuil (*Ivo Altolii*), abbot of Saint-Quentin-lès-Beauvais, and afterwards Bishop of Chartres. 1116. — In the diocese of Limoges, St. Asclepius (*Asclepius*), bishop of that see and confessor.[2] 8th c. — In the diocese of Poitiers, St. Delphinus, Bishop of Bordeaux, whose notice we shall sketch on the following day. 5th c. — At Stenay (Meuse), in the diocese of Verdun, St. Dagobert II, King of Austrasia, victim of the fury of Ebroin. 679. — At Saint-Claude, St. Sabinian, deacon, monk of Condat. About 480.

MARTYROLOGIES OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS

Martyrology of the Canons Regular. — At Fano, in the March of Ancona, St. Paternian, bishop and confessor, who, after giving many proofs of pastoral solicitude and great examples of virtue, and working striking miracles, rested in the Lord on 13 November. His body was buried in the church of Saint-Martin-outside-the-Walls; the Canons Regular of the Holy Saviour translated it with honour, on 10 July, under the pontificate of Julius III (1550–1555), into the celebrated church of his name, where he has worked many miracles.

Martyrology of the three Orders of St. Francis. — At Valencia, in Spain, Blessed Nicholas, surnamed Factor, confessor, of the Order of Friars Minor, animated with a great charity for God, most glorious for his many admirable ecstasies, for the gift of prophecy and of miracles. The Sovereign Pontiff Pius VI placed him among the Blessed.[3] 1583.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS

Among the Friars Preachers, Blessed Genoese (Genovese) of Siena, widow, of the Third Order of St. Dominic. The name of this Blessed comes from her father's being a Genoese. She was born at Siena and became a fervent disciple of Blessed Nera Tolomei. During her life she had the gifts of ecstasy and prophecy, and after her death she worked many miracles. 1292. — In Ethiopia, St. Abashade, abbot and martyr. — In Egypt, St. Hellanicus, bishop. — Again in Egypt, St. Begeus, abbot. — In England, St. Frithubert (*Fridebertus*), bishop. 8th c. — At Pugino, in the diocese of Orense (Galicia), St. Vintila, solitary. 890. — In the Tyrol, St. Hartmann (*Hartemannus*), canon regular and provost of Neuburg [Klosterneuburg], then Bishop of Brixen. 1142.

ST. VICTORIA OF TIVOLI, VIRGIN AND MARTYR

253. — Pope: St. Lucius. — Roman Emperor: Aemilian.

Generosius est in carne imitari vitam angelorum, quam ex carne adhuc numerum augere mortalium. It is nobler to imitate in one's flesh the life of the angels than to increase by one's flesh the number of mortals. — St. Augustine, Letters.

Victoria was of Tivoli, a town quite near Rome; she was born of parents illustrious according to the world, and still more so by the Christian religion which they professed. When she was of marriageable age they promised her in marriage, with her consent, to a gentleman named Eugene, who had very good qualities but was still entangled in the superstitions of idolatry; for at that time difference of worship was not an impediment to marriage. Another girl, named Anatolia, whom some authors make her sister according to the flesh and others only according to the spirit, was at the same time betrothed to Titus Aurelius, a Roman lord, but a pagan. She had made a vow of virginity and would by no means consent to this alliance, which, by snatching her from Jesus Christ, must make her the wife of a profane man, a sacrilegious man and a slave of the devil.

Lord Aurelius, who had an extreme passion for her, used various means to win her over; but, seeing that he could not succeed, he begged Victoria, as the betrothed of his friend Eugene, to undertake this affair and to persuade Anatolia to defer her wedding no longer. Victoria could not refuse him this service; she went to see Anatolia and spoke to her thus: "You know, my sister, that I am a Christian like you, and that as such I am far from wishing to give you bad counsel; nevertheless, if you will believe me, you will consent to your marriage as soon as possible. God has not condemned marriage; on the contrary, we see in Scripture that the Patriarchs and Prophets, His friends and faithful servants, had wives, and that God blessed their posterity. Besides, the man your parents have destined for you is a man of honour; he will not denounce you as a Christian, he will not prevent you from practising all the exercises of your religion; there is even hope that, through the

conjugal love he will have for you, he will embrace the worship of the true God whom you profess."

Anatolia listened patiently to this discourse; but when Victoria fell silent, she took up the word and said to her:

"O my dear Victoria, triumph over the malice of the devil, and be Victory in deed as you are in name! When the world had to be peopled, God said to men: 'Increase and multiply, and fill the earth'; but now that the universe lacks no inhabitants, the Son of God, come down from heaven to earth to give us a heavenly doctrine, never ceases to cry: 'Increase in faith, grow in charity, and fill heaven, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" She said still other very pressing things to her, and, the better to persuade her, she added: "My dear sister, on the day when I distributed to the poor the price of my jewels, I had a vision in which a young man appeared to me with a golden diadem on his head, clothed in purple and covered with precious stones, and said to me with a pleasant air and a face full of gladness: 'O virginity, that art always in the light and never in the works of darkness!' At these words I awoke, very sad at not having heard the rest, and I threw myself on the ground with tears in my eyes, praying Jesus Christ that he who had spoken these few words to me might continue to instruct me. As I lay thus prostrate, the same young man added: 'Virginity is a royal purple which raises those clothed in it above all others. Virginity is a stone of inestimable price; virginity is the immense treasure of the King of kings. Thieves try to rob those who possess it; keep it with all possible diligence, and be the more on your guard to preserve it, the more eminent the degree in which you possess it.'" So powerful and moving a discourse touched Victoria deeply; she was happily vanquished by her whom she had undertaken to vanquish, and, having resolved to remain a virgin, she sold, like Anatolia, her rings and other vain ornaments, and gave all the money to the poor.

As soon as the lords Eugene and Aurelius learned the resolution of these two generous maidens, they spared nothing to oblige them to proceed to marriage. For this they applied to the emperor himself: they obtained permission to carry them off and take them to their country houses, to try to win them, either by gentleness, or by threats, and even by ill-treatment. St. Anatolia distinguished herself by her constancy and suffered martyrdom, as we said at 9 July. As for St. Victoria, she withstood all the solicitations and all the outrages of Eugene. He kept her some years in his castle, during which he had her given for food only a piece of brown bread in the evening. He also made her endure many other ill-treatments unworthy of her birth and of her virtue, to bring her to marry him or to adore the idols, but in vain; Victoria remained invincible in the midst of so many torments. She even had the skill, in the little liberty she had, to win several brides for Jesus Christ, by persuading young ladies who came to see her to consecrate their virginal purity to Him.

Aldhelm, bishop of the West Saxons in England, who composed her story in heroic verse, given by Surius on this day, says that she gathered as many as sixty of them, who led an angelic life and sang hymns and psalms day and night in honour of the true God. He adds that she worked several miracles, and that, among others, she drove away a horrible dragon that infested all that country, after making the people promise to embrace the Christian religion. At last Eugene, wearied by her perseverance, obtained from Julian, pontiff of the Capitol and count of the temples, an executioner named Liliarchus to put her to death. He gave her a sword-thrust in the heart and made of her a glorious martyr of Jesus Christ. This was under the persecution of Decius, on 23 December of the year 253. The wretch who had dealt her the death-blow at once became a leper, and at the end of six days he died eaten by worms. The body of the Saint was buried where she had been executed. Her memory is marked in the four martyrologies, and principally in that of Ado.

This account is by Father Giry.

ST. SABINIAN, DEACON, MONK OF CONDAT, IN THE DIOCESE OF SAINT-CLAUDE

480. — Pope: St. Simplicius. — King of the Franks: Clovis I.

Castitas hominem perducit ad gloriam, ad coelum sublevat, sanctis angelis unit. Chastity leads man to glory, lifts him towards heaven and unites him to the angels. — St. Augustine, Sermons.

St. Sabinian was one of the most devout monks of Condat and one of the most glorious disciples of St. Romanus. It is probable that he was a native of Sequania, though we know with certainty neither his country nor his family. He strove to walk in the footsteps of his abbot, uniting, like him, the work of the hands with prayer. Indeed, he was charged with running the mill which the monks had built, for the needs of the community, some distance from the monastery of Condat, on the stream of the Bienne. He also kept the fish-ponds intended for the use of the brethren, and showed as much zeal as skill in his duties.

Sabinian was a deacon, and the special employment with which he was charged did not prevent him from fulfilling exactly all the duties of his Order; for his historian tells us that by the holiness of his life, the purity of his morals and the eminence of his virtues he was worthy to be called a true disciple of St. Stephen, whose ministry he continued. The mill of Condat was placed somewhat below the monastery, at the bottom of the valley. In spite of this distance, Sabinian was so faithful to the rule that he always attended punctually all the hours of the office, even at night, and was often there before all the other brethren. God rewarded so much fervour, and gave him, as He did several other monks of Condat, marvellous graces and the gift of miracles.

Sabinian lived in a little dwelling adjoining the mill. He fulfilled his charge with care, and we see that he kept watch during the night, either to work or to pray beside his hearth. He was usually alone in his house. But during the day the brethren sometimes came to work at the mill, when Sabinian needed their help to carry out some repair or more important work. One day he had called them to help him repair the dam that led the waters of the river onto the wheels of the mill. The aim was to raise the level of the current by narrowing its bed and to direct it more swiftly towards the wheels. For this Sabinian had two rows of stakes planted on each side of the channel, interlaced with branches of osier or willow, and had a mixture of straw and stone thrown in, so that these barriers might be solid enough to hold the waters in the bed they meant to give them. While the monks were busy driving in and packing the straw between the stakes to form the dyke, an enormous serpent suddenly appeared among the hurdles and at once vanished into them. The brethren, fearing to be bitten if they went on with their work, tried to find the monster, and so spent part of the day without daring to set hand to the work again. Then the faith of the holy deacon Sabinian showed itself. “Why,” he said to them, “interrupt our work like this, and still fear this reptile, which once served as a covering for the tempter of men?” Then he asked one of the brethren to make the sacred sign of the Lord’s cross on his feet and hands, and, armed with this all-powerful sign, Sabinian at once entered without fear the very place where the serpent had gone in. “Let us see now,” he said, addressing the devil, of whom the monster was in his eyes only the instrument, “thou who layest snares for us continually: I no longer fear thy bites and I trample thee underfoot.” The brethren admired his faith and courage and said to one another: “Truly our Levite is of the number of those to whom the Saviour made such fine promises in the Gospel, saying to them: ‘Behold, I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.’”

The monks of Condat had to struggle against the elements and the difficulties of nature, to clear and make fruitful a country as wild as the region they inhabited. We see that they made, in their own way, the embankments needed to use the watercourses of the valley. Under the direction of St. Romanus and St. Lupicinus they brought under cultivation vast tracts until then deserted. But natural obstacles were not the only ones they had to fight. God, who permitted the spirits of evil to sit one day among the angels, also sometimes lets these spirits of darkness make their way here below, even visibly, among His servants and His elect, to tempt them and prove their virtue, in order to make it more glorious. Thus Sabinian, in his humble cell, was exposed to the most violent attacks of the devil, who tormented him night and day, sometimes leaving him, says his biographer, not even a single moment of rest. He made him suffer every kind of discomfort, shaking and rocking his dwelling and frightening him with monstrous visions. But, like

another Antony, the holy deacon opposed vigilance and prayer to him. Sustained by the most lively faith, he drove out the unclean spirit by invoking the name of Jesus Christ.

The virtue that shone above all in Sabinian was an unalterable chastity. The enemy of men, jealous of so pure a life, tried to seduce him with the attractions of sensuality. He presented to Sabinian the most lascivious images, the most voluptuous phantoms. But the holy deacon armed his heart with the shield of prayer and disdained the pleasures whose desire the tempter sought to awaken in his soul. “Whatever thou doest,” he said, “O enemy of our souls, Christ upholds me, and thou canst not triumph over my constancy. My heart is protected by the standard of the Saviour’s Passion, and thou canst neither corrupt it by pleasure nor cast it down by terror.” The historian adds that several times the devil appeared visibly to the servant of God to tempt and torment him, and that one day, wishing to discourage him and drive him to the end of his endurance, he struck him so violently on the cheek that he was quite wounded and bruised; that the next day, when Sabinian went to the monastery, he told the other brethren what had happened to him, poured holy oil on his wound, and then returned to his cell, where the devil never again tried to torment him.

St. Sabinian died at Condat about the year 480, according to Chastelain, who gives his feast on 23 December. His memory remained in veneration among his brethren, and his name was inscribed, with the title of Saint, in the calendar of the martyrology of the Jura, on the 10th of the calends of January (23 December). He is also mentioned by the Bollandists at 23 and 28 February. The rhymed chronicle of Condat cites him, with the title of Saint, as having shone by his miracles, his learning and his virtues, together with another disciple of St. Romanus, Blessed Palladius.

Extracted from the *Saints de Franche-Comté*, by the professors of the college of Saint-François-Xavier at Besançon.

ST. DAGOBERT II, KING OF AUSTRASIA, MARTYR, PATRON OF STENAY, IN THE DIOCESE OF VERDUN

679. — Pope: Agatho.

Quanto fis celsior potestate, tanto humilior fias pietate. Be the more humble in piety, the greater power makes you. — St. Augustine, Letters.

If there were a state of life that could claim to be an exception to the general vocation of all Christians to attain holiness, it would doubtless be the first state of society, that of the monarchs of the earth. Nowhere does one meet more powerful obstacles, nowhere are distractions more numerous, and nowhere is the heart of man more a prey to a thousand different agitations. But the grace of God, stronger than all the obstacles of this world, lavishes the riches of its power in the hearts even of those surrounded by the pomps of the earth, the display and the opulence of greatness. The illustrious St. Dagobert will furnish us with a striking proof of it.

Dagobert II, one of the greatest monarchs of Austrasia, was the son of the holy King Sigebert and of Queen Himnechild. In his tenderest childhood he lost his father, whom he at first succeeded without any opposition; but scarcely had he tried to occupy the throne when he was cast down from it by the treachery of Grimoald, son of Blessed Pepin of Landen and mayor of the palace of King Sigebert. That monarch had believed he could entrust the education of his son to this lord, hoping that the benefits with which he had loaded him would be a sufficient motive to attach him to his child; but he did not know that ambition effaces the memory of benefits received, and that ingratitude follows close behind it: for this minister, whom intrigues and cabals had made all-powerful, won over in a short time a part of the officers of the army, and, claiming that Sigebert, when he had as yet no child, had promised the throne to his son Childebert, he led the lords of the court by promises to recognize the latter as their king; and so, after having the young Dagobert tonsured as if to devote him to the Church, he sent him to Ireland, where the prince was obliged to live long unknown.

Dido, Bishop of Poitiers and a kinsman of Dagobert, had the cowardice to lend himself to so odious a manoeuvre and to conduct the young prince himself into his exile.

But heaven watched over this child and gave him a father in the person of St. Wilfrid, Bishop of York, who had him brought up according to the precepts of the Gospel. Dagobert acquired in his exile the qualities needed to govern wisely one day. This exile was a good school for him: there he learned to despise the brilliance of a perishable throne in order to occupy himself with eternity. As he advanced in age he studied the precepts of our holy religion and made the Gospel the subject of his frequent meditations. He thus came to know in what true greatness consists, and these considerations led him to walk with courage in the path of virtue. “Happy,” he said to himself, “the prince who, before commanding others, knows how to govern himself and to exercise a severe rule over his own heart. And what would it profit him to be obeyed by thousands of subjects, if he himself were a slave to his passions, if his evil inclinations dominated him? And what advantage would it be to him to see his name famous in the history of the kings and conquerors of the earth, if the heavenly Father blotted it out of the book of immortality?”

Such were the grave thoughts that occupied the young monarch in the land of misfortune. If he sighed, like the Israelites of old, for the moment of returning to a beloved homeland, it was not in order to shine there on a brilliant throne and receive the homage of his subjects; it was in the desire to labour there for the good of his people, to make religion flourish, and to govern as a Christian king. He appreciated too well the weight of a crown to aspire to wear it without fulfilling the duties that kingship imposed on him. His tenderness for his peoples awoke above all when he learned what the fair land of France was suffering from the vexations and abuses of certain great men, who, under pretext of the public good, were tearing the bosom of their country and sought only to sate their personal hatreds and satisfy their ambition. More than once he was on the point of leaving the hospitable land and returning to his country, to announce to the peoples that he was still alive and to assert his rights; but then, moderating his noble ardour, he renounced his plan, waiting until Providence should furnish him the occasion to go and reconquer the heritage of his fathers, and contented himself with offering to heaven his prayers for his country.

Scarcely had this young prince disappeared when the rumour of his death was spread everywhere. Grimoald carried infamy so far as to have a magnificent funeral held for him, the more surely to deceive the peoples and thereby cover the odiousness of his usurpation: for almost at once he had his own son proclaimed king, claiming that Sigebert had adopted him. The peoples were deceived and did not detect this unworthy fraud; but Queen Himnechild protested against this infamous treachery, and, being unable at that moment to inform the peoples of the truth, she took heaven to witness that she by no means intended to see her own excluded from the throne, and took refuge in Paris with Clovis II, her brother-in-law. The great men of Austrasia were not long in recovering from their enthusiasm for the usurper. For the violence of Grimoald little by little alienated their minds, and after a reign of seven months they dethroned Childebert and placed on the throne Clovis II, Sigebert’s brother, who thus united the whole kingdom of France under his sceptre; but he died in 656 and left the monarchy to Clothaire III, his eldest son, who was scarcely five years old. Clothaire III held Austrasia until 660, when it was given to Childeric, the second of the sons of Clovis, who governed that kingdom under the regency of Himnechild and married her daughter, Dagobert’s sister.

The young prince went on living unknown in his exile, waiting for heaven at last to declare itself in his favour. Through the good offices of St. Wilfrid he married a Saxon princess, by whom he had a son whom he named Sigebert, and four daughters, Irmina, Adela, Rotildis and Ragnetrudis. While Dagobert was applying himself to giving his children a Christian education, some Austrasian lords, attached to Himnechild and full of veneration for the memory of Sigebert, thought of recalling him. For this purpose they wrote to St. Wilfrid and begged him to send back their lawful king, to place him on his father’s throne. The holy prelate collected a large sum of money in the country and engaged the English princes to give him help to cross back into Austrasia. Dagobert set out at once, but could not at first recover his rights; then Himnechild asked Childeric

for Alsace and some cantons situated beyond the Rhine, where Dagobert came to reign rather as Childeric's lieutenant than as a true sovereign. When the latter was assassinated in 673, Dagobert recovered the whole kingdom of Austrasia.

The peoples had at last heard of the virtues this prince had practised in a foreign land; they expected a happy reign, and they were not deceived in their hope. Never did a monarch watch with more care over the interests of his subjects. On every occasion he rendered them strict justice, and made himself beloved by the gentleness of his government. Piety was the foundation of his virtues and the soul of all his undertakings. In him was fulfilled what the Apostle said of old, "that piety is profitable to all things; that it not only promises rewards in this world to those who put into practice what it teaches, but further assures them far greater gifts beyond the tomb." The life of Dagobert is a vigorous and irrefutable answer to those detractors of religion who dare to claim that true piety narrows genius, enervates courage and prevents a man from conceiving and executing anything great. Let history be questioned, let the facts be examined, and this prince will be seen struggling successfully against the barbarism of his age, striving to efface the last traces of the destructive fury of the Vandals and Huns, who had made of the fairest provinces a frightful desert. Dagobert, convinced that religion alone could soften the lot of peoples and heal the deep wounds that two barbarian invasions had made everywhere, called to his aid the beneficent power of that religion and by it stayed the course of public ills. Not content with fulfilling with scrupulous exactness the duties Christianity imposed on him, he sought also to make his peoples share in the salutary influence of the graces it procures, by founding various religious houses. To his generosity the monasteries of Surbourg, Haslach and Saint-Sigismond owed their existence. He found in a wise administration of the revenues of the State the means of enriching his provinces with establishments as important as they were useful at that period. His palace had all the regularity of a monastery; it was open to the least of his subjects, who could approach his king in all freedom and lay his situation before him. Never did the pious prince listen to the suggestions of flatterers; he banished from his court those deceitful and wicked men who play so unworthily with the confidence of monarchs and deceive them. He loved the truth and spoke it likewise with a truly royal frankness.

To his zeal for religion the diocese of Strasbourg owed two of its most illustrious pontiffs, St. Arbogast and St. Florentius, who enjoyed his most intimate confidence. The first of these prelates obtained for his cathedral the domain of Rouffach and the castle of Issenbourg, in gratitude for the signal favour the Lord had granted Dagobert in restoring to him a beloved son, mortally injured by a fall from his horse. Schadaeus relates that Dagobert also made magnificent presents to the same church, consisting of several reliquaries, a gold chalice, and a book of the Gospels adorned with gold and precious stones. Thus uniting all the Christian and royal virtues, the monarch of Austrasia was great before God and before men, and this greatness he owed wholly to religion: far from blushing at it, he even made it his glory. He led a very austere life and rigorously practised the fasts prescribed by the Church. His table always preached sobriety, even to strangers: he preferred to pour out in alms the sums he might have spent on sumptuous meals and delicate dishes.

Dagobert had formed the habit of approaching the divine Eucharist often. He always prepared himself with admirable fervour to receive this august sacrament. Each time the Lord loaded him with particular graces: hence his progress in perfection. The Eucharist has always been, and is still in our own day, the delight of the Saints: it has strengthened them in their weakness and has become for them a source of consolation in this valley of tears.

While Dagobert was giving his kingdom the example of the highest virtues, he had the consolation of seeing in Alsace the benefactor to whom he owed everything. St. Wilfrid, become in his turn the object of the persecutions of his enemies, left his diocese to go to Rome to seek from the Holy See some help against unjust aggressions. Dagobert, wishing to attach to himself a man of such great merit and at the same time to show him his lively gratitude for the good offices he had received from him, offered him the bishopric of Strasbourg, which had just fallen vacant by the death of St. Arbogast; but Wilfrid was too attached to his

flock to abandon it so easily; he knew that persecutions are the lot of the disciples of a God who died on the cross, and far from cast down his courage, they only increased it. He therefore declined the Austrasian monarch's offer and continued his way to Rome.

To show his humble confidence in the Blessed Virgin, Dagobert vowed himself as a serf of the cathedral of Strasbourg. His example led most of the lords of his court to imitate him. These lords, despite their title of serfs, nevertheless always kept their freedom. When the bishop could convict them of felony, or of having betrayed the interests of his church, whether by counsel or in deed, they were condemned to a heavy fine. The consecration of the serfs of the church of Strasbourg was renewed every year on 27 February.

Dagobert had lost the throne of his fathers in his childhood through the ambition of one mayor of the palace; he was to lose his life through the intrigues of another. Ebroin, a cruel and bloodthirsty man, the same who dipped his hands in the blood of St. Leger, Bishop of Autun, was then abusing the confidence of Theuderic III and seeking to dismember the kingdom of Austrasia, to increase his own dominion and diminish Dagobert's. The latter, having learned of Ebroin's conduct, addressed himself to Theuderic and set before him his grounds of complaint against the unjust undertakings of this ambitious mayor of the palace. To put all justice on his side, Dagobert fixed a period within which the provinces detached from Austrasia were to be restored to him; but when this period had expired, Theuderic took no trouble at all to satisfy Dagobert's demand. Though this pious prince knew that the greatest scourge with which the Lord can punish an empire is to send it war, he nevertheless believed he must declare it on Theuderic, in order to maintain himself in possession of his States and at the same time obtain the restitution of the provinces Theuderic was so unjustly withholding. Dagobert commended the whole affair to God and took Him to witness to the purity of his intentions. He summoned the great men of his kingdom and informed them of the motives that had dictated his resolution. All were of the opinion that Theuderic's claims should be repelled by arms and the provinces he would not yield to right be wrested from him by force.

Dagobert prepared for war as a Christian king. While the army was assembling with its leaders, the pious king, clothed in a rough hair-shirt, practised fasts and austerities to make heaven propitious. Then, putting all his trust in God, he advanced at the head of his army. After the example of David he could say: "Some trust in the number of their chariots and the swiftness of their horses; but we will call upon the name of the Lord our God." This army, animated by the same sentiments as its king, was remarkable for the strictness of its discipline. It was not a body gathered by the hope of rich booty; it had taken up arms only to uphold the lawful rights of its prince. The two armies, having reached the frontiers of Lorraine and Champagne, were awaiting from one moment to the next the signal for battle. Dagobert was again preparing for it by fervent prayer when he saw envoys arrive in his camp, who invited him to a conference in order, so they said, to end this quarrel amicably and thus prevent the shedding of French blood. The wise monarch told the envoys how glad he was to be able to end this affair in a manner both honourable and Christian, and, after giving his orders to the leaders of the army, he set out with the envoys without an escort; trusting to the honour of these warriors, he crossed with them the forest of Woëvre to reach the appointed place. But must the Saints then become the victims of the perfidy of a cowardly villain? Scarcely was Dagobert far enough into the forest to be out of sight of his own men, when he fell into an ambush laid for him by Ebroin, and was pitilessly massacred by the hand of Grimoald, his godson, on 23 December of the year 679. Thus a magnanimous prince, who had made the happiness of his subjects, ended his career, basely assassinated by a vile mercenary, at the moment when, without guards, he had gone on sworn faith to the place where this quarrel was to be settled.

At first they sought to conceal this death, in order to hide the shame of it, which fell back on Theuderic and his criminal counsellors. But when Dagobert's army learned of it, it fell into an extraordinary fury and wished at that very instant to avenge its unhappy leader. The officers had difficulty in restraining this noble wrath; but they pointed out that, the prince being the victim of an infamous treachery, he was already

enjoying in heaven the fruit of his virtues, and that consequently they ought not to stain with blood the victory he had just won; that, besides, the religion the king had professed with such courage forbade a shedding of blood that would lead to no advantage. These considerations calmed the soldiers' excitement; the cries of fury and the laments gave place to admiration. Each took pleasure in recounting the fine qualities of a prince worthy of a better fate and in praising his virtues. The public voice placed Dagobert among the Saints, and the manner of his death caused him to be regarded as a martyr.

VENERATION AND RELICS

St. Ouen, Archbishop of Rouen, obtained with difficulty the body of the holy monarch and had it carried to his church. It was later translated to the church of Saint-Remi at Stenay, which soon took his name. He drew there the faithful who came from Austrasia and Belgium to implore the protection of their beloved monarch. In 872 Archbishop Hincmar of Reims exhumed St. Dagobert and placed his bones in a shrine; but in 1591 the Huguenots pillaged the church of Stenay and carried off his silver shrine, adorned with golden fleurs-de-lis.

Mention is made of Dagobert, king and martyr, in the ancient Gothic martyrology of the cathedral of Verdun, and in the ancient one found at the head of the psalter of Queen Emma, wife of Lothair; his name is likewise read in the martyrology of Ado. It seems that his feast was formerly kept in the abbey of Haslach; for Abbot Louis, in his Life of St. Florentius, speaks to us of an ancient manuscript, preserved in his time in the archives of that Chapter, which contained an abridgement of the life of St. Dagobert in the form of the lessons recited at the Office of Matins. At Stenay the day of his translation, fixed on 2 September, was also celebrated. This feast always drew an immense concourse of people, and several prelates of the neighbouring towns went there every year to commend their flocks to the blessed king, who was patron of several provinces.

Extracted from the *Histoire des Saints d'Alsace*, by M. l'abbé Hunckler, and from the *Histoire de Verdun et du pays verdunois*, by M. l'abbé Clouet.

ST. IVO OF AUTEUIL, ABBOT OF SAINT-QUENTIN-LÈS-BEAUVAIS, THEN BISHOP OF CHARTRES

1116. — Pope: Paschal II. — King of France: Louis VI, the Fat.

Qui sanctos persequuntur, ad coelorum regna transmittunt. Those who persecute the Saints open to them the gate of the heavenly kingdoms. — Cassiodorus.

According to most historians, Ivo was born about the year 1040 at Auteuil, a village nearly three leagues from the town of Beauvais. Hugh, his father, and Hilemburgis, his mother, brought him up in the sentiments of a true and solid piety. After applying himself to the study of letters and philosophy, he went to the abbey of Le Bec,[1] in Normandy, one of the most renowned schools of the West. There he had Lanfranc for master and St. Anselm for fellow-student, names that recall the legitimate and salutary ascendancy that religion, genius and learning can exercise here below for the happiness of peoples.

Ivo, intelligent and hard-working, made such rapid progress in the ecclesiastical sciences that his masters soon charged him with teaching them himself. It is not known where he opened his first school. It is to be believed that it was in the illustrious collegiate church of Nesle, in Picardy, of which he was first a canon. However that may be, Guy, Bishop of Beauvais, was not slow to know and appreciate his virtues and his learning. Indeed, no sooner had this pontiff built at the gate of his episcopal city a church and an abbey of canons in honour of the martyr St. Quentin than he entrusted its direction to Ivo.

The first years the abbot of Saint-Quentin spent in his monastery were devoted to considerable labours on the writings of the Fathers, the Councils and the Canons of the Church. It was then that he composed a double collection of Canons, of which the first bears the name of *Panormia* and the second that of *Decretum*.

Studying the rules of the Church at such authentic and pure sources, Ivo, struck by how little the life of the canons of his time agreed with the ancient discipline, resolved to put an end in his monastery to a state of things no less harmful to the clergy than to the faithful. Guy seconded him powerfully in this work of restoration, and soon the community of Saint-Quentin, directed by a master so consummate in Christian wisdom, was admired for its regular life, its fervent piety and its love of study.

The hard trials this abbey had undergone in the first years of its existence were followed by an era of prosperity and glory. It opened its doors to a multitude of young men from the noblest families, drawn by the reputation of the illustrious reformer. Like all the great institutions of that time, the work of the abbot of Saint-Quentin was endowed with a marvellous fruitfulness. His disciples went to found or people abbeys and priories in various places: among them were, in the diocese of Beauvais, the royal abbeys of Ruricourt or Saint-Martin-aux-Bois and of Saint-Just-en-Chaussée, and the priories of Gournay-sur-Aronde, of Monceaux near Liancourt, of Neufvy, and of Neuilly-sous-Clermont. The Valois also shared in the benefits of the canonical reform: canons regular took possession of the collegiate church of Béthisy-Saint-Pierre, which Richard, first castellan of that country, had founded in 1060.

Great as was the mission Ivo exercised at the monastery of Saint-Quentin, another, more important and more august, awaited him: after labouring to reform the morals of clerics, he was called to repair the evils caused to the Church by a pontiff forgetful of his holy duties.

God, for the punishment of peoples, and also to maintain among His ministers the spirit of humility, vigilance and prayer, sometimes permits the stones of the sanctuary to be shaken. So it had happened to the unfortunate diocese of Chartres. Geoffrey I, its bishop, instead of devoting himself to the care of the flock entrusted to his keeping, had made himself guilty of sacrilegious simony; twice deposed by Pope Urban II, and unable to clear himself of the crimes imputed to him, he at last consented to resign the holy functions he was unworthy to fulfil. The Sovereign Pontiff, seeking to efface the memory of Geoffrey's scandals, resolved to give him as successor the learned and devout abbot of Saint-Quentin. Recommended by Urban to the clergy and people of Chartres, Ivo united all suffrages in his favour.

The inhabitants of the Chartres country greeted the news of this election with lively joy. But it was not so with several bishops of the province; these prelates, partisans of Geoffrey, put obstacles in the way of Ivo's consecration. In this difficult circumstance the humble religious made his way to Rome and went to beg Urban to allow him to remain at the head of his monastery. This step served only to confound his adversaries: the Pope, measuring the Saint's merits by the humility of his sentiments, made it his duty to accept the episcopate, and consecrated him himself at Alatri (States of the Church), towards the end of November in the year 1091.

Ivo, without giving up the government of his monastery, which he still directed for several years, went to take possession of the episcopal see of Chartres, after receiving from the king the pastoral staff in token of investiture. But scarcely had he taken in hand the administration of his diocese when the bishops who were friends of Geoffrey raised fresh difficulties against him. Assembled at Étampes under the presidency of Richer, Archbishop of Sens, they wished to pronounce a sentence of deposition against him. Strong in the justice of his cause and the uprightness of his intentions, the new prelate made this attempt fail, no less by his patience, his charity and his gentleness than by his appeal to the Sovereign Pontiff. Not only was he able to remain at his post despite the storm raised against him, but he ended by winning the esteem and friendship of his adversaries. Such, in all times and in all countries, has been the privilege attached to holiness: it destroys the most unjust prejudices, effaces disagreements and reconciles what seemed irreconcilable.

But the calm the Saint enjoyed was not of long duration: his heroic opposition to the adulterous marriage of King Philip I drew on him that prince's enmity and vengeance. Philip had repudiated Queen Bertha, his wife, to marry Bertrade de Montfort, whom he had carried off from Fulk, Count of Anjou, her husband. Wishing to

legitimize this criminal union in the eyes of the people, he tried to support it with the authority of the holy Bishop of Chartres. Such an attempt could not succeed with the courageous and incorruptible pontiff. Ivo did not confine himself to refusing to justify by his presence a marriage contrary to the law of the Gospel; he implored the king to take back his lawful wife and to return Bertrade to her husband. “For my part,” he added, “I would rather be thrown into the depths of the sea with a millstone round my neck than scandalize Christians by giving my consent to this guilty marriage.” These words, far from touching the king’s heart, awoke in him feelings of anger and vengeance. He publicly took Bertrade as his wife, and, to rid himself of an importunate censor, he ordered the Bishop of Chartres to be stripped of his goods and thrown into prison. He carried his harshness towards the captive so far as to refuse him the food granted even to criminals.

This ill-treatment and these privations did not weaken Ivo’s courage. A new John the Baptist, he bore with patient resignation the injustices of the new Herod. Learning that the people, moved by his misfortune, were preparing to force the doors of his prison to free him, he turned them from it by an admirable letter, every word of which breathes the gentleness and peace of the holy Gospel: “I hear,” he said, “that you are uniting your forces to deliver me. Do not do it; I forbid you. I want no freedom bought at the price of violence, pillage and burning. It was not arms that placed me on the episcopal see; this see I cannot consent to have defended with arms: I should no longer be a shepherd but an invader. If the hand of God strikes me, let it reach me alone, and not fall back on poor widows and orphans. Remember the conduct of the faithful when Peter was in prison: they ceaselessly addressed supplications to the Lord for his deliverance. Do the same, and the God of peace and consolation will stretch out to me a helping hand.”

Restored to his Church, thanks to the representations made on his behalf to the king by Pope Urban and by Hoël, Bishop of Le Mans, Ivo did not on that account see the end of his troubles. The excommunication launched against Philip at the council of Clermont in the year 1095 drew fresh persecutions on him. He even saw his ministry exposed to such numerous and grave difficulties that he thought he should ask the Sovereign Pontiff’s permission to renounce the functions of the episcopate. Urban’s reply deserves to be known: it shows the high esteem in which he held the Blessed. “If the episcopate,” he said to him, “is not necessary to you, you are necessary to the episcopate and to the Church, which cannot do without your services.” Ivo was thus obliged to abandon the plan he had formed of going back to the exercises of the regular life in his monastery of Saint-Quentin.

As inaccessible as the zealous servant of God was, in the presence of duty, to weakness, fear and every human consideration, so prompt and generous was he in pardoning the injuries he had received. As soon as the king showed the intention of breaking his guilty union with Bertrade, Ivo asked and obtained from Pope Paschal II, Urban’s successor, absolution from the canonical penalties Philip had incurred. This wise moderation, after so much firmness, disinterestedness and suffering, won him throughout the kingdom a unanimous chorus of blessings and praise. He was venerated as a Saint and admired as an invincible champion of good morals and of the laws of the Church.

In the midst of his persecutions and disgraces, Ivo worked for the salvation of his children as though he were sailing on a calm and peaceful sea. Even in his prison he saw to it that they did not suffer from his absence. He had nothing so much at heart as the instruction of the clergy and people, the reform of morals and the reign of ecclesiastical discipline. To found new monasteries, to revive in others the spirit of obedience, piety and study, to procure charitable establishments for the poor: such were the objects of his labours and his solicitude. His virtues and his learning were useful to France and to the whole Church. He was not only the oracle of the faithful: in several councils his colleagues welcomed his voice as a faithful echo of the traditions of the Church and the doctrine of the Fathers. He kept up relations with Popes, kings, princes and the greatest personages of his time, as his instructive letters show, an immortal monument of piety and learning. To the last day of his holy and laborious career, virtue found in him a devoted support, and vice a persevering adversary. He never showed either weakness or fear in accomplishing the mission God had given

him, to destroy and to build, to root up and to plant. Divine love made all burdens light for him and all sacrifices possible: he was so inflamed with it that his face reflected a heavenly brightness. Several times a halo of light was seen surrounding his head while he was celebrating the divine Mysteries.

The Church of Beauvais was proud to have been the cradle of so great a bishop. For his part, Ivo had kept for it the sentiments of a son for a mother. He visited it often; it was the object of his thoughts and his constant solicitude. His letters attest how dear it was to him: here he thanks it for having begotten him to Jesus Christ; there he shows it steadying his steps in the way of piety. Elsewhere he addresses it in tender and affectionate language: “In body,” he says, “I am far from thee, but my spirit is with thee.” Was it afflicted, he hastened to come and console it. He worked to calm its divisions and continued to serve as guide and father to a great number of its children. He used the influence he had over the clergy and people to have them elect devout and holy Pontiffs. It was by his counsels and devotion that one of them, Fulk of Dammartin, succeeded in escaping the odious machinations woven against him out of hatred for his virtue. Foreseeing that his strength would not always allow him to go and rest at Beauvais from the fatigues of his episcopate, Ivo founded near Chartres a monastery named Saint-Jean-en-Vallée[2] and peopled it with canons taken from the community of Saint-Quentin, which he loved “as the apple of his eye”. When he went there to give himself to prayer, he thought himself still among his humble and fervent religious of Beauvais.

To the last days of his laborious episcopate Ivo defended with rare energy the Church and her discipline, watched over the maintenance of the temporal rights of his cathedral and his clergy, and worked for the prosperity of the schools where youth was formed in piety and learning. In all the great things he accomplished, before and during a pontificate of twenty-one years, he proposed to himself only one aim: to extend and strengthen here below the kingdom of Jesus Christ. After fulfilling with as much success as zeal this work so dear to his pastor’s heart, he ended a life no less rich in holiness than in glory on 23 December of the year 1116.

VENERATION AND RELICS. — HIS WRITINGS

His body was buried in the abbey church of Saint-Jean-en-Vallée and remained there until the sixteenth century. In that disastrous period of religious wars it was exhumed by the sacrilegious hand of the Calvinists and given to the flames. His feast, approved by a bull of Pope St. Pius V dated 18 December 1578 [*sic*] for the Canons Regular of St. Saviour of the Lateran, is now celebrated in several dioceses of France.

Besides the works of which we spoke above, Ivo of Chartres composed a great number of others. Let us cite here only:

1° His book on the liturgy, entitled *Micrologus*. “We are indebted,” says an author of the Life of Ivo, “to Henry Wharton (a learned Anglican clergyman) for having taught us, beyond possibility of doubt, that the *Micrologus* has Ivo of Chartres for its author.” This writing is only a detached part of a more extensive work Ivo composed on the offices of the Church, *De Officiis ecclesiasticis*. There is a very fine manuscript of it, almost as old as the author, in the Lambeth library in England. This work, as Wharton presents it, is composed of seventy-one chapters, of which the first eight treat of Matins, Lauds, Prime, Terce, Sext, None, Vespers and Compline. The sixty-two following make up the *Micrologus*, and the last, which is not in the *Micrologus*, treats of the Mass in general and of each of its parts. It is one of the most considerable works composed in early times on the liturgy.

2° His Sermons. There are twenty-four of them in the edition of his works made in 1647, but they are not the only ones he composed.

3° His Letters. The collection of his Letters above all is very precious; in it are found the principal points of the teaching and discipline of his time, as well as the state of morals of that period. They contain facts of civil and religious history that one would seek in vain elsewhere. If they attest his ecclesiastical learning, they

attest no less his humility and modesty. Sometimes he takes in them the title of simple cleric, sometimes that of humble minister or servant of the Church of Chartres. One sees on every page that they come from the pen of a doctor no less illustrious for his holiness than for his learning.

Several other works of Ivo of Chartres have not yet been printed, among others a Commentary on the Psalms. It is found in two manuscripts, one from the library of Colbert (shelf-mark 1475, in 2 vols. folio), and the other from the library of Saint-Allyre at Clermont in Auvergne (in 1 vol. folio); and in a third manuscript in the Low Countries spoken of by Sanderus.

The works of St. Ivo are found in the *Patrologia* of M. l'abbé Migne.

Extracted from the *Saints de Beauvais*, by M. l'abbé Sabatier.

ST. SERVULUS OF ROME, CONFESSOR (570)

St. Gregory the Great, for the consolation of persons afflicted with poverty and sickness, speaks thus of St. Servulus: "We have seen, under the portico that leads to the church of St. Clement, a man named Servulus, whom all Rome knew as we did. He was poor in the goods of the world but rich in merits. A long illness had reduced him to a pitiable state; for from his youth to the end of his life he was always afflicted with paralysis. It is not enough to say that he could not stand; for he could not even raise himself from the bed on which he lay, nor sit up, nor carry his hand to his mouth, nor turn on one side or the other. His mother and his brother assisted him, and, as many alms were given him, he used their hands to distribute to the other poor all that remained after he had taken, very sparingly, what was necessary for his subsistence. He could not read; but, having had books of Holy Scripture bought for him, he asked the religious who came to see him, and to whom he gave hospitality, to read something of them to him; so that at last he learned it all. Amid his infirmities and his pains he was ceaselessly occupied in thanking God for the state to which He had reduced him, and he spent days and nights singing hymns and canticles of praise in His honour.

"When the time came at which God willed to reward his patience, the illness, already spread through all the members of his body, attacked in particular the vital parts; which made him judge that his death was near. Then he asked all the pilgrims to whom he gave hospitality to rise and recite psalms around him while awaiting God's disposal of his soul; and, dying as he was, he did not fail to join his voice to theirs. But during this psalmody he suddenly gave a great cry and asked that silence be kept, saying: 'Do you not hear that melody which resounds in heaven?' And while he was applying with all his strength the ear of his heart to listen to these divine songs, his soul was happily delivered from the prison of his body. At the moment he expired, the place was filled with an incomparable fragrance, and all who were present felt themselves filled with a sweetness that the most exquisite perfumes could not give forth. They judged from this that his blessed spirit had been led to heaven by that band of angels whose harmony he had heard. One of our religious, still living, was a witness of this marvel, and he was so moved by it that he could not speak of it without shedding torrents of tears. All who were present continued to perceive this miraculous fragrance until his body had been given burial."

So speaks St. Gregory in Book IV of his *Dialogues*, chapter 14; but in Homily XV on the Gospels, where he relates the same facts, he adds: "See in what manner he died who bore poverty and sickness with constancy. The good ground, according to the word of the Lord, has brought forth good fruit, and patience faithfully exercised has merited a just reward. Tell me, I pray you, my dear brethren, what excuse shall we bring at the judgment of God, we who have received from His Providence goods to distribute and hands to act, if we are slothful in doing good works, when a poor man who had not the use of his limbs was able to fulfil the law of the Lord? What reason can we allege if we transgress it? Ah! to condemn us He will not bring forward against us the Apostles, who by their preaching led so many souls with them to heaven, nor the Martyrs, who shed their blood to enter into blessed eternity; but He will set against us poor Servulus, whose arms,

motionless through the necessity of his illness, never ceased to do holy deeds. Let this example, my brethren, then animate you to virtue and move you to labour without respite at the business of your salvation, so that by imitating the fervour of the Saints you may be in a state to share in their reward."

The life of St. Servulus is represented in paintings in the church of St. Clement at Rome, and his memory is held there in great veneration.

This account is by Father Giry.

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[1] They are commonly called the Ten Martyrs of Crete. Theodulus, Saturninus and Euporus were of Gortyna, the metropolis of the island; Zeticus was of Cnossus, Agathopus of Panormus, Basilides of Cydonia, and Evaristus of Heraclea. The others were likewise Cretans. They were martyred at Gortyna, on the Lethaeus; the Christians secretly carried off their bodies to bury them. Their relics were afterwards translated to Rome. The Fathers of the council of Crete, held in 458, say in a letter to the emperor Leo that their island had until then been preserved from heresy by the intercession of our holy Martyrs. — Metaphrastes, Surius, Godescard.

[2] See, in the French martyrology of 2 January (vol. I, p. 58), some details on St. Asclepius of Limoges.

[3] Blessed Nicholas came into the world at Valencia in 1520. From his childhood he gave himself to harsh mortifications and showed an ardent charity for the poor. This charity drew on him the mockery of his companions; he bore it with joy for love of Jesus Christ, and relaxed nothing of his works of mercy. Full of contempt for the world, he refused to marry and consecrated himself to the religious life, entering the Observants of Valencia. When he had made his vows, his superiors entrusted him with the ministry of preaching. The eminent virtues admired in him made his word very fruitful. His austere mortifications led his hearers to enter, after his example, upon the narrow way. He lived in the constant practice of obedience, chastity and poverty; distrustful of himself, he kept a constant watch over his senses. The prudence and skill he showed in the guidance of souls led his superiors to entrust him with the direction of the novices. He led them to perfection by his discourses, by his examples, but above all by his gentleness. In the midst of his occupations he remained constantly united to God. The supernatural favours and the ecstasies with which God gratified him aroused the suspicions of the Inquisition; he had to appear before its tribunal, which, after a severe examination of his conduct, declared it irreproachable and loudly testified its admiration for his virtues. Struck by a grave illness, he learned with visible joy that his death was near, and, after asking out of humility to be buried in a stable, he expired in 1583, at the age of sixty-three. Pope Pius VI declared him Blessed in 1786. — Local notes.

[4] A Benedictine abbey founded in 1034 near Pont-Audemer, at the confluence of the Bec and the Risle. Four of its abbots were elected Archbishops of Canterbury. From its bosom came Pope Alexander VII [*sic*], William I, Archbishop of Rouen, and Fulk, Bishop of Beauvais. It was devastated during the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. In 1626 it joined the Congregation of Saint-Maur. The French Revolution did not spare the old cloisters of Le Bec: it turned this illustrious refuge of prayer and learning into a stud-farm.

[5] The church of Saint-Jean-en-Vallée, founded in 1038 by a priest named Toalde, was erected into an abbey by Ivo in 1099. This church was consumed by fire in 1215. After being rebuilt, it suffered several disasters, floods first, then the Calvinists, and was almost destroyed in 1591, at the time of the siege of Chartres. This monastery was granted to the Reformed Fathers of the Congregation of France (or Génovéfains), who applied themselves to restoring its former splendour.

24 December

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY

The Vigil of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. — At Antioch, the birthday in heaven of forty blessed virgins who, during the persecution of Decius, consummated their martyrdom by divers kinds of torments. 250. — At Spoleto, St. Gregory, priest and martyr, in the time of Diocletian and Maximian: first beaten with knotted clubs, laid on a gridiron and shut up in a dungeon, he then had his knees torn with iron cards and his sides burned with blazing torches, and at last his head was cut off. 303. — At Tripoli, the holy martyrs Lucian, Metrobius, Paul, Zenobius, Theotimus and Drusus. — At Nicomedia, St. Euthymius, martyr, who, after having disposed many of the faithful to suffer martyrdom during the persecution of Diocletian, soon went to share their crown, being pierced with a sword-stroke. 303. — At Bordeaux, St. Delphinus, bishop, who shone by his holiness in the time of the emperor Theodosius. 5th c. — In Poland, St. John of Kenty, secular priest, confessor, celebrated for his learning, his zeal for the propagation of the faith, his virtues and his miracles. His feast is kept on 20 October.[1] 1473. — At Rome, the feast of St. Tarsilla, virgin, aunt of St. Gregory the Great, who affirms that at the hour of her death she saw Jesus Christ coming to her. 6th c. — At Trier, St. Irmina, virgin, daughter of King St. Dagobert II. 8th c.

At Clermont in Auvergne, the death of St. Venerandus, bishop of that see and confessor, whose notice we sketched on 18 January. 423. — At Trier, Blessed Adela, sister of St. Irmina, cited in the Roman martyrology of this day. About 740. — Among the Friars Preachers, Blessed Brocard of Strasbourg, confessor, of the Order of St. Dominic. Being at Paris for his theological studies, he was drawn to the Order by Blessed Reginald and received the habit from his hands. During his novitiate he showed such virtue and wisdom that immediately after his profession he was chosen by the General Chapter — others say by St. Dominic himself — to go and preach in the Holy Land. He was given as companions Blessed James Xaron, honoured as a great Saint in Candia, and Blessed Stephen of Lusignan, a kinsman of the kings of Cyprus. Blessed Brocard founded convents of his Order at Bethlehem, Damascus, Nazareth and twelve other places in Palestine, which allowed it to be made a province of the Order. He lived to the age of ninety and fell asleep in the Lord laden with merits. 13th c.

ST. GREGORY OF SPOLETO, PRIEST AND MARTYR

303. — Pope: St. Marcellinus. — Roman Emperor: Diocletian.

> *Tota justitia haec est: virginitas, sacerdotium et martyrium. All justice lies in virginity, the priesthood and martyrdom. — St. Augustine.*

Under the reign of Diocletian and Maximian, all Italy teemed with sacrilegious idolaters, who were carried away by such fury against the Christians that everywhere a redoubled zeal for the worship of idols could be seen; and if anyone refused to adore them and sacrifice to them, he was at once subjected to divers kinds of torture.

There was at that time a most impious man named Flaccus, whom the emperor Maximian had deputed to revive the worship of all the false gods. When he had arrived in the city of Spoleto, he had his tribunal set up and sent the public criers to announce at every crossroads of the city that all the citizens were to assemble in the Forum in his presence. When all the people had gathered, Flaccus said to Tircanus: “Does all this crowd honour our gods?” Tircanus answered: “All whom your piety sees here adore the gods Jupiter, Minerva and Asclepius, immortal gods, who show themselves favourable to the whole world.” Flaccus was delighted on hearing these words; then he gave the order to dismiss the assembly.

There was then in the city of Spoleto a man named Gregory, who day and night applied himself to fasting and prayer. By his prayers he restored health to a great number of the sick, drove out unclean spirits, cured those whom illness kept to their beds, cleansed lepers, gave sight to the blind, and converted the hearts of many pagans to the Lord Jesus Christ; his zeal also led him to overthrow the temples of the idols and their images. Tircanus, having learned all these things, was outraged and went to report them to Flaccus. “There is in the city,” he said to him, “a man named Gregory who, not content with despising the gods, leads minds astray and takes no account of your orders.” At this news Flaccus was seized by the demon of anger, and at once he ordered forty soldiers to bring blessed Gregory to him in chains. The guards, obeying their master’s command, soon presented to him the captive they had sought.

Flaccus, having sat down on his tribunal with Tircanus and looking fixedly at blessed Gregory, spoke to him thus: “Are you Gregory of Spoleto?” Gregory answered: “I am.” — “Is it true that you despise the gods and take no account of the orders of the princes?” — “If you wish to know the truth, I will tell you that since my childhood I have never forsaken my God, who formed me from the slime of the earth.” — “And who is that God?” — “He who made man to His image and likeness: the strong God, the immortal God, who renders to each according to his works.” — “Not so many words; do what I command you.” — “I know what the orders are; as for me, I do what I ought to do.” — “If then you act so for your salvation, enter this august temple and sacrifice to our great gods Jupiter, Minerva and the venerable Asclepius: thereby you will deserve to receive

great benefits from our invincible princes, and you shall be our friend." — "I do not at all covet your friendship; so I do not sacrifice to demons, but to my God Jesus Christ." — "What madness possesses you, wretched Gregory? Know well that you will thus bring down on your head the severest penalties." — "I have never been touched by madness: it is rather you, who do not acknowledge your Creator, the Lord Jesus Christ; for it is plain that Jupiter, Minerva and Asclepius, of whom you speak, are demons."

Then Flaccus said: "Break his jaws with blows, saying to him: 'Cease your blasphemies against the gods and be obstinate no longer.'" Gregory answered: "I have never been obstinate: it is you who are the ministers of Satan, since you do his will." Tircanus said to him: "Gregory, I urge you to sacrifice before your body is torn to pieces." Gregory replied: "It is better for me that my body be lost than my soul: do what you will." Flaccus and Tircanus said to him: "Come, sacrifice to the gods before we proceed to torments." Gregory answered: "I have told you already, and I say it again: I do not sacrifice to your demons, but to my Lord Jesus Christ, who made heaven, earth, the sea and all that they contain." Then Flaccus said: "Bring knotted clubs and break his back, saying to him: 'This is what those deserve who ignore the gods and despise the princes.'" Gregory said to the governor: "I want you to know, Flaccus, that for the tortures you inflict on my body I shall receive a double reward in heaven." Flaccus said to the executioners: "Turn him on his back and beat him on the belly with your clubs." Gregory, raising his eyes to heaven, then prayed thus: "Have pity on your servant, O God, Holy One of Israel: deliver my soul from fear of the enemy." Flaccus and Tircanus said to him: "Have pity on yourself before you die: it is a friend's advice we give you." Gregory answered: "Depart from me, minister of Satan; go and make your offerings. The Lord Jesus Christ assists me, to strengthen me amid my wounds." Flaccus said to him: "So it is yet another of your follies, wretch, that will not let you prolong your life." Gregory answered: "Tear my whole body to pieces if you will; the Lord protects my soul and gives it life."

Flaccus, despairing of overcoming his constancy, then said to the executioners: "Bind his feet and hands, stretch him on the red-hot gridiron and put wood beneath it." The ministers did as they had been ordered and made ready the fire. Blessed Gregory cried out from the midst of the flames and said to the Lord: "Lord Jesus Christ, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, God of our fathers, who do not reject the prayers of your servants, who went down with the three children into the furnace, help me, your servant, in the tribulations I endure at this moment." While he was still speaking, a great earthquake shook the city of Spoleto, and a whole quarter of the city fell down, burying beneath its ruins more than four hundred and fifty persons, all pagans and given to the worship of idols. At this sight Flaccus roared like a lion and, yielding to terror, fled. But Tircanus said to the guards: "Bring iron chains to bind him, shut him up in the prison, and have him carefully guarded by the soldiers." When blessed Gregory had entered the prison, the Angel of the Lord appeared to him and said: "Peace be with you, Gregory! fear nothing." At that very instant his chains broke, and he was surrounded by the brightness of the Lord. At this sight he threw himself on the ground and addressed this prayer to the Lord: "I give you thanks, Lord Jesus Christ, who have sent your holy Angel to strengthen my soul: I praise you with all my heart, and I will glorify your name for ever, because you have shown me mercy; yes, you are the only God." The Angel said to him: "Courage, good and faithful servant; since you have been faithful over a few things, I will set you over many: enter into the joy of your master." And as he said these words he vanished from his sight. Blessed Gregory, rising at once, began to praise and bless God.

The next day Flaccus ordered his tribunal to be set up in the middle of the Forum and blessed Gregory to be brought before him. When he had arrived, Flaccus said to him: "Now then, give up your folly and come and sacrifice to our great gods, whom you have denied until now." Gregory answered: "Never have I sacrificed to demons, nor will I sacrifice, save to my Lord, who has deigned to bring me to this crown of justice." Then Flaccus said: "Bring the iron combs and strike his knees with them with all your strength, so that at least by this means we may cure him of his stupidity." Gregory answered him: "Yet see what you are, you who serve

demons and adore idols made by the hands of men. For if you knew your creator, the Lord Jesus Christ, you would adore Him, before whom all the Angels tremble." — "I, serve demons, villain!" — "One can see well that you are blinded by them." — "Bring the burning lamps and burn his sides, saying to him: 'Do not be proud.'" — "Were you to make of my whole body a single wound, my physician is near me, the Lord Jesus Christ, who heals and strengthens me, so that all these ills you seem to make me endure I count as nothing." — "Come here, accursed one, and try to win the favour of the immortal gods before I deliver you to death." — "Cursed are all who trust in idols!" Flaccus, hearing these words, blazed up like a furnace and cried: "Call Tircanus quickly." — "Here I am," the latter answered. And at once the impious Flaccus gave the order to drag blessed Gregory into the middle of the amphitheatre and behead him.

Gregory, having arrived at the amphitheatre, made this prayer to the Lord: "Blessed be you, Lord, my God and my king, my help and my deliverer, who have deigned this day to call me from this world to come to you!" And raising his eyes to heaven, he heard a great voice saying to him: "Behold, you are about to be crowned, O Gregory! you are inscribed among the number of my Saints: come to me, blessed of the Lord! your dwelling in heaven is prepared." The Angel was still speaking when the guard Aquilinus cut off the martyr's head. Tircanus ordered the wild beasts to be let loose to devour his body; but these furious animals bowed their heads before those precious remains as though they adored them. The crowd, witnessing this prodigy, cried aloud: "Truly great is the God of the Christians!" and a good number of them believed in the Lord. That same day Flaccus, struck by an Angel, expired, casting up his entrails through his mouth.

Meanwhile the body of blessed Gregory lay stretched out in the middle of the amphitheatre. A Christian woman named Abundantia went to find Tircanus to ask leave to take away the body of the holy martyr. Tircanus said to her: "Give me thirty-five pieces of gold and take it." Abundantia answered him: "I will gladly give the sum you ask; only I beg you to deliver the body to me without delay." Tircanus said to her: "Bring me what I told you and take away the body." This woman, having counted out to him the thirty-five pieces of gold, had the body taken away, full of joy, blessing God and saying: "Blessed be the Lord, who has not disdained my prayer nor withdrawn His mercy from me!" She then covered the holy body with balm, nard and precious spices, and buried it near the stone bridge, on the bank of the stream called the Sanguinario, not far from the walls of the city, on the ninth of the calends of January, singing hymns and canticles and saying: "The Lord is wonderful in His Saints: the God of Israel will Himself give power and strength to His people; blessed be God! The Lord is just in His words and holy in all His works; it is He who gives holy desires and blesses the years of the just."

Taken from the *Acts of the Martyrs*, translated and published by the Rev. Benedictine Fathers of the Congregation of France.

ST. IRMINA, VIRGIN, ABBESS OF THE MONASTERY OF HORREN AT TRIER

8th century.

> *Amor Dei hominem laetificat et a terrenis sublevat. The love of God gladdens man and detaches him from the earth. — Idiota.*

St. Irmina, daughter of St. Dagobert II, King of Austrasia, was born about the year 662. The fine examples of her virtuous father were not lost on her; for the court of that monarch then offered a spectacle very different from that of the other courts of the same period. There were seen an Arbogast, a Florentius, a Wilfrid, those venerable pontiffs who then recalled the virtues of an Ambrose and a Martin, who were the friends of the monarch without being his flatterers and courtiers, who knew how to make him attentive to the true interests of his peoples, and never hid from him the state of the kingdom's affairs.

Irmina, brought up under the eyes of such Christian parents and such holy prelates, tasted while still very young the charms of virtue and the delights of piety. Her precious qualities developed with her age, and she soon drew the eyes of the court. Something serious and grave was noticed in her; a true love of God guided her in all her actions, and she fulfilled with joy all the duties of Christianity. It is true that these duties seemed hard to her at first; but the desire she had to please the Lord smoothed away little by little all the difficulties, and she gave herself ardently to the practice of good. Holy Scripture represents this joy that accompanies the practice of virtue as the distinctive mark of perfection: “Her ways are beautiful ways, and all her paths are peaceable.” So the commandments of God are not burdensome to one who loves Him, and the good man makes the law of the Lord his delight; he meditates on it day and night — and not only meditates on it, but labours also to conform his life to it.

Irmina was the ornament and delight of the court by her piety, her modesty, her gentleness and her rare prudence. Though the eldest daughter of a powerful monarch, she never sought to make much of the prerogatives of her birth; on the contrary she was seen to flee large gatherings and all occasions where she might have put herself forward: she avoided the eyes of men and appeared in public only when her parents ordered it. In spite of her care to withdraw from the world, she was nevertheless regarded as the model of Christian virgins, and a young Frankish lord asked her hand in marriage. Irmina had never felt any attraction to that state; but, submissive in all things to her parents’ will, she did not refuse, hoping to serve God with the same fervour as in her father’s palace. She prepared herself in silence to adorn her heart more and more with every virtue, and so to bring to her husband wisdom as the most precious of all dowries. Already everything was being made ready, and everyone congratulated the happy young man who was to possess in his bride an inestimable treasure. But how different are the judgments of God from those of men! At the moment when the intended union was about to be formed, news came to Dagobert of the death of his future son-in-law.

On this occasion it was seen what sway religion held over Irmina’s heart. The whole court pressed round her to soothe the grief that such crushing news must cause her; but the young virgin showed a calm and serene brow and made to God the most generous sacrifice, resigning herself to the loss of a husband whose happiness she would have made. How many young persons would here have accused heaven of too great severity in thus taking from them a happiness that seemed assured! But Irmina submitted with true greatness of soul to the will of the Lord; she went further, for, after thanking her God for having so dealt with her, she formed the resolution of having no other spouse than Jesus Christ.

From that moment she broke entirely with the world and clung more than ever to those delights alone that had religion for their source. The Lord, who never lets Himself be outdone in generosity, then made His servant the object of His tenderest favour. Dagobert, convinced of the sincerity of her resolve, allowed her to follow her vocation; and this young princess, the pride of her whole family and the admiration of all, went in the flower of her age to bury herself in a monastery. Thus she won the most complete victory over an inconstant and treacherous world, whose infidelities she would sooner or later have experienced and whose caprices she would have had to fear. Her father gave her the old castle called Horreum, at Trier, where she founded a religious community, which she placed under the Rule of St. Benedict. The charter of donation that Dagobert issued for this house is of the year 675, which has led some authors to believe that the monastery of Horren existed already before Princess Irmina entered it, and that she is called its foundress only because she made it several fine donations.

Irmina’s generous resolution made a deep impression on the minds of the young women of Austrasia, and several girls of rank who until then had followed the vanities of the world reflected seriously and turned to God. Thus the pious princess became also the instrument that Providence used to work the salvation of others. Irmina was the admiration of her community, as she had been of the court, by her angelic fervour, her modesty, her humility, and above all her entire submission to the Rule of the Order. In a short time she forgot the prerogatives of her birth, or, if she thought of them, it was to use her influence in doing good. Her

community grew more and more fervent and was soon one of the most regular in the kingdom, drawn as it were to virtue by the holiness of its abbess.

Irmina was happy in her monastery and thanked heaven for the graces it deigned to pour out on her community; but this happiness was to be crossed by trials, and towards the end of the seventh century the pious abbess saw a cruel sickness ravage her house. Submissive in all things to the will of the Lord, she adored the decrees of Providence and addressed ardent prayers to heaven to obtain the end of this scourge. Already several nuns had died, and nothing suggested that the sickness would soon cease. Then the holy abbess redoubled her austerities, gave abundant alms among the people, and spent whole nights in prayer. The Lord willed to give her community a signal mark of His protection through St. Willibrord, apostle of Frisia. Irmina begged this venerable servant of God to come to the monastery, and, with firm trust in the words of Him who once said to His disciples, "You shall lay hands upon the sick, and they shall recover," she besought him to give his blessing to her sick. The holy man yielded to her prayer, offered the holy sacrifice of the Mass for the suffering nuns, sprinkled them with holy water and gave them some to drink; at once they were all healed, and the sickness entirely disappeared. In gratitude for so signal a benefit, the holy abbess in 698 made the venerable Willibrord a considerable gift of several rich estates, by means of which there was founded, four leagues from Trier, the abbey of Echternach of the Order of St. Benedict. Likewise in 699 she granted him the village of Bergen, which that abbey enjoyed until the time of its suppression.

All her life Irmina kept the memory of the miracle the Lord had worked in favour of her community, and often spoke of it with the liveliest gratitude. Her life continued to be consecrated to God and her neighbour. She had her last end always before her mind, and counted as lost all moments in which she did not draw nearer to blessed eternity by the practice of some virtue. She always regarded herself as the servant of those whose guidance had been entrusted to her, and was ready to make every sacrifice when it was a question of procuring their spiritual good. She never knew that imperious haughtiness which alienates minds and usually wrings out only a forced obedience. Her orders were rather requests, and if sometimes she was obliged to use her authority, she did so only with a secret reluctance and so as not to fail in her duty. She used the rights of her office only for the glory of God and the salvation of her neighbour. Her great austerities, her vigils and her fasts had impaired her once robust health. Frequent illnesses told her that she would soon go the way of all flesh, and she rejoiced in the Lord to see that happy moment approach. She then made her will, which breathes the tenderest piety. The pious daughter is occupied in it only with God: she bequeathed great riches to her monastery, but with admirable generosity. Having thus set her temporal affairs in order, she announced to her nuns that she was soon to leave them. This news threw the community into consternation and spread mourning among her pious daughters: each wept for a mother, a friend, a comforter. Irmina alone was not affected: she awaited the stroke of death with resignation, well convinced that she would find grace before the Lord; she received the last sacraments with angelic fervour and fell peacefully asleep in the sleep of the just on 24 December. The year of her death is uncertain: most authors place it at the beginning of the eighth century. Her body was exposed for several days, then buried in the church of her monastery. The people paid her public veneration almost at once. Her relics were later translated to the abbey church of Wissembourg, where they were laid in a magnificent tomb.

Taken from the *Histoire des Saints d'Alsace* by the Abbé Hunckler.

ST. DELPHINUS, BISHOP OF BORDEAUX (5th century)

The Church had in this great prelate not only an enlightened and fearless defender of orthodox truths, but also a watchful protector who upheld her against the undertakings of heretics. We know neither his country nor the names of his parents; we do not even know in what year he was raised to the episcopal see of Bordeaux. All we can say is that his piety and learning made him so famous that the holiest bishops of the Church thought themselves honoured to be his friends and to correspond with him. In 380 he was called to

the council of Saragossa in Spain, where he contributed much to the condemnation of the heretics Priscillian, Helvidius, Salvianus and Instantius.

He then withdrew into his diocese to prevent these monsters, who had refused to appear at the council, from spreading there the poison of their errors. This precaution and diligence were absolutely necessary; for the heretics, resolved to go and implore the emperor's protection, passed through Gaul and infected with their pernicious doctrine the city of Eauze and its whole diocese (the present diocese of Auch). From there they went to Bordeaux to spread their venom there too. Delphinus was not asleep, but, like a good shepherd, watched over his flock; so he discovered their baleful design and pressed them so hard that they were forced to abandon all Aquitaine and flee to Italy. Not content with taking from them the means of harming his sheep, he also assembled (385) in his episcopal city a council at which Priscillian and Instantius, whom those of their party had made bishops, were declared unworthy, deprived of all ecclesiastical dignity, and condemned anew. Our holy prelate showed there an admirable prudence and firmness; and had the others imitated his zeal, they would have cut off the root of many evils that this uprising of the heretics produced in the Church.

What makes St. Delphinus still more illustrious is that he fully persuaded St. Paulinus (later Bishop of Nola) to undertake a perfect life, that he catechized him, baptized him and gave him his first instruction in the spiritual life. These benefits bound St. Paulinus to be grateful to him all his life; indeed nothing can be added to the testimonies of esteem, respect and gratitude that he offers him in the five letters he wrote to him.

St. Delphinus was also very closely united with St. Phoebadius, Bishop of Agen, and both of them likewise with St. Ambrose of Milan. They both corresponded regularly with that holy doctor, but only one letter has been preserved, addressed to the two together. From it one sees that their union was so close that they preferred to be written to in a common letter rather than each separately, their mutual affection not suffering even their names to be parted.

St. Delphinus is believed to have built a church at Langon (Gironde, arrondissement of Bazas). Full of days and merits, he died at Bordeaux on a 24 December, at the beginning of the fifth century.

Father Giry, completed from the *Gallia christiana nova*.

ST. TARSILLA, ROMAN VIRGIN (6th century)

St. Gregory speaks thus of St. Tarsilla, his aunt:[1]

"My father had three sisters, who all three consecrated their virginity to Our Lord: one was called Tarsilla, another Gordiana, and the third Aemiliana. They renounced the vanities of the world with equal fervour; and, having been consecrated virgins on the same day, they undertook a perfectly regular life in their own house. There they made wonderful progress in virtue through the good examples they gave one another. Yet after a number of years a difference was seen among them. For Tarsilla and Aemiliana advanced so much from day to day in the love of God that one could say they had only their bodies on earth and their souls had already passed into the delights of eternity; but Gordiana, having through negligence let grow cold that intimate love with which her heart had formerly burned, fell imperceptibly into laxity and began little by little to take up again the love of the world.

"This change, which Tarsilla well perceived, often made her say to Aemiliana: 'I see clearly that our sister is no longer of our company; she pours herself out too much on outward things, and she does not take the care she ought to keep her heart in the good resolutions she has made.' They both reproved her with all possible gentleness, pointing out to her that her great levity ill became the profession she had made of living under reform. Gordiana seemed indeed to wish to profit by their charitable reproofs, and when she was spoken to about amending, her face at once took on again the gravity befitting a virgin; but as soon as the reprimand

was over, she dropped that modesty to abandon herself once more to great freedom of speech and complete dissipation, eagerly seeking the company of young ladies of the world and unable to bear those who did not live by the world's maxims.

"Tarsilla, being the most assiduous in prayer, the most careful in practising austerities to afflict her flesh, and the strictest in abstinence and modesty, soon reached an eminent degree of holiness. She told me that one day she had a vision in which blessed Felix, my great-great-grandfather, bishop of the Roman Church, appeared to her and, showing her a dwelling filled with wonderful brightness, said to her: 'Come, for it is in this place of light that I receive you.' Indeed the next day she was seized with a fever which in a short time brought her to the grave; and, as it is the custom, when persons of rank are in danger of death, to assemble in order to try to console the relatives, several men and many women, among whom was my mother, were present at the hour of her agony. Everyone was round her bed when all at once she raised her voice and said to those present: 'Withdraw, and make room; I see Jesus coming to me.' And while she gazed fixedly on Him whom she saw, her holy soul was freed from the bonds of her body.

"The fragrance with which the whole room was at the same time filled made the company judge that the very Author of all sweetness had honoured her with His presence. When her body was uncovered to be washed, according to custom, her elbows and knees were found covered with calluses like those seen on camels — an authentic witness to the long prayers she had made during her life. These wonders happened before the feast of the Saviour's birth. Immediately after the feast Tarsilla appeared to Aemiliana and said to her: 'Come, my sister; I did not keep with you the solemnity of the day of the Lord's birth, but we shall keep together the feast of the Epiphany.' 'If you call me alone,' answered Aemiliana, 'what shall we do with our sister, and to whom shall we leave the care of her?' 'Come, I tell you,' replied the Saint with a very sad face; 'Gordiana is resolved to stay with the worldly.' After this vision Aemiliana fell ill and died before the feast of the Lord's Apparition, as her sister had foretold her. As for Gordiana, as soon as she found herself alone she grew laxer still; for, losing the fear of God, renouncing modesty and propriety, and quite forgetting her consecration, she married her steward.

"You have seen three sisters," adds St. Gregory, "who gave themselves to God at the same time with equal ardour, but who did not all persevere, because, according to the word of Jesus Christ, 'many are called but few are chosen.' Let those, then, who practise virtue not trust in their own strength, but live in continual distrust of themselves, for fear of losing tomorrow what they have acquired up to today with so much labour."

St. Gregory the Great, *Homily XXXVIII on the Gospels*, and *Dialogues*, Book IV, chapter 16.

ST. ADELA, FIRST ABBESS OF PALATIOLUM (PFALZEL), NEAR TRIER (about 740)

St. Adela, sister of St. Irmina and, like her, daughter of St. Dagobert, showed from childhood a great aversion for the world and early acquired the habit of prayer and meditation. When she was of an age to be married, her parents gave her to a rich lord named Alberic, who made her the mother of a son whom she likewise named Alberic. Penetrated with the importance of the duty of bringing up this child according to the maxims of religion, she neglected nothing to imprint a lively love of God on his tender heart; and the better to succeed, she always led an irreproachable life and by her example taught her son to practise what she taught him. She had the consolation of seeing her lessons bear fruit, and blessed the Lord for having given her a son faithful in loving and serving Him.

Having become a widow a few years after her marriage, Adela resolved to spend the rest of her life in continence and renounced for ever the contracting of new ties, although her birth, her age and her beauty would have procured her splendid matches; but she preferred to consecrate herself to God and asked leave to

enter religion. Her sister's example had taught her to despise the world and to devote herself to the exercises of piety. She founded, a few leagues from Trier, the monastery of Palatiolum, of which she became the first abbess; she walked in Irmina's footsteps and was the admiration of her community by her fervour, her complete self-denial and her ardent desire to please the Lord. She died about the year 740. Several martyrologies speak of her and join her feast with that of her holy sister, although it is not proved that she died, like Irmina, on 24 December.

St. Adela is the model of mothers who wish to bring up their children in a Christian way.

Taken from the *Histoire des Saints d'Alsace* by the Abbé Hunckler.

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[1] We gave the life of St. John of Kenty on 20 October, vol. XII, pp. 480–482.

[2] Alias: Tharsilla, Thrasilla, Tarsilla, Tharsilla.

25 December

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY

In the year from the creation of the world, when in the beginning God created heaven and earth, five thousand one hundred and ninety-nine; from the flood, two thousand nine hundred and fifty-seven; from the birth of Abraham, two thousand and fifteen; from Moses and the going out of the people of Israel from Egypt, one thousand five hundred and ten; from the anointing of David as king, one thousand and thirty-two; in the sixty-fifth week according to the prophecy of Daniel; in the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad; in the year seven hundred and fifty-two from the foundation of Rome; in the forty-second year of the reign of Octavian Augustus; the whole earth being at peace; in the sixth age of the world, Jesus Christ, eternal God and Son of the eternal Father, willing to sanctify the world by His most holy coming, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit, and nine months having passed since His conception, is born in Bethlehem of Judah, made man of the glorious Virgin Mary.

The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh. — The same day, the triumph of St. Anastasia, who, in the time of the emperor Diocletian, first suffered a hard and close imprisonment, in which her husband Publius shut her up, and in which the generous confessor of Jesus Christ, Chrysogonus, strengthened and consoled her. Afterwards she was again cast into prison and long held there by Florus, prefect of Illyria. At last, bound to two stakes with hands and feet outstretched, she expired in a great fire that was lit around her. This was in the island of Palmarola, whither she had been brought with two hundred men and seventy women, who also died martyrs by divers kinds of torments. 303. — At Rome, in the cemetery of Apronianus, St. Eugenia, virgin, who, having given many striking proofs of her virtues in the time of the emperor Gallienus (260–268), and having gathered a great number of virgins to consecrate them to Jesus Christ, was arrested by order of Nicetius, prefect of the city, who kept her long in torments and at last had her throat cut. 3rd c. — At Nicomedia, the martyrdom of many thousands of Christians who had assembled on the day of the Nativity of Our Lord to celebrate its solemnity. The emperor Diocletian ordered the doors of the church to be shut and fire to be prepared all around to burn it; then he had a tripod with incense set at the entrance, and had a herald cry aloud that those who wished to save themselves from the fire should come out at once and offer incense to Jupiter. Whereupon all having answered with one voice that they would rather die for Jesus Christ than commit this sacrilege, the fire was lit and they were all consumed, so that they had the happiness of being born in heaven on the very day on which Our Lord willed to be born on earth for the salvation of the world. — At Barcelona in Spain, the precious death of St. Peter Nolasco, confessor, founder of the Order of Our Lady of Mercy for the redemption of captives, illustrious for his virtue and his miracles. His feast is kept on 31 January by order of Pope Alexander VII.[1] 1256.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED

At Elne (Pyrénées-Orientales), in the diocese of Perpignan, St. Flamidian, martyr. 4th c. — In the former Benedictine abbey of Cluny, in the diocese of Autun, Blessed Matthew, canon of Reims, then monk and grand prior of Cluny, finally cardinal-bishop of Albano (States of the Church) and legate of the Holy See in France. He was the disciple of Blessed Peter the Venerable, who wrote his life. 12th c. — Again at Cluny, Blessed Peter Maurice of Montboissier, surnamed the Venerable, ninth abbot of that monastery. 1157. — At Marchiennes (Nord), in the diocese of Cambrai, Blessed Adalsendis or Adalsinda, nun at Hamage in the Low Countries, whose notice we sketched on 30 June. 8th c. — At Saint-Satur (Cher, arrondissement and canton of Sancerre), in the diocese of Bourges, St. Romulus or Romble of Brittany, priest, founder and abbot of a monastery formerly situated near Saint-Satur.[2] 5th c. — At Toulouse, the death of Blessed Fulk, bishop of that see and confessor.[3] 1231.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS

Among the Friars Preachers, Blessed Nera Tolomei of Siena, virgin, of the Third Order of St. Dominic. In her youth she had to suffer a horrible persecution from her mother because of her stubborn refusal of marriage. She was shut up in a room that served her as a prison and condemned to bread and water. The poor recluse bore everything with angelic patience. In reward for this firmness the Saviour often visited her, accompanied by a numerous band of heavenly spirits. When her liberty was restored to her, she placed herself under the direction of Blessed Ambrose of Siena, who led her to high holiness. She worked several miracles during her life and after her death. Her image is exposed to public veneration in the church of San Domenico at Siena. She is represented conversing with her guardian angel, who often consoled her in her prison. 1287. — In Japan, the martyrdom of Blessed Michael Nakashima, a Japanese, of the Society of Jesus. 1628.

THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Year of the world 5199.

> *Hunc astra, tellus, aequora, Hunc omne quod caelo subest, Salutis auctorem novae Novo salutat cantico. Let the stars this day, let the earth, let the Ocean itself and all creatures that move beneath the vault of heaven come and greet the advent of the Deliverer and intone in His praise a canticle worthy of Him. — Roman Liturgy.*

This feast is so august, and the faithful people of their own accord give themselves with such ardour and devotion to its celebration, that we should disappoint their expectation if we did not dwell a little on the great mystery honoured in it, in order to give them a more perfect knowledge of it. It is not, properly speaking, the birth by which the divine Word proceeds from the understanding of His Father: a permanent birth, an eternal birth, a birth that never had a beginning and will never have an end; a birth that has no fixed day, because it is before all days, and yet there is no day that it does not contain; a birth that has given, gives and will eternally give, without succession and without failing, to that adorable Word the very nature of His Father, which is His divinity. It is true that the Church sets it before us in the third Mass of this day, since she has read in it the first chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the beginning of the Gospel according to St. John, which are the places where Holy Scripture speaks of it with most light and depth; but it is certain that her chief intention is to revere the second birth of her Saviour, that by which He was born of a Virgin in the fullness of time, to enlighten the world with His presence and to begin among men the great work of their redemption, after having been conceived of the Holy Spirit in the womb of that Virgin and enclosed there for nine months, according to the ordinary course of human generation.

It is with this mystery in view that she sings in her offices: “Today true peace has come down to us from heaven. Today the heavens have become sources of honey throughout the world. Today the day of a new redemption, of an ancient restoration and of an eternal happiness has dawned for us.” And this is what makes St. Leo, pope, say in the first sermon on the Nativity: “Our Lord is born today, dearly beloved; let us rejoice,

for it is not lawful to remain sad when life is born. No one is shut out from sharing in this gladness; all have cause to take part in it, because Our Lord, the destroyer of sin and death, having found no one free from guilt, has come to redeem and set free all men. Let the just man exult, because he is near to receiving the reward of his justice; let the sinner take comfort in his misery, because pardon of his offences is offered him; let even the Gentile take courage, because he is called to receive life."

Indeed we see in this birth, foretold so many centuries before, the fulfilment of all that God had promised to Noah, to Abraham, to Jacob, to Moses, to David, to Isaiah and to the remnant of the Babylonian captivity. He had promised them all a true Saviour who would deliver the human race from the slavery of sin and the tyranny of the devil. Behold, at last He is born: the angels announce Him to us by their songs of gladness and by a heavenly harmony; the heavens point Him out to us by a new and extraordinary star; the earth assures us of it by a great number of wonders worked on every side. Let us go ourselves to acknowledge Him; let us run with the shepherds to Bethlehem, enter the stable in their company, and there consider, according to the angel's word, this Child born of God in eternity and born of the Virgin in time, wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.

From the time the angel of the Lord had revealed to St. Joseph the ineffable mystery of the Incarnation of the Word, Joseph and Mary did nothing together but raise themselves to God, to bless, adore, praise and thank His inestimable charity towards sinners, and to pray Him earnestly to complete the design of His mercy by giving to all the world, by a happy birth, Him whom He had already given them by a virginal conception. To dispose themselves for this signal favour they fulfilled in themselves what was still lacking to the burning desires of the Patriarchs, the urgent prayers of the Prophets, the cries and sighs of the just, the hope of all the ages and the expectation of all nature, which, groaning under the captivity of sin, awaited with impatience the coming of a deliverer; and they did so with all the more perfection because Mary, already Mother of the Child, and Joseph, His guardian, protector and foster-father, had in that capacity a sovereign knowledge of His worth and a love for Him proportioned to the eminence of their dignity. Moreover the Virgin knew, by the angel's revelation, that, having conceived by the operation of the Holy Spirit, she would also give birth by that same operation, which would not only keep the seal of her virginity but would even give it a new lustre, so that the Child could say what the royal Prophet puts in His mouth: *Tu es qui extraxisti me de ventre*: "It is You, Lord, who by a prodigy of Your power and by an altogether singular work of Your wisdom have drawn me from my mother's womb." So she bound and united herself ceaselessly to the holy dispositions of divine Providence, with no other care than to receive its impressions and follow the movements of its grace.

Meanwhile the time came to bring this divine Child into the world; and as He willed one day to be executed at Jerusalem in the presence of all the earth, to suffer a greater shame, so He willed also to be born without any splendour in the little town of Bethlehem, to teach us, in being born as well as in dying, to humble ourselves. For this purpose He gave His parents occasion to go to that town which the Prophets had foretold would be the cradle of the Messiah. The occasion was that Caesar Augustus, emperor of the world, wishing to know the strength of his empire and the number of families and persons composing it, and to levy a poll-tax on his subjects, issued an edict ordering all the governors of provinces to make an exact census everywhere, and every individual to be enrolled in the registers to be drawn up in the place where the head of his family was. St. Joseph, who was of the house and tribe of David, whose stock was at Bethlehem, found himself thereby obliged to go there to obey the prince's command.[1]

He left Nazareth, according to the text of the Gospel; he set out for Bethlehem, and took with him his wife, who was with child, in order to be enrolled with her. That town, already very populous in itself, was overflowing with strangers at that time. Joseph and Mary, because of their poverty, could find no room in the inns and went out of the walls of Bethlehem. David, having become king, had built himself a fortress at Bethlehem, which had been his cradle, where he had led his father's flocks to pasture and where Samuel had anointed him king. This fortress, fallen into ruins, served as shelter for travellers and their beasts of burden,

and for shepherds who took refuge there with their flocks. It was there, in an underground cave, that Mary, exhausted by the fatigues of a journey so hard for her age (she was only fourteen), was obliged to shelter with her spouse against the rigours of the season. It was a kind of stable with a manger, straw and hay. No humbler lodging can be imagined; yet the wisdom of God had chosen it from all eternity for His birth. For then, says St. Luke, *impleti sunt dies Mariae ut pareret*, "the time of Mary's delivery came" — not only the time nature required according to the order of human generation, but also the time marked before all ages in the order of God's designs, the time of the world's final disposition to receive so great a benefit, and the time when Mary had reached the last degree of grace she was to have in order to bring into the world that infinite light, that spotless mirror of the beauty and goodness of God.

She was warned of this moment by revelation, and, having withdrawn into the farthest recess of the cave, which she took care to clean, she knelt there facing the East to await in this humbled posture the marvel the Holy Spirit was about to work in her. She was then filled with an extraordinary splendour. She was raised to an unwonted contemplation of the greatness of God and of the excellences of His incarnate Word; she was inflamed with a fire of love so great and so vehement that she had never felt the like; finally she entered into a wonderful participation in the perfections of the eternal Father begetting His Son, whose Mother she had the honour to be. St. Bridget writes in her *Revelations* that, out of humility, she took off her shoes, laid aside the veil of her head and the white mantle she wore, unfolded the little swaddling bands and the cloths she had prepared — which, though coarse and of mean stuff, were very clean and neatly arranged — and that, with hands and eyes raised to heaven, wholly filled with a heavenly unction and sweetness, she addressed this prayer to God: "Eternal Father, who have done me the honour of choosing me for the Mother of Your only Son; who have enclosed in my womb the inestimable Treasure of Your wisdom, and hidden in my body, as in a mysterious shell, the priceless pearl of Your image: I pray You now to make manifest to the world this perfect image of Your infinite goodness, so that by it all men may be drawn to the knowledge of You. Let the Creator of heaven and earth come forth from His creature, the source from its stream, the shoot from its root, the vine from its branch, the sun from its ray, and the bridegroom from his bridal chamber. Let the world see its author, the angel his king, the just man his life, the sinner his remedy, the Gentile his light, the Jew his glory, and the afflicted his consolation. Finally, let Your most humble Handmaid see her only Son and her Beloved."

After this prayer, or some other more excellent one that the weakness of our mind could not imagine, the divine Child appeared before her eyes with ravishing grace and beauty, borne by His own power. Some holy souls have learned by revelation that He held Himself at first a little raised above the ground and then set Himself gently down upon the floor. The Child had come forth from her womb without breaking the seal of her virginal enclosure, with the same purity with which desires come forth from the heart, thoughts are born of the mind, and the ray springs from the sun and passes through a perfectly clear glass to light a whole room.

So teach all the holy Fathers of the Church and the scholastic Doctors, against pagans, Jews and heretics. They prove it against the pagans by the oracles of the sibyls, who, enlightened by the spirit of prophecy, almost all foretold that the Saviour who would come into the world would be conceived and born of a Virgin: St. Augustine uses this argument in Book XVIII of the *City of God*, chapter 23. They prove it against the Jews by fine figures and evident testimonies of the Old Testament. If the first Adam, says St. Irenaeus, was formed from virgin earth, which rain had not yet watered and the hand of man had not yet tilled, why should not the second Adam have been formed and come forth from a Virgin Mother, *nulla ex parte corrupta virginitate*, "without her virginity receiving the least alteration"? If barren women have conceived, add St. Cyril of Jerusalem and the same St. Augustine; if Aaron's rod, without being watered, put forth leaves and flowers; if the earth has been seen laden with fruit without having been sown — let us give God this glory, that He could cause a virgin to bring a son into the world without losing anything of her virginal integrity. Is not this what the prophet Isaiah had foretold in chapter 7: *Ecce Virgo concipiet et pariet filium, et*

vocabitur nomen ejus Emmanuel, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel"? And we must not translate with the Jews and heretics, "Behold, a young woman," but with the Seventy, "Behold, a virgin." For that is what the Hebrew word *almah* properly signifies; and, as Origen very well remarks, the prophet Isaiah means to give in this place an extraordinary and miraculous sign of the divine power. Now it would be no miracle that a young woman should conceive and give birth by way of marriage; but the miracle is that a virgin should have conceived and given birth while remaining ever a virgin. Is not this again what the prophet Ezekiel teaches us by that gate of the house of God which he saw always shut, although the Lord, the God of Israel, had passed through it? *Quid est porta illa clausa in aeternum*, says St. Augustine in Sermon XIV on the Nativity, *nisi Maria Virgo ante partum, Virgo in partu, Virgo post partum?* "What is that gate for ever shut, if not Mary, Virgin before childbirth, Virgin in childbirth, Virgin after childbirth?"

Finally they prove it in particular against the heretics who accept the Gospel, by the words of the angel Gabriel, who, having assured Mary that she would conceive and bear a Son, and the Virgin having asked him how either could be done, told her that it would be by the power of the Most High and by the ineffable operation of the Holy Spirit. From which it is easy to conclude that the Holy Spirit acted no less to preserve her purity in the mystery of the birth of this adorable Son than in that of His conception. The Apostles' Creed, the rule of our faith, also teaches us this important truth, since in it we make solemn profession and avowal that Jesus Christ was born of a Virgin: *Natus ex Maria virgine*. We find it likewise either supposed as an incontestable point or defined in the Councils. "If anyone," says the holy Lateran Council under Pope Martin I, "does not acknowledge the glorious Mother of God, ever Virgin and Immaculate, as having conceived and brought Him forth without corruption, her virginity remaining inviolate even after childbirth, let him be anathema!" It is true that this miracle is great, and that Theophylact prefers it to the resurrection of the dead; it is so singular that it has been done only once. But is anything impossible to God, and did not the birth of His Word on earth well deserve that He should make of it a masterpiece of His power, so that the Word should be born there in a purity conformable to that of His eternal birth? "To be born of a Virgin," says St. Augustine in his Epistle 3 to Volusian, "was so great a miracle in Jesus Christ that no greater can be expected from God. If one could penetrate its secret, it would no longer be wonderful; if one could produce an example of it, it would no longer be singular. Let us give God this glory, that He can do what, by our own avowal, we cannot conceive. In these supernatural works the whole reason to be given is the almighty power of the workman." We have dwelt somewhat on this matter to strengthen the faithful in this article of their belief, and to enlighten those heretics who might cast their eyes on this work and who dare to dispute with Mary the august title of Virgin and Ever-Virgin, which has been given her at all times with a consent so solemn and so unanimous that it has become as it were her proper name.

We do not now undertake to describe the acts made by this august Mother with her spouse St. Joseph at the first sight of the divine Child, whom they acknowledged as the Son of the eternal Father and the Creator and Master of all things. On this one may see the pious *Meditations* of St. Bernard, St. Bonaventure, Louis of Granada and the other holy Doctors who have excelled in these sentiments of devotion. All we can say is that our understanding could conceive nothing of it that would not be infinitely below all that the heart and mind of these two spouses brought forth on that occasion. There were adorations, homages, most profound self-abasements, praises, burning sentiments of love, thanksgivings, surrenders of themselves to the guidance of this lovable Child, protestations of serving Him with all the ardour and reverence of which they were capable; but they made these acts in a manner far beyond our reach, which it is better to honour by our silence than to weaken by our expressions. For His part the Child, who on the one hand offered Himself to His eternal Father to be the victim of His justice and on the other deplored the miseries into which sin had cast the human race, gave them a lovely smile to reward their fervour and to begin to acknowledge the favours He was about to receive from them.

The Virgin did not leave Him long in that state, in which, being naked, He felt keenly the rigour of the season. She lifted Him from the ground, pressed Him to her bosom, took the liberty of giving Him a respectful kiss, wrapped Him in bands and swaddling clothes, and laid Him in the manger. The Church says that it was on hay; indeed she had neither wool, nor cotton, nor feathers, nor down to lay Him on. Such was the bed of the King of kings, of Him who rests eternally in the bosom of the eternal Father. “Augustus and Herod,” says St. Bernard, “were born in a palace, but Jesus Christ is born in a stable; Augustus and Herod at their birth were laid softly in precious cradles, but Jesus Christ at His is laid hard in a mean manger where the beasts fed.” “It was indeed fitting,” adds St. Gregory of Nyssa, “that the divine Wisdom, which is the bread of life, should be placed in the trough of the animals, since man, of whom He wished to make Himself the food and the life, had put himself in the rank of the senseless beasts and had become like them.”

It is an undoubted tradition of the Church that He was warmed there by the breath of an ox and an ass. St. Gregory Nazianzen, St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Paulinus and St. Peter Chrysologus conclude it from this passage of Isaiah: “The ox knows his owner, and the ass his master’s crib”; and St. Cyril of Jerusalem applies to the same subject the words of the prophet Habakkuk according to the Septuagint version: *In medio duorum animalium*, “You will be seen between two animals.” And all the pictures of our mystery made according to the tradition of the first centuries have always represented it to us in this way.

The Evangelist St. Luke, continuing the history of this Nativity, adds that there were then in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem shepherds keeping the night watches over their flocks. The Venerable Bede says that they were three and lived in the tower of Ader (Migdal Eder), a thousand paces from the town, where Jacob once pastured his cattle. The angel of the Lord, finding them awake, appeared to them; at the same time a great light shone round them on every side, which filled them with fear. “Fear not,” said this angel to them — who, according to St. Chrysostom and St. Jerome, was St. Gabriel — “for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy that shall be to all the people. For this day is born to you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord, in the city of David; and this shall be a sign unto you: you shall find the infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger.” Truly these are very mean and contemptible marks by which to point out so great a prince; but since Our Lord Jesus Christ did not blush to clothe Himself in them, this divine ambassador did not blush to indicate them. Scarcely had Gabriel finished speaking when a great multitude of the heavenly host joined him to praise the Almighty. So they sang in the presence of the shepherds, who were witnesses of their harmony: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men of good will!”

The Evangelist records only these two phrases; but it is easy to judge that they were but the beginning and as it were the theme of their canticle. They continued it with marvellous gladness and inflamed the hearts of these shepherds with so holy an ardour that the harmony had no sooner ceased than they said one to another: “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see what has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us.” They went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. By this they knew the truth of what the angel had told them of this child; they made it known, and all who heard them were greatly rejoiced at what they told them. Such is more or less the text of the Gospel. It does not explain to us what these shepherds did in the stable, how they behaved towards the Child and towards that adorable Mother who had brought Him into the world, what they said to St. Joseph and what offers of service they made him for his holy Family. It has left all these things to our meditations, and we may form such sentiments about them as piety inspires in us; but we must take great care to imagine nothing on this subject that is not holy and does not answer to the majesty of so great a mystery.

The stable of Bethlehem has been, from the birth of Christianity to our own days, the object of the astonishment and admiration of all the Saints. They have contemplated there the surprising union of things that seem most incompatible: the Eternal, born a moment ago; the Almighty, bound, wrapped and as it were chained in swaddling bands; the Immense, confined in the poverty of a stable; the Ruler of the world

dependent on the guidance of a mother; the joy of paradise shedding abundant tears; the Feeder of men and beasts needing milk for His nourishment; and the Saviour of the human race unable to move or procure any help for Himself. They have recognized there at the same time the highest lessons of the doctrine of the Gospel and the practice of all the virtues that Jesus Christ came to teach the world: poverty, obedience, humility, the desire of crosses and sufferings, simplicity of heart, contempt of and detachment from all earthly things, love of God, mercy towards one's neighbour, and many others. Finally they have admired there the incomparable strength and the surprising effects that this humbled state of the Son of God produces in us, since His poverty enriches us, His simplicity enlightens us, His weakness strengthens us, His self-abasement raises us up, and He is no less terrible to the devil and to proud kings in His manger than He will be when working miracles in the midst of Jerusalem.

For the rest, God did not work prodigies only at Bethlehem and in Judaea to make known the new birth of His Son. St. Peter Damian relates that King Romulus, when building the city of Rome, had said that a palace he was having built would not fall until a virgin gave birth; and that building fell the very night Jesus Christ appeared in the world. About the same time the famous Apollo of Delphi, according to Suidas, became dumb and ceased to give oracles; Augustus having pressed him to declare the reason of his silence, he answered that a Hebrew child, master of the gods, shut his mouth and forced him to confine himself to hell. Nicephorus adds that this prince, having returned to Rome, for this reason had an altar raised in the Capitol with this inscription: *Ara primogeniti Dei*, "Altar of the first-born of God."[2] Other authors write that the same emperor saw in the clouds a virgin holding a child in her arms. Paulus Orosius reports other signs of the Redeemer's coming: among others, that in the hospice of the veteran soldiers at Rome a fountain of oil flowed for a whole day without anyone knowing whence it could come. This hospice was afterwards changed into a church under the name of Our Lady beyond the Tiber (Santa Maria in Trastevere).

As for the sacred cave where the Saviour was born, it has always been held in very great veneration among Christians. It is true that the emperor Hadrian, in hatred of the faithful, had a temple of Adonis built over it, hoping that this profanation would entirely abolish its memory; but this did not prevent even the pagans from always showing the place with respect, saying: "This is the place where the God of the Christians willed to be born." Afterwards, the persecutions having ceased, a magnificent church was built there: it was covered with plates of silver and its walls encrusted with marbles, and the holy cave too was very richly adorned. This church was then surrounded by several monasteries, both of men and of women, and by several hospices for the lodging and feeding of the pilgrims who came there from every side. St. Jerome was one of the first to attach himself to this holy place, and he was the author of these sacred foundations. He bore it such respect that he invited everyone to make the pilgrimage to it and to choose it for their dwelling. He drew there St. Paula and St. Eustochium, who gathered nuns there as he had gathered monks. In his letter to St. Marcella, a Roman lady, he urges her, in words full of majesty and heavenly unction, to leave those brilliant palaces, those gilded ceilings, that precious furniture, that charming company, those ever-new pleasures of the city of Rome, to come and take refuge in this little nook consecrated by the birth of the King of heaven and earth. St. Paula, whom he had drawn there, imitated his devotion and fervour. She said on entering: "This is the place of my rest, because it is the homeland of my God." She remained there twenty years with inexpressible transports of joy.

As for the manger in which the divine Child was laid, having become by His touch a most precious relic, a fragment of it was in the course of time brought to Rome, and it is seen in St. Mary Major, called for that reason St. Mary *ad Praesepe*.

The swaddling clothes of the Child Jesus were also most preciously kept once the Church was at peace. They were brought to Constantinople, where a magnificent church was built to keep them. The feast of the dedication of that church was kept on 31 August. We still have some very excellent sermons that St. Germanus, Patriarch of Constantinople, preached on that solemnity. This treasure was carried to Paris

about the middle of the thirteenth century, the emperor Baldwin II having made a present of it to King St. Louis, and that prince had it placed in the Sainte-Chapelle.

We cannot end without rendering infinite thanks to the divine Word for having given Himself to us in so sweet and tender a manner. What more could He do to stir us to His love? And what heart is so barbarous as not to love Him after such authentic and favourable marks of His inestimable charity? What more could He do to convince us of the vanity of all the goods and pleasures of the earth and to detach our hearts from them entirely? “Either Jesus Christ is mistaken,” says St. Bernard excellently, “or the world is in error; for they love, choose and seek things directly opposed: Jesus Christ, poverty; the world, riches; Jesus Christ, obedience; the world, superiority and independence; Jesus Christ, humiliation and contempt; the world, esteem, applause and praise; Jesus Christ, finally, sufferings; and the world, delights. Now it is impossible that Jesus Christ should be mistaken, since He is the Wisdom of God and knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. The world is therefore under an illusion: it takes for good what is evil and for evil what is good; so it is great folly to cling to its opinions. Let us rather cling to those of this divine Child; let us consider Him in His manger as a master in his chair; let us receive the divine lessons He gives us there; let us put them faithfully into practice; and let us be convinced that there will be salvation for us only in so far as we conform ourselves to His doctrine and His examples. This is the fruit we ought to draw from the contemplation of this mystery, and we shall draw it very easily if we become devout to the manger, to the stable, to the childhood, to the weaknesses and humiliations of the Word made Child.”

It remains for us to note that three Masses are celebrated on this day, according to the very ancient usage of the Church reported by St. Gregory, pope, in Homily VIII on the Gospels: one at midnight, in reference to Our Lord’s temporal birth in the stable of Bethlehem, which took place, according to a Prophet, *Dum medium silentium tenerent omnia, et nox in suo cursu medium iter haberet*, “while all nature was in deep silence and the night was in the midst of her course”; the second at daybreak, in reference to His resurrection, which took place about sunrise; the third in full day, in reference to His eternal birth, which was without darkness, in an inaccessible splendour.

The reader will have seen in the Roman Martyrology a most pious exposition of this mystery; but it should be noted that for the time of its accomplishment it follows the reckoning of the Septuagint, which is neither the most common nor the most probable.

THE MANGER OF OUR LORD. — CRITICAL NOTE ON THE ANTIQUITY OF THE FEAST OF CHRISTMAS

I. We must distinguish between the manger properly so called (*praesepium*, as the Gospel says), a kind of recess made in the living rock of the cave, and the holy cradle (*santa culla*) made of boards by St. Joseph to carry the divine Child more conveniently into exile.

These two holy relics are generally confused; it is therefore necessary to say a word on each.

The manger properly so called, in which the Saviour was laid after His birth on a little straw, is still preserved in our own day at Bethlehem, in the grotto of the Nativity, the original stable. It is a recess hollowed in the wall of the rock, its lower part supported by a marble column that replaces several stones of the manger given to certain churches. One of these stones, of fair size, was carried to Rome, and even today it is venerated in the basilica of St. Mary Major on the Esquiline; it is set into the altar of the crypt of the magnificent chapel of the Blessed Sacrament. In this most precious stone a recess has been made, in which is represented the holy Child Jesus lying on straw, with the Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph kneeling in an attitude of contemplation.

At Bethlehem, to preserve the manger from the pious assaults of pilgrims, it has been faced with white marble in the form of a cradle four feet long by two wide. Once a year the Reverend Franciscan Fathers who

serve the church of the Nativity remove this marble and with a brush gather and distribute the little fragments that come away of themselves.[3]

The holy cradle (*santa culla*) was carried from the Holy Land to Rome in the year 642 and placed in the Liberian basilica. The magnificent reliquary enclosing it may be six feet high. It consists of a pedestal about a metre long and as high, and an urn containing the pieces of the holy cradle. The pedestal is of porphyry, adorned at the corners with fine silver sculptures and in front with a bas-relief, also of silver, representing the adoration of the Magi. On the base of this pedestal is read, in letters of gold: *Gloria in excelsis Deo et in terra pax*.

The urn, which is oval, is supported by statuettes of angels and decorated with gilt festoons; it is formed of two superb crystal shells imitating a cradle, set in richly sculptured silver mounts. Through the crystal one sees very clearly the five little boards that made up the holy cradle, bound with silver-gilt bands and surrounded by ribbons with wax seals; these boards may be fifty centimetres long.

The urn is closed by a dome-shaped lid, surmounted by a little bed imitating straw on which lies, half reclining, a pretty silver-gilt statuette of the Child Jesus.

On Christmas Eve this precious relic is exposed in a little chapel next to the sacristy of the basilica, and the whole afternoon the public is admitted to see and venerate it. Pius IX has recently had built under the high altar of the basilica a sumptuously adorned chapel resembling that of the Confession of St. Peter. On 17 April 1864 he consecrated it and placed in it the *santa culla*, which now stays shut up there and is taken out only for the feast of Christmas.

In the crypt under the chapel of the Blessed Sacrament, of which we have already spoken, are kept a part of the swaddling clothes in which the Saviour was wrapped and of the hay on which He was laid. The cloak St. Joseph used to cover Him and protect Him from the cold is venerated in the church of St. Anastasia, and the basilica of Holy Cross in Jerusalem has the privilege of possessing some hairs of the holy Child Jesus.

In the cathedral of Aix-la-Chapelle (Aachen) a part of these same swaddling clothes is likewise kept, given by St. Helena; they are the colour of tinder.

II. The common opinion is that the feast of Christmas is older in the Churches of the West than in those of the East, and that the latter borrowed it from the Latins only towards the fourth century. The proof of this is thought to be seen in St. Chrysostom's homily for the day of the Nativity. For this Father, addressing the people of Antioch, reminds them that ten years earlier this feast was unknown to them; and, after a fairly long discussion of the day of the Saviour's birth, he affirms that the Church of Rome has the surest information on this point, and that it is from that Church that the custom of the feast of the Nativity passed to the East.

But perhaps St. Chrysostom means to speak only of the practice of celebrating this feast separately on 25 December. For there is no doubt that the Eastern Churches celebrated it from the first centuries, but on 6 January and together with the Epiphany. Indeed the Greek Fathers most often designate the feast of the Epiphany by the name of Theophany, a name which, on the testimony of St. Gregory Nazianzen, was also given to the Nativity, for it properly means appearance of God. This would explain why there was formerly no special feast of the Nativity among the Orientals. Cassian states it formally for the Churches of Egypt, and even notes precisely the difference that existed between the Westerners, who, he says, celebrate the two feasts separately, and the Orientals, who solemnize them together on 6 January. Similar testimonies are found for the Church of Cyprus in St. Epiphanius, for that of Antioch and the other Eastern Churches in St. Chrysostom, and finally for that of Jerusalem and Palestine in numerous documents that Cotelier collected in his notes to the *Apostolic Constitutions*.

On the contrary, the Latin Churches, those of Africa, and even the other Churches of the Greeks always held to 25 December, as proof of it is found in St. Jerome, St. Augustine, and even in St. Chrysostom, St. Gregory

Nazianzen and St. Basil.

However, uniformity seems to have been established from the fourth century among the different Churches of East and West, which all definitively adopted 25 December. In the Acts of the Council of Ephesus there is found a homily of Paul, Bishop of Emesa, which was delivered on the 29th of the month Choiak (25 December) in the great church of Alexandria in the presence of St. Cyril, and is entitled: *De Nativitate Domini et Salvatoris nostri Jesu Christi*.

At all times the Church has solemnized the feast of the Nativity of Jesus Christ with great pomp. Some epigraphic monuments seem to authorize us to think that from all antiquity this feast bore the name the Church gives it today: those which show the word *Natale* standing alone. Such is the epitaph of a child who died at the age of five, *pridie natale*, on the eve of the Birth par excellence. We see that already in St. Augustine's time the liturgy of this feast began with the night preceding 25 December. All the faithful were bound to go to church during that holy night. It was forbidden to celebrate the holy Mysteries in private oratories or in rural churches; all had to attend in the cathedral church and communicate at the liturgy celebrated by the bishop, and this under pain of excommunication for three years.

The most ancient sacramentaries of the Roman Church, that of St. Gelasius for example and that of St. Gregory, have three Masses for that day; and St. Gregory again attests the fact in his eighth homily on St. Matthew. The ancient Gallican and Mozarabic liturgies have only one; so too had the Ambrosian, as appears from the Milan missal edited by Pamelius. In Gaul there were already two Masses in the time of St. Gregory of Tours. The use of three Masses was introduced into Spain only in the fourteenth century, and at Milan after the fifteenth.

On Christmas Day, according to the *Apostolic Constitutions*, servants were released from their ordinary labours; fasting was strictly forbidden, as Pope St. Leo and the Council of Prague (Braga) teach us. A law of Theodosius the Younger forbade fasting and shows on that holy day.

We have completed Father Giry's account chiefly from *Les Trois Rome* by Mgr Gaume and the *Dictionnaire des Antiquités chrétiennes* by the Abbé Martigny.

ST. EUGENIA OF ROME, VIRGIN AND MARTYR (3rd century)

> *Faithful handmaid of Christ, Eugenia tramples underfoot the pride of the world; and, along the paths of humility, her life leads her to heaven.*
>
> *— Mozarabic Breviary: Hymn of St. Eugenia.*

St. Eugenia was born at Rome in 183, of pagan parents named Philip and Claudia. Her father having been appointed by Commodus Augustal prefect of the province of Egypt, Eugenia, then about ten years old, went to settle at Alexandria with her parents. The cares of administration did not make Philip neglect his domestic duties and the education of his daughter and of his two sons, Avitus and Sergius. That of Eugenia, whom he destined for an alliance worthy of his fortune and rank, drew his tenderest solicitude. This young child showed, from the age of ten, a remarkable precocity. To a penetrating liveliness of mind she joined so happy a memory that whatever she had once read or heard remained indelibly engraved there. Her father neglected nothing to make fruitful a soil that opened to such fair hopes. Resources were not wanting in Alexandria. The hearth of pagan letters, that city contained all the intellectual treasures of the ancient world. Moreover, Philip's high position allowed him to choose among the most illustrious masters; and Eugenia's progress was such as to give their zeal unceasing activity, and their legitimate pride a useful and precious nourishment.

She had scarcely reached her fifteenth year when already she had been able to pass from the thorough study of Greek and Latin letters to that of philosophy. These various branches of knowledge, offered methodically to her mind, had arranged themselves there without effort, each lighting the others anew as she drew near the

end of this rare and brilliant education. Philip never tired of contemplating with pride the flower that was opening before his eyes and shone with so gentle a lustre at the domestic hearth. These ornaments of the intellect were not Eugenia's only adornment; she was endowed with all the graces of nature. But God, in His designs upon her, had added to these gifts a beauty superior to all the others: the soul of the virgin, secretly ruled by the attractions of chastity, shone with all the charms of that angelic virtue, the sure mark of a well-ordered soul.

The moment had come when the prefect had to think of a match worthy of his daughter; and behold, in 199, Aquilius, son of the consul Aquilinus, came to ask her of him as his betrothed. Philip sounded Eugenia about this proposal; and as he pointed out to her the high birth of the young man who sought her: "It is not birth," she answered gravely, "it is character that should guide the choice of a husband. One does not live with one's husband's parents, but with him."

So mature an answer did not displease Philip; but it had a bearing he did not suspect. New suits reached him from every side; but a vague love of virginity always made her refuse them, when a book of the Epistles of St. Paul, which fell providentially into her hands, and which by itself contained more truths than the seven hundred thousand volumes of the great Alexandrian library, worked a revolution in her soul, lighting it with sudden and wholly new brightness. With what avidity Eugenia devoured those pages, by turns mysterious and full of light! We shall not follow her in that sublime initiation into Christian doctrine and morals; the rest of her life will prove to us that she was a worthy disciple of the great Paul. He had taught her above all the necessity of baptism for salvation. She longed for it with all the aspirations of her soul; but, a Christian in heart, what could she do in that pagan setting where her age, her sex and her rank perforce held her? How many nights spent in anguish! How many opposing plans crowded into the young virgin's head! She felt that she could not open her mind to a father who would not suffer a Christian in the capital of Egypt; her mother could do nothing for her: she too sat in the darkness and shadows of idolatry.

Eugenia was barely in her sixteenth year, and already the holy agitations tormenting her soul had impaired the freshness of her face. Her parents grew anxious; but she could not give them her secret. God came to the aid of her who so longed for the happiness of being His handmaid. He put it into her heart to plead with her parents the need of some rest in the country. She now knew that the holy theories of the master whose epistles she held were every day and every moment being put into practice in the neighbourhood of Alexandria and throughout Egypt. That is why she was leaving her father's house; and her thought, fixed from then on, was never to return to it. Philip, who could suspect nothing of such a resolve, hastened to grant his daughter's wish.

Accompanied by two young eunuchs named Protus and Hyacinth, who had grown up with her and shared her education, thanks to Philip's princely habits, Eugenia left Alexandria. Her father owned rich estates a few leagues from Alexandria: it was there that she would ripen the execution of her great and bold design. On her way she heard Christian singing; she had her litter stopped; she listened, and her ear was struck by these prophetic chants: "God is great; He is worthy of all our praise; He is terrible above all gods. All the gods of the nations are demons; but our God made the heavens. Glory and beauty go before Him; holiness and magnificence are in His sanctuary." At the words, "All the gods of the nations are demons, but our God made the heavens," Protus and Hyacinth saw her sigh and weep. "With me," she said to them, "you have given yourselves to the study of letters. History has taught us to know the deeds that honour or brand men. We have spent hard hours on the syllogisms vainly elaborated by the philosophers. Well then! all that scaffolding of learning crumbles before the expression of this single thought, which we have just heard joyfully acclaimed by the Christians: All the gods of the nations are demons; but our God made the heavens."

The litter went on its way to Philip's villa. There, taking Protus and Hyacinth aside, Eugenia entered with them into the most moving reflections on the new religion she wished to embrace. She read to them the pages of the Apostle that had brought light into her mind. She was so deeply moved, so eloquent, so persuasive,

that their first astonishment soon gave way to a profound conviction, and their belief was not slow to come into harmony with hers. Some days passed in these devout conversations, and the virgin, free at last and full of confidence in the blessing God would give to her steps, had already recovered her former freshness.

The difficulties were far from being smoothed away before her; but she was sustained by her hope. Now she questioned heaven by fervent prayer; now she called her young companions to strengthen them in their new faith. Often she went into solitude to muse on the coming execution of her plan. Learning that the Semnea, whose Christian chants had struck her so pleasantly, were under the authority of a bishop named Helenus, and that this bishop, busy with the care of all his churches, had entrusted that large community of men to a priest named Theodore, she disclosed to her companions the plan she had formed: to cut off her hair, to put on the dress of a young patrician, to take again next day, at the first glimmer of dawn, the road to Alexandria, and, while the rest of her people were ahead, to alight, unknown to them and under cover of the darkness that would still reign, not far from those longed-for monasteries, leaving the empty litter to continue its way towards Alexandria. This plan, approved by her two young companions, was carried out at the appointed hour. Christ deigned to bless the steps of those who already believed in Him: the most complete success crowned their holy daring.

Scarcely had Eugenia alighted from her litter when she heard in the distance chants that seemed to come from a great number of voices. They did not come from the Semnea. Little by little the chants drew nearer, and she saw a large procession advancing towards her. It was a countless multitude of Christians thronging in the steps of the bishop Helenus. Eugenia and her companions followed them and, after the celebration of the divine mysteries, were presented to the bishop. He, having had a revelation of the sex of Eugenia, who had presented herself under the name of Eugenius, entered more and more into God’s designs upon the young virgin and authorised her to keep her men’s clothing. He ruled that she should not be separated from her two companions, sure protectors of her virginity; and he did not leave them until he had made all three catechumens, baptised them with his own hand, clothed them in the holy tunic, and admitted them at last into those Semnea towards which they had so courageously directed their first steps.

While this was happening, Eugenia’s parents, in despair at seeing her litter arrive empty, made useless searches to find her; and Philip, whom the pagan priests had made to believe that she had been carried up to heaven by the gods, raised a golden statue to his daughter and had her honoured as a goddess.

Eugenia, whom we shall henceforth call Eugenius, saw herself at last at the height of her wishes. In the secrecy of her solitude she laboured to acquire the Christian and religious virtues, and her mind gave itself with unspeakable ardour to the study of the sacred writings. She made such progress in them that by the second year she knew all the divine Scriptures by heart. On the other hand, never had a brother reached so quickly the highest degrees of perfection. The serenity of her soul was so great that all agreed in saying of her, and of her alone, that she was an angel. Who would have suspected a young woman in one who, by the power of Christ and by her spotless virginity, was a marvel to all those holy anchorites? Her speech breathed humility in charity and showed as much refinement as measure. No fault was ever caught in her. She was sparing of words and surpassed all the brethren in reserve and modesty. None was before her at prayer and the holy assemblies: the first to come, she remained the last, and duty alone could draw her away. She made herself all things to all. She found in her heart a consolation for every sorrow, a kindly sympathy for every joy. A single word of hers softened anger, and the proud man found such happy edification in her example that the wolf soon became a lamb. In a word, and this was the dominant trait of her virtue, she showed towards all a true charity, which was not only on her lips but living in the depth of her heart. In a short time the grace of healing was granted her from on high, and her credit with God became so powerful that her visits to the sick brought them more than consolation: they restored their health.

Three years had passed since Philip’s daughter had been astonishing the holy dwellers of those deserts by her ever-growing virtues: she was about to receive a reward most fearful for her humility and for the peace, until

then so serene, of her great soul. The priest Theodore, who was set over the men of God, passed to the Lord; and all the brethren were of opinion that he should be succeeded by the one who was an angel of virtue among them, Brother Eugenius.

What will she do before such a wish? Her first thought is to cast the care of her soul into the bosom of God. He has not led her so far, He has not put such love into smoothing the first difficulties under her steps, only to lay a snare for her afterwards. He has given her, under her man's garment, so fatherly a shelter; everything has worked together to hide her so well, that the very expression of this wish of the brethren is perhaps a proof that God wills her to be hidden still more. Yet she is a woman; it is against the rules that she be set over the guidance of men. After questioning heaven, she turns to her confidants on earth: they cannot bring themselves to advise her to flee. They have always seen her first in condition and in virtues; it seems to them that it is God who calls her. Yet they yield to her entreaty and try to work on the minds of the brethren against her election. She herself opposes it with tears and the most vigorous refusals. Vain efforts, which only bring greater lustre to her humility. Besides, the decision is taken; the assembly of the brethren is convened; and

Eugenius, who can no longer, without betraying her inviolable secret, reject such unanimous votes, made her sacrifice, which was received with unanimous joy.

From then on, forgetting herself, she took upon her the care of all. To obey the voice of heaven, she was always seen first in all the offices that had until then been done by the lowest of the brethren, such as drawing and carrying water, or cutting wood, or cleaning. She fixed her dwelling at the threshold of the Semnea, so as not even to appear superior to the humble solitary who kept its approaches. She watched none the less with remarkable activity over the brethren's meals. She brought a quite special zeal to ordering the divine psalmody. Terce, Sext, None, Vespers, and the hours of the night or morning were the object of her most vigilant care; she regarded as lost to God, during the Hours, the smallest moment not consecrated to the divine praise. Her counsels to the brethren bore the stamp of deep humility and ardent charity. She urged them above all to watch over their lips and to avoid idle words. "It is the Lord's precept," she would say. "There is only one way of honouring God and showing Him the respect due to His majesty: it is to obey His commandments."

Thus did the abbot whom God Himself had made walk towards perfection, in a design of mercy whose wonderful secret would soon be revealed. The virgin's holy converse with heaven was interrupted neither by day nor by night, and her life was one continual prayer. She rose so high in grace by the way she fulfilled her charge that she drove demons from the bodies they possessed and opened the eyes of the blind.

Eugenius's deep humility served only to give greater relief to her virtue; and God was pleased to set off the holiness of this soul by the blessings He granted to her prayers. The report of the miraculous cures due to the abbot's holy intervention spread abroad; and a lady of Alexandria, tormented for a year with a quartan fever, resolved to go and ask him for some relief in her sufferings. This lady, of very high rank, lived in a villa near the Semnea, and her name was Melanthia. She was richer in the goods of earth than in the precious virtues of the soul.

A litter set the noble invalid down at the feet of Eugenius, who made the sign of the cross over her; and scarcely had a few drops of oil touched Melanthia when, suddenly recovering her health, she was able to walk back to her villa. She wished to show her gratitude to her physician; and, once home, she at once chose three silver cups which she filled with aurei and sent him as a present. The abbot ordered them to be taken back to Melanthia, offering her thanks and saying: "We have all good things in abundance, and more. So, my very dear mother, if you will take my advice, give these presents to people poorer and needier than we." Melanthia, saddened by this answer, was no longer content with a message: she went herself to press acceptance of the gift, and made new and larger offers. Thenceforth constant at the side of Eugenius, in

whom nothing revealed a woman to her, she was struck by his youth and beauty. Seeing this angel of heaven, she thought she had to do with a young man of earth. In this woman's mind it was not the high virtue but the great skill of the physician that had cured her; and she began to covet him. In order to give him less taste for his holy state, she ventured from time to time some words, at first guarded, then more explicit.

Eugenius, with that beautiful simplicity pleasing to God, suspected nothing of what occupied this woman's heart, and answered her worldly insinuations as objections whose utter nothingness it mattered to Melanthia's salvation that she should at last see. Divine warnings and holy counsels were not spared her. But wisdom does not enter a soul given to evil; it does not dwell in a body subject to sin. So Melanthia went on nursing her strange and senseless desires, and still hoped to overcome Eugenius by presents. Incapable of judging virtue because she did not know it, she persuaded herself that the young abbot's obstinate refusals had no other source than excessive greed, and she set no more bounds to her offers and promises. She persisted a long time; but Eugenius stubbornly sent back, with thanks, all the presents she sent him. At last, yielding to the evil that was consuming her within, Melanthia thought fit to resort to pretence: she said she was ill and begged her amiable physician to come and visit her. Eugenius granted her request and came to sit beside Melanthia's bed, who at last disclosed her criminal love.

Eugenia then understood the whole strangeness of the situation. To unveil it to Melanthia a single word would have sufficed: that word, revealer of her great secret, Eugenius must not say. "Not without reason," she answered, signing herself, "does your very name bear witness to the blackness of perfidy: hell has a great place in your heart. Away, deceitful and seductive Melanthia! No, we will not betray chastity! No, we will not suffer any attack on virginity! No, Mary, Mother of God and Virgin at once, we will not fail in our vows! Our spouse is Jesus Christ. No agreement, no fellowship between His servants and you: we fight under another banner. Leave your riches to masters who resemble you: our delight is to beg with Christ; poor with Him, we are always rich enough! Drive away these images of concupiscence; happiness is not in the passion by which you let yourself be ruled. Den of the dragon, you distil its venom. But we, with the name of Christ whom we invoke, know how to escape your poisons and find mercy in the Lord."

Eugenius was already far off when his mouth, interpreter of a heart holily indignant, flung these last words at Melanthia. She could not bear the shame of such a disappointment; and, fearing to be accused if she did not at once become the accuser, she set out for Alexandria and presented herself before the Prefect Philip, Eugenia's father! "I have this very day," Melanthia said to him, "met a young villain, an imitator of the Christians. I knew him at first only as a physician, and in that capacity I had called him to me." And adding treacherous words, the matron's shameless audacity laid her own crime upon the innocent and chaste virgin. The Prefect had an honest soul: his anger was kindled. He sent in all haste a squad of apparitors, who were ordered to invade the Semnea, load the abbot with chains, and arrest all the brethren with him.

Behold them thrown upon the great road to Alexandria, driven ahead like a vile herd as far as the precincts of the metropolis. The people of Alexandria, ever greedy for excitement, surrounded them with clamour and were already dragging them towards the Stadium. But they were snatched from its impatience by the intervention of the Prefect. Philip took account of the letter of Hadrian, which required that Christians, to be condemned, be juridically accused. He had them put in irons; and, as one prison was not enough for their number, they were divided among several. The day of execution was soon fixed. Meanwhile an immense rumour stirred the city, and shameless report carried the coming scandal through the whole province of Egypt. All believed, all condemned beforehand. In the eyes of the Prefect in particular it was evident that a noble woman like Melanthia could not lie; and the people were already feeding their lively and fickle imagination on the spectacle of the pyres alight, of wild beasts crushing the corrupters under their teeth, and of the various torments they would undergo.

From the morning of the day so impatiently awaited, all Alexandria was astir. From all the towns not far from Alexandria, pagans and Christians hastened to the spectacle: the latter to dip their linens in the blood of

the victims, gather up their bodies, and give those holy remains honourable burial. Priests and even bishops remained hidden in the ranks, outside the sacrilegious enclosure, awaiting the moment when they might rush in with the devout faithful. The pagans uttered cries of joy at the preparations for this solemn interrogation: the beasts roared; the racks were set up; the whips, the flames, the executioners, the various instruments of torture meant to wrest the secrets of hearts, all was ready.

The Augustal Prefect was announced. He took his place on his tribunal amid the acclamations of the multitude. His two sons, Avitus and Sergius, sat at his side. Suddenly the ranks opened: the apparitors were bringing in the many accused, chained and dragged by their iron collars, their young abbot at their head. The clamour of the people redoubled and grew more and more threatening. The Prefect imposed silence on the multitude and had Eugenius brought near, wishing to hear him without intermediaries, so as to gather the truth from his own mouth. He addressed him thus: “Tell me, Christian, most criminal of all, do the teachings of your Christ then recommend you to make a trade of corruption and to lay snares for the modesty of our matrons? Answer, wretch, and confess, sham physician, your bold attempt against the noble and chaste Melanthia.”

Eugenius, lowering her eyes so as not to be recognised by Philip, made him this answer: “The God whom I serve, Jesus Christ, has taught chastity; and to those who keep the integrity of the body He promises a life that will never end. As for Melanthia, it would be easy for us to convict this woman of false witness. But it is better for us to endure your tortures than to expose her, by confounding her, to some grievous misfortune: we should lose the fruit of our patience, and our law commands us to return good for evil. If, however, your Sublimity takes the invincible princes to witness that you will not turn upon this woman the sentence that threatens us, and that your vengeance will not pursue her false witness, then we consent to prove that she charges us with a crime of which she herself is the author.” The Prefect swore by the life of the Princes that he granted her request; and Eugenius went on: “O Melanthia! black and treacherous Melanthia! What is still a mystery to the people is none to your conscience; God sees it with those eyes that see all things, and He will punish your calumny! For the rest, you have had racks set up; you wish to stretch the Christians on them: condemn, strike, burn; you know how to value us. Not, however, that Christ has servants such as it pleases you to show them. Have the slave brought, the witness of our crime, and her deposition will lay bare your lie.”

The people murmured; the proceedings were too long for their impatience. Meanwhile a slave appeared: the attention of all was roused and held for a moment more. This slave had been trained in Melanthia’s school; she went into crudely accusing details, which she offered to confirm by other testimonies. These details pricked the curiosity of the multitude; and, with the fickleness that marks it, sure now of its many victims, it showed the prefect by an approving silence that it liked to hear these new witnesses. He called them, and their deposition supported the slave’s. Questioned one by one, all attested that she had told the truth. “What have you to answer,” the judge, visibly moved, then said to Eugenius; “what have you to answer to so many witnesses, to so many crushing proofs?”

Eugenius was made a spectacle to angels and to men: God allowed her to be heard. “The time to speak,” she cried, “has come, after the time to be silent. If it is good to hide the secret of the king, it is honourable to reveal and confess the works of God. I had wished, before the crime imputed to me, to await the revelations of the judgement to come, and to show my chastity only to Him for love of whom we must keep it. Yet, so as not to let bold falsehood triumph over the servants of Christ, I will set out the whole truth in a few words: not to make a parade of it, but for the glory of the name of Christ. Such is the power of that name, that a woman happy enough to know and love it rises to the dignity of a man: the difference of sex vanishes before faith. It is the teaching of the blessed Apostle Paul, master of all Christians, when he says that before the Lord there is no more male nor female, for we are all one in Jesus Christ. That is the rule I embraced with all the ardour of my soul. Trusting in Christ, I would not be a woman; but, firmly resolved to keep virginity, I put on the

character of a man in Jesus Christ. Had I been a man, I would have disdained to play the woman; but, a woman whom faith raised to a noble manliness, I played the man, by courageously embracing the virginity which is in Christ."

At these words she raised her head, suddenly tore open the top of her tunic and, turning towards the prefect, to whom she appeared a woman: "You are my father," she cried; "Claudia is my mother; and here at your side are my two brothers, Avitus and Sergius. I am Eugenia!… your daughter… who, for love of Christ, disdained the world and the nothingness of its pleasures. Here are Protus and Hyacinth, my eunuchs, with whom I entered the school of Christ; and Christ has shown Himself so good a master that by His mercy He has set me above every assault of vice; and I hope to belong to Him for ever!"

We give up describing that sublime moment. The people raised an immense acclamation. Eugenia was long held in the arms of her father, of her brothers, of her mother who, at once told the great news, had arrived in all haste. The priests' stratagem was confounded. The whole city had wept for Eugenia's disappearance; the whole city applauded her triumph. A gown brocaded with gold was brought her, in which she was arrayed in spite of herself. The abbot's austere tunic gave way to the rich ornaments of an Augustal prefect's daughter; and from the top of the tribunal, where she drew all eyes, she was carried in triumph on men's shoulders amid the acclamations of the people, who repeated: "There is only one Christ, the one and true God of the Christians!" While Eugenia was returning to the Augustal palace amid the popular rapture, her chastity received a more magnificent testimony. Heaven spoke in its turn: an avenging fire came down from it, which enveloped the house of Melanthia, that den of false witnesses, and left there not even a trace of all that had belonged to her.

The people, applauding the justice of God, learned to fear Him; and countless conversions were the immediate consequence of this moving turn of events. The most important was the conversion of the Augustal Prefect, of his wife and of his two sons. The churches were reopened after a widowhood of eight years, and the Christians were recalled into the capital. The bishop Demetrius not only had the consolation of being able henceforth to exercise his august functions freely among the faithful of Alexandria; it was reserved to him to baptise with his own hand a Prefect honoured with the fasces. Philip's example was followed by his whole family: with him were baptised Claudia, Eugenia's mother, and her two brothers Avitus and Sergius.

This Christian conquest of Eugenia's ran directly counter to Severus's new edict, which forbade proselytism above all; and yet, instead of hastening the persecution, it suspended its effects in Alexandria. Philip, who was not unaware of the tenor of that edict, sent the emperor a report from which all allusion to proselytism was skilfully left out. He merely stated that in his opinion the Christians were useful to the empire and that it was fitting to let them live in peace within the cities. In the emperor's eyes the Augustal Prefect's past was a guarantee of his future. He esteemed Philip, whose wise administration had long made the prosperity of Egypt: his report received Severus's assent. From then on all their privileges were restored to the faithful, and the city of Alexandria was transformed into one great Christian assembly. The happy repercussion was felt in the neighbouring towns, and everywhere the Christian name could flourish and be honoured.

Eugenia did not rest after her triumph. Called to do good in broad daylight, she multiplied her works of zeal and devotion. Henceforth the virgin whose apostolate had had such happy success among men would address herself only to virgins. Growing more numerous day by day, they gathered with happiness from her virginal lips the lessons of Christian faith and virginity; and scarcely a few months had passed when a magnificent building, raised near the Porticoes through Eugenia's care, could soon serve as a refuge for these new brides of Jesus Christ. The holy daughter of the Augustal Prefect knew how to use her credit with her father's heart to obtain from him everything useful to the advancement of religion. Claudia vied in zeal with her beloved daughter, and had already settled the plan of a building meant to receive strangers. These works were the fruit of the deep peace the Christians enjoyed at Alexandria. But it was not to last long.

Eugenia had completed her twentieth year when her father was snatched from her affection by martyrdom. The blow was hard to her heart. She was losing a father who had loved her much and who was her conquest in the faith. Her filial piety had grown with all that religion can add to natural affections; and she would have been inconsolable had she wept like those who have no hope. But she found an admirable counterweight to her grief in contemplating the crown that encircled Philip's brow; she knew that for him the palm had succeeded the fasces. A martyr's daughter, she was holily proud to be an orphan at that price, and she coveted her father's lot for herself. About the year 204 she hastened to return to Rome with her mother and her two brothers. A long time would now pass for Claudia's noble daughter in a silence recalling the humility of her first days in the Egyptian Semnea. There, three years had sufficed to bring her first triumph; the greater triumph of her martyrdom at Rome would be fifty-three years in coming.

During the persecution of Decius, Eugenia never ceased to pursue at Rome the apostolate to which she had vowed herself. At that advanced period of her life she was no longer content with gathering as many young virgins as she could: Roman matrons surrounded in great numbers the venerable woman of sixty, who dispensed to them the word of faith and encouraged them against the desperate efforts of the persecutors. Under the threat of the sword, her tireless and holily daring zeal wrought illustrious conversions, among which is counted a young virgin of royal blood named Basilla, who soon suffered martyrdom, as did Protus and Hyacinth.

The hour of the great and last combat had come for Eugenia too. She had sent into the bosom of God and into the eternal joys into which her father had entered a countless number of virgins and, among them, her dear and tender companion Basilla. Heaven had also coveted her inseparable companions Protus and Hyacinth: she was not long in joining them. God reserved for the young victor of twenty at Alexandria another magnificent triumph, which was to make her old age immortal in the heart of Rome. That city was the arena where every day she had run her course, without her humility ever allowing her to think she had reached the goal. Faithful to the lessons of St. Paul, her first master, she forgot like him what was behind her; and, ever pressing on, the illustrious virgin was at last to win the prize to which she felt herself called from on high by Jesus Christ.

She appeared in her turn before the prefect Nicetius. The complaint laid against her by Pompeius before the emperors had been heard; and Gallienus, in launching his decree against Basilla, had at the same time condemned Eugenia "to sacrifice to the gods or die under torture". Nicetius had her taken to a temple of Diana and summoned to sacrifice to the goddess. "You will sacrifice," a ferocious apparitor kept saying to her on the way, "or else I have in hand what will run you through and through." And he brandished his sword. She was thus dragged as far as the island of Lycaonia, also called the Tiber Island, equally famous in the history of pagan Rome and of Christian Rome.

She had reached the building consecrated to the goddess when the lictor, ready to strike, said to her: "Buy back your life and your patrimony, Eugenia, and sacrifice to the goddess Diana." "My God!" cried the generous martyr, stretching out her hands, "You who know the secrets of my heart, who in Your love for me have kept my virginity intact, who have united me to Your Son Jesus Christ, my Lord, who have made Your Holy Spirit reign in me, come to my aid in the confession I make of Your holy name, and cover with confusion all who serve this idol and glory in their images." As she finished this prayer, a violent shock shook the ground; the temple trembled to its foundations and collapsed with the idol itself: nothing remained standing but the altar set up before the door, where Eugenia stood. This prodigy drew an immense concourse of people; and from that multitude a thousand voices rose, some proclaiming Eugenia's innocence, others calling her a sorceress. The prefect, told of what was happening, informed the emperor; and a sentence of Gallienus condemned Eugenia to be thrown into the Tiber with an enormous stone round her neck. But He who had been with His Apostle on the sea did not forsake Eugenia in the river: the enormous stone split open and came away from the Saint's neck, and all could see her sitting calmly and as if borne by angels on the

waters of the Tiber.

She was taken out of it to be exposed to a new torment. The waves had spared their victim; but in the persecutors' minds she would not escape the action of fire. She was therefore condemned to be thrown into a burning furnace. Eugenia was dragged through the two regions of Trans Tiberim and the Circus Maximus as far as that of the Porta Capena, where Severus had built the Baths bearing his name in 202. Not without design had Providence prepared this new stage for the martyr: her presence at the Baths of Severus recalled that this prince had been her first persecutor, and the last triumphs of Philip's daughter were thus linked to the one that had made her illustrious at Alexandria.

When she was in the flames, the hypocaust went out, so that the baths suddenly lost their heat. In vain they tried to relight it: the wood heaped in the hypocaust gave off nothing but a thick smoke that smothered the blaze and checked the heat of the fire.

Not far from there was a dark dungeon, where the *confectores* soon received the order to shut up her whom neither water nor fire had been able to touch. She was condemned to stay there ten whole days without food and without the least contact with the light outside. But those who had thrown her into that darkness did not know that there too, as on the Tiber and in the Baths, God would be with her. The God of light, who bids or forbids the dawn to rise, suddenly lit up the prison, and Eugenia herself became all dazzling with brightness.

The Saviour appeared to her during her long fast; He came to her with a gentle majesty, and in His divine fingers He held a bread of shining whiteness and infinitely delicious to the taste. "Eugenia," He said to her, "receive this bread from My hand: I am your Saviour, He whom you have loved and love with all the strength of your mind and heart. I will receive you into heaven on the day on which I Myself came down upon earth." And, saying these words, He disappeared.

This foretaste of paradise, the heavenly appointment just given her, left Eugenia in an ecstasy of happiness. The beating of her heart was now nothing but burning longings for her Beloved. On the day of the Saviour's Nativity a gladiator received the order to make his way to her, and he pierced her throat with his sword in the very prison. Her soul flew away into the gardens of the Bridegroom.

A sixth-century mosaic shows us Eugenia among the heavenly palms, the bride's crown in her hand. There Mary sits on a throne attended by angels and holds her divine Son on her knees. Bowed before the throne of grace, the Magi offer their gifts; and behind these three kings, first-fruits of the nations called to drink of the wine that makes virgins spring forth, there unfolds in a single line a majestic series of twenty-two holy women, of whom Eugenia closes the triumphal procession.

In the church of Varzy there is still to be seen a very remarkable sixteenth-century triptych which reproduces in painting the legend of St. Eugenia. The outer face of the shutters represents, on the left, the martyrdom of St. Stephen; on the right, that of St. Lawrence. St. Stephen, being stoned, raises his eyes towards the Holy Trinity, placed at the top of the subject. In the half-light is the figure of Saul, who later became St. Paul. St. Lawrence is on a burning gridiron; two executioners turn him with iron hooks; Decius and Valerian are witnesses of the scene. If the triptych is opened, one sees in the background of the middle panel the interior of a chapel: religious of the Order of St. Benedict are beginning the Office, the priest is about to go up to the altar, and St. Eugenia, in monk's dress, presents herself at the foot of the sanctuary to be admitted into the convent. In the middle of the same panel St. Eugenia is shown at the moment when she is about to be beheaded, in the presence of the emperor Gallienus, who is on his throne to the right; behind him are doctors and familiars; to the left are other persons of his suite. The executioner stands behind the Saint, arm and scimitar raised; between the executioner's parted legs a figure is seen that seems to be climbing the steps of the throne: it is presumed to be the portrait of the painter of this remarkable work. At the bottom of the same panel are two inscriptions: one in old German, which has not yet been translated; the other, in Latin, is the antiphon of the Saint's Office. Behind St. Eugenia, a little to the left, are people of the common sort; and in a

kind of crypt under the paving of the chapel are two figures that must be Protus and Hyacinth, Eugenia's faithful servants. The small left-hand panel represents St. Eugenia baring her breast to repel Melanthia's calumnies, and recognised by her father. Guards and lictors fill the background of the scene. On the other, right-hand panel is seen Eugenia's appearance to her mother, who stretches out her arms to her; a group of angels supports the Saint and another group sings the *Te Deum*; near St. Eugenia's mother is the tomb of the blessed Martyr.

The legend of St. Eugenia is completed by frescoes dating from the end of the twelfth century, which, despite their deterioration, can still be made out in the cathedral of Nevers. We shall describe the principal scenes. In the first, Eugenia, her hands bound, is before the emperor Gallienus, seated on his throne. In the second, the Saint, standing, a large stone tied to her neck, is about to be thrown into the Tiber by an executioner who grips her arm. In the third she glides gently over the waters, although the stone still remains tied to her neck. A hand with a cruciform nimbus appears in the sky above her head. In the fourth she is seen standing, her hands joined, amid flames that have no power over her; the same hand as in the preceding scene appears again in the sky, bounded by a round arch under which the Baths of Severus can be glimpsed. Lastly, in the fifth, Eugenia is seen sitting in her prison, and Our Lord Jesus Christ bringing her a bread.

Veneration and Relics

The virgin's body was carried off by Christians and laid not far from the city on the Via Latina, in land that was her own property and where she herself had given burial to a great number of Saints. This is what is still called today the cemetery or catacomb of Apronianus.

A basilica was raised at Rome on the Via Latina to shelter the glorious remains of St. Eugenia and her mother. It still existed in the eighth century, when it was restored by Popes John VII and Adrian I. The latter Pontiff, to honour the virgin's memory by perpetuating the work par excellence of her whole life, built beside this basilica a monastery of virgins who were to sing the divine praises there without ceasing. Leo III and Leo IV enriched our Saint's oratory with precious ornaments; and it was there that, at a very early period, the station of the fourth Sunday of Advent was held. No trace of this basilica remains today.

From the end of the ninth century the Saint's body no longer rested in her basilica. Under the pontificate of Stephen VI it had been translated, with that of Claudia, to the church of the Holy Apostles, which these relics still enrich today.

Rome offers memorials of St. Eugenia elsewhere than in the basilica of the Holy Apostles. In the sanctuary of San Paolo alla Regola an inscription of 1096 mentions relics of our Saint among the treasures of that church. And at Sant'Anastasia a bone of an arm of St. Eugenia, virgin and martyr, is presented every year to the veneration of the faithful who visit that church on the day of the Station. The feast of St. Eugenia is still celebrated today at Rome in the basilica of the Holy Apostles; it is transferred to 30 December.

The Church of Spain also claims relics of St. Eugenia. Salazar speaks of a translation of them said to have been made in the middle of the eleventh century.

In the former diocese of Auxerre her feast was kept on 18 May, the anniversary of the translation of her relics. Under the pontificate of John X, Gaudry, forty-third bishop of Auxerre, went to visit the tombs of the holy Apostles at Rome; the Sovereign Pontiff made him a present of rather large relics of St. Lawrence and St. Eugenia. He deposited them solemnly in his cathedral on 18 May 923, and then distributed them. The abbey of Saint-Germain had a part; the second stayed at the cathedral; but the largest portion was destined for the town of Varzy. From the fifth century there had been in that town a church under this Saint's title, whose foundation is attributed to St. Germanus; it was falling into ruin, and Gaudry took the occasion to have it rebuilt, and then deposited these precious relics there. Near it he had a country house built, which was often lived in by him and by the bishops of Auxerre his successors. The church became a collegiate church,

founded in 1090 and served by nine canons, whose head was the cantor. Four chaplains, a sub-cantor, a sacristan and four choirboys made up the lower choir.

In the church of Varzy were to be seen: (1) a wooden shrine covered with plates of silver, in the form of a small thirteenth-century church surmounted by a tower, containing two pieces of human skull-bone in their full thickness; (2) a wooden reliquary in the form of an arm, covered with plates of silver-gilt, in which was part of a human humerus five to six inches long; (3) a reliquary in the form of a bust, which contained two pieces of rib of a human body, from the ends that joined the vertebrae, with this label: *Sancta Eugenia*.

What has become of this third reliquary, which is no longer at Varzy, is unknown; as for the first two, they still exist: they were transferred, with other reliquaries, on 9 October 1792 from the collegiate church of Sainte-Eugénie to the church of Saint-Pierre, where they are still to be seen. Another reliquary, of ebony, made in 1733, also contains relics of St. Eugenia. It is hard to understand how the reliquaries of St. Eugenia, St. Regnobert and others, covered with silver plates, were able to escape the sacrilegious greed of the revolutionaries of 1793.

On 21 March 1858 Mgr Crosnier, protonotary apostolic and vicar general of Nevers, accompanying Mgr Dominique-Augustin Dufêtre on his pastoral visitations, after examining the seals applied to the reliquary of St. Eugenia and confirming their authenticity, renewed those old seals, several of which had been partly broken.

Taken from the *Histoire de sainte Eugénie* by the Abbé Toursel, honorary canon of the cathedral of Arras, and from the *Hagiologie nivernaise* by Mgr Crosnier.

ST. ANASTASIA THE YOUNGER, VIRGIN AND MARTYR, ON THE ISLAND OF PALMAROLA, OFF THE COAST OF ITALY (303)

Non ideo laudabilis virginitas quia in martyribus reperitur, sed quia ipsa martyres facit.

Virginity is not praiseworthy because it is found in martyrs, but because it makes martyrs.

— St. Ambrose.

St. Anastasia, whose life we undertake to write, is different from two Saints of the same name whom we have mentioned in the Roman Martyrology on 15 April and 28 October. She whom the Church commemorates today is called the Younger. Simeon Metaphrastes tells us that she was the noblest, the most beautiful and the wisest of all the maidens of Rome. She had a pagan father and a Christian mother, and she was instructed in the faith by the glorious martyr St. Chrysogonus, of whom we spoke on 24 November. Her father forced her to marry a Roman gentleman named Publius, a pagan like himself and passionately attached to idolatry. She had an extreme horror of this union, and she managed so well to keep her body chaste as well as her soul that she avoided all carnal intercourse with him. Meanwhile she gave herself entirely to succouring the martyrs in the prisons, where they were left to die of want. She bought from the gaolers and guards leave to enter their dungeons and, after prostrating herself before them to receive their blessing, she washed their feet and hands, cleaned their heads, cut their hair; she took away the blood with which they were covered and took care to dress their wounds, which she kissed with inconceivable reverence; she gave them clean linen and provided them with food and everything necessary for their subsistence.

Her husband, who besides hated her mortally because she did not adorn herself like other ladies, wearing most often simple and very ordinary clothes, and because she did not give him the satisfactions he had hoped for from his marriage, was extremely angered when he learned of these works of charity. To put an end to them, he took from her the freedom to leave her house, keeping her very skilfully confined there under the watch of some officers whom self-interest made the ministers of his cruelty. It was from this domestic prison that she wrote St. Chrysogonus the following letter: “You are not unaware, blessed Confessor, that although

my father was a pagan, my mother, who joined to Christianity a most constant chastity, made me a Christian from the cradle. After her death I was married to an impious man, whose company, however, by God's help, I have succeeded in avoiding. I try to follow as far as possible the footsteps of my Lord Jesus Christ. This barbarous man, who devours my patrimony with infamous idolaters, treats me as a sorceress and a sacrilegious woman, and keeps me shut up with such cruelty that I do not doubt he will put me to death. In this state, which I love exceedingly, having no greater joy than to die for Jesus Christ, one thing alone grieves me: to see given to infamous men and villains the wealth I had consecrated to the service of my Lord. That is why I beg you, servant of God, to ask Him in your prayers that I may be able to dispose of this wealth for His glory."

St. Chrysogonus received this letter while in prison with many other confessors, and after they had offered their prayers to God for her who had written it, he made her this answer: "Do not doubt that, in the waves and storms that toss you, Jesus Christ will come promptly to your help. He will walk dry-shod upon the waters and with a single word lay those violent winds that the devil stirs up against you. Have patience, then, and, in the midst of the storm, wait steadfastly for that divine Deliverer who is soon to set you free. Enter into yourself and cry with the Prophet: 'Why art thou sad, O my soul, and why dost thou trouble me? Hope in God, for I will still give Him thanks, as to my Saviour, on whom I continually fix my eyes, and as to my God.' You will have a double proof of His goodness towards you, for the goods of earth will be restored to you, and you will also be filled with the goods of heaven; and if this help is somewhat delayed, it is because the divine Master wishes to make you grasp by this delay the infinite worth of the favours He is preparing for you. Do not be scandalised to see that, loving piety, you are tried by many adversities. You are not being deceived but tested. Do not lean on men, for Scripture says: 'Cursed be he that trusteth in man, and blessed be he that trusteth in God!' Avoid strongly and watchfully every kind of sin, and look for relief and consolation only from Him whose commandments you keep. Calm will at last follow the storm, light the darkness, and the serenity of spring the unbearable ice of winter. Thus you will be able to assist in temporal things those who suffer for Jesus Christ, so as to merit by this charity an eternal reward."

Anastasia received wonderful consolation from this letter; but as her husband reduced her to such great want that she had not even bread to live on, believing her end was near she wrote to St. Chrysogonus to commend herself to his prayers in her last hour. This other letter led the blessed Martyr to write her a second, in which, after setting before her God's various dealings with His elect, to lead them by different ways to one same end, he foretold to her that she would yet again perform the office of assisting the confessors in prisons and torments, and that she herself would afterwards endure an illustrious martyrdom.

St. Anastasia's grief during this captivity was not to be deprived of the conversation of the world, for which she had nothing but horror; it was to be no longer able to assist the servants of Jesus Christ, and above all that illustrious martyr from whom she had received such holy instruction and whom she knew to be overwhelmed with want. She earnestly prayed Our Lord to give her back her freedom; and, as her holy teacher had foretold, she was at last heard. Her husband was appointed by the emperor to go on an embassy to the king of Persia; he accepted this mission and, on leaving, he left Anastasia in the keeping of a villain named Codissus, whom he charged to keep her so closely confined that she could not even breathe the air, hoping that this rigour would kill her and that on his return he would have only to take possession of the great wealth she had brought him in marriage. But divine justice punished his inhumanity. He died on the way by a violent death, and the plans of his cruelty and avarice died with him. Anastasia was thus delivered from the idolaters who guarded her and, finding herself mistress of all her wealth, she had greater freedom than ever to succour the martyrs. She therefore took up again her former offices of charity, and added that of seeking out and ransoming the bodies of those who had been executed, burying them with her own hands and giving them honourable burial.

Meanwhile Diocletian, being at Aquileia, began there a horrible butchery of Christians, and among others he had St. Chrysogonus brought from Rome, hoping to overcome him by his promises or his threats. Anastasia thought this a fine field for exercising her zeal. She hastened there at once, and the help she gave those precious victims of Christianity is past belief. When she had buried St. Chrysogonus, together with Sts. Agape, Chionia and Irene, she left Aquileia and went into Macedonia, where she had the same opportunities to show her charity. The prisons there were so full of confessors that they could hold no more: an order came from Diocletian to put a great part of them to death to make room for others who professed the same faith and were being arrested at every moment. One day when one of these prisons had been entirely emptied, Anastasia, knowing nothing of it, came as usual to bring her help to the blessed captives; but, not finding them, she began to weep bitterly and to heave deep sighs. She was asked what ailed her; she answered with wonderful courage that the cause of her grief was that she no longer found the servants of Jesus Christ, whose faith she shared, so as to succour them as members of her adorable Saviour. From this it was known that she was a Christian; she was seized and taken to Florus, prefect of Illyricum.

This judge first inquired who she was and, having learned her name, her country, her family, and that she had been married to Publius, the emperor's ambassador to the king of Persia, he pressed her hard to yield to the prince's will. Her answers made him judge well that he would not succeed; but, as provincial judges were forbidden to torture ladies of rank without a particular order from the court, he found himself obliged to refer the matter to Diocletian. As that tyrant was no less avaricious than cruel, and loved gold even more than his gods, he wished first to know what she had done with her riches. "If I still had any wealth left," she answered, "I would not have disclosed myself so soon, and I would have gone on pouring it out in secret on the servants of my divine Master; but having entirely exhausted myself in assisting them, I now come with a good heart to offer my body to make of it a sacrifice to the true God, since my greatest desire is to share in the sufferings of those to whom I have given a share of my treasures." Diocletian, incapable of such lofty wisdom, called her mad and would not argue with her. He therefore had her taken back to Florus, and Florus handed her over to Ulpian, pontiff of the Capitol, a cunning and malicious man whom he judged capable of bringing her to the worship of idols.

This profane man spared nothing to succeed, and joined to the most frightful threats the world's fairest promises, those best fitted to shake a heart that was in the least timid; but the Saint's constancy made all his artifices useless, and he told her in conclusion that he gave her three more days, and that after that every sort of torture and punishment would be used against her. "What need of three days?" said Anastasia; "imagine they are already past, for I shall tell you nothing other than what I tell you now. I detest your gods, I laugh at the impious and sacrilegious orders of your emperors, I sacrifice only to Jesus Christ, and I am ready to die for His honour." This resolve did not prevent her being given the three days. She was put into the hands of some idolatrous women, that they might do their utmost to shake her. They worked at it with all their might, but without success. The Saint spent all that time in rigorous fasting and continual prayer. When she was brought back before Ulpian, that pontiff had the temerity to wish to lay a lustful hand on her; but he was repulsed with horror, and in punishment of this outrage he lost his sight and, a moment later, the life of his body as well as that of his soul, which was cast down into hell.

Some time afterwards Florus had her brought before him and, taking her aside, told her that if she would make over to him the great wealth she still possessed in landed property, he would let her live in peace in her religion. "If you were in need," Anastasia replied, "I would assist you very willingly with the same charity with which I have assisted all the poor; but since you are rich, I will take good care not to make over to you the wealth that divine Providence has given me for the relief of the unfortunate. It is true that you are in very great poverty of the goods of grace; but it is for God to give them, and He bestows them only on souls that ask Him for them with fervour."

The prefect was in despair at this answer and, the better to avenge himself, had her shut up in a dark prison with orders to give her hardly anything to eat. That was what the Saint wished. There she was visited and consoled by St. Theodota, formerly her companion in visiting the dungeons where the martyrs were, and since executed for the faith with her three children at Nicaea in Bithynia, as we said on 2 August. The frequent visits of this illustrious martyr led St. Anastasia to ask her how she had the freedom to come and see her. “God,” Theodota answered, “sometimes grants the souls of martyrs the privilege of visiting whom they wish, to console them and converse with them.” At the end of thirty days, Florus, seeing Anastasia in full health, thought her gaolers had been indulgent to her; so he had her taken to another prison whose guards were most barbarous. There she was treated with the utmost rigour; but she did not cease to be almost always at prayer, often with her arms in the form of a cross, during the month she remained there.

After this month she was put, by the prefect’s order, into a boat with a Christian named Eutychian and a hundred and twenty idolaters condemned to death for their crimes; she was taken out to the open sea to be drowned there. The boat was holed in many places so that it would take in water on every side, and it was abandoned to the fury of the waves. Its loss was naturally inevitable, and the sea had already almost covered the whole vessel when Theodota appeared above the sails and took the helm. She kept it from sinking and steered it so well to the shore that no one was drowned. This miracle brought about the conversion of the hundred and twenty idolaters, who, instead of suffering death for their crimes, had three days later the happiness of dying for the confession of the name of Jesus Christ.

As for the generous Anastasia, she was taken to the island of Palmarola (Tyrrhenian Sea) with two hundred men and seventy women, all condemned for the faith of Jesus Christ. When she had arrived there, the executioners tied her to a stake, hands and feet stretched out, and lit a great fire around her to burn her. She gloriously completed the course of her martyrdom by this torment, and went to triumph in heaven with those whom she had so charitably succoured on earth. Her other companions also lost their lives by various kinds of torments.

The body of St. Anastasia was carried off by a lady of rank named Apollonia, who after the persecution had a magnificent church built at Rome in the Saint’s honour, in which her precious remains were laid. This church is a cardinal’s title. St. Leo the Great preached there his famous homily against the heresy of Eutyches; a chalice is still kept there which, it is said, was used by St. Jerome when he celebrated the holy mysteries there. It is in this church that the Sovereign Pontiffs are accustomed to sing the Mass at Dawn on Christmas Day, in memory of St. Anastasia.

This account is from Father Giry, which we have completed with the *Année dominicaine*. Cf. Metaphrastes and Surius.

BL. PETER MAURICE OF MONTBOISSIER, CALLED THE VENERABLE, ABBOT OF THE MONASTERY OF CLUNY (1157)

Peter Maurice of Montboissier, called the Venerable, belonged to the country of Auvergne, which had already seen the birth of St. Odilo and of Duke William, founder of the abbey of Cluny. Brought up at Sauxillanges (an abbey, daughter of Cluny) through the care of St. Hugh, who loved him tenderly, he showed himself the worthy disciple of so great a master.

From his youth he was called “the doctor and master of the old”, and later “the support of the monastic Order”. Theologian, poet, orator, skilful and formidable controversialist, he joined to a vast knowledge of all the sciences divine and human the purity of a spotless life, a deep humility, and an unction and tenderness of heart without equal; he was to the Order of Cluny what St. Bernard was to the Order of Cîteaux. His figure was elegant, his face handsome, his manners grave; his most harmonious voice delighted those who heard him. He was elected abbot of Cluny in 1122, at the age of thirty.

His name, become so famous, is constantly mingled with the great names and great events of the twelfth century, and one may say that he holds one of the most eminent places among the most eminent personages of his age, which produced so many. He was one of the most illustrious defenders of the Church; it was he who made Abelard retract and led him to embrace the Institute of Cluny. It was he too who rooted out the schism of Pons, and who established a learned, regular and complete reform in several monasteries of his Order. Confidant and counsellor of popes and kings, consulted by the most learned doctors, intimate friend of St. Bernard, called to and admired at the Council of Pisa and the Second Lateran Council, he was the peacemaker of the Pisans and the Lucchese, the mediator between the King of France Louis the Young and Amadeus of Savoy, and between the Sovereign Pontiff Innocent II and the King of Spain; in short, the ornament of the religious state and of the Church. And when this great man had thus accomplished the highest missions that the good of Church and State laid upon him, he would humbly come back to hide, recollect and rest himself in the modest cell of the religious, and apply himself ardently to study and the monastic virtues.

We have several works of his: six books of very precious Letters, four dogmatic Sermons, Hymns and some short Treatises. But we have lost three books of his immortal Controversy; only the general table of the matters contained in the first four books has been found, a bibliographical curiosity worth consulting. His letters are exquisite in freshness and purity of style, in finesse, gentleness and feeling. In general they are fine and written with clarity, ease and elegance; delicate sentiments abound everywhere.

Peter the Venerable fought against the doctrines of the Mohammedans and was the first to have the Koran translated. It was a marvel for the age. He also wrote against Peter of Bruys, from whom the Petrobrusians took their name. But his last moments were coming, and his glorious career was drawing to its close; his death had long been foreknown by the holiness of his life. It came in 1157, in the sixty-fifth year of his age; he had governed for thirty-five years the abbey he loved. Unanimous regret broke out at this immense loss. People could not yet believe they were deprived of him on seeing him dead, so much pure beauty and serenity had his face kept! One cannot say with what respect his relics and memory have been surrounded!

Although Peter the Venerable has not been canonised, several public monuments give him the title of Saint.

Extracted from the *Esprit des Saints* by the Abbé Grimes.

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[1] We gave the life of St. Peter Nolasco on 31 January, vol. II, pp. 141–151.

[2] We gave some details on St. Romulus or Romble of Brittany on 5 November, in note 1 to the martyrology of France, vol. XIII, p. 200.

[3] Fulk was the son of a rich Genoese merchant settled at Marseilles. As he excelled in poetry, he spent his youth in the profession of troubadour, going to the various courts where he sang of princes and ladies. But seeing those he had sung die one after another, he began to reflect on the vanity of human greatness, and took the monastic habit in the Cistercian monastery of Le Thoronet, of which he afterwards became abbot. In 1206 he was named Bishop of Toulouse in place of Raymond of Rabastens, who had usurped that see by an uncanonical election. The diocese entrusted to him was infested with heretics; he applied himself by his instructions to bring them back to the true faith, and won a great number, above all by his charity, which made him loved and venerated by everyone. He contributed with all his power to the foundation of the Order of Friars Preachers, which arose at Toulouse itself. In 1215 he generously endowed the first convent of the Order, and the same year went to Rome with St. Dominic to attend the Lateran Council, in order to have the new institute approved. Fulk fell asleep in the Lord on 25 December 1231, after twenty-seven years of episcopate. His body was carried in great pomp to the monastery of Grandselve (diocese of Toulouse) and buried near the high altar. — Cf. *Histoire générale de l'Église de Toulouse*, by the Abbé Salvan.

[4] The classification of the people by tribes and families formed the basis of the Jewish state; that is why in censuses each person had to be enrolled at his place of origin. But it was not only a question here of a census of the people; the Jews had also to take an oath and do homage to Herod under the auspices of the emperor Augustus. For this purpose Herod summoned the descendants of the house of David to Bethlehem. Let us add that the census among the Romans included women as well. Mary's journey to Bethlehem was therefore not useless.

[5] Hence the name of Altar of Heaven — *Ara Coeli* — still borne by the church built on the site, and with some of the columns, of the famous temple of Jupiter Capitolinus built by Tarquin the Proud.

[6] The Jerusalem newspapers have spoken of an odious attack committed at Bethlehem by the Greeks against the Latin monks. This is what is written to the *Voce della Verità* under date of 5 May 1873: “On 25 April last, towards seven in the evening, more than three hundred Greeks, urged on by their schismatic bishop, rushed with guns and sabres into the basilica of St. Mary, called St. Helena’s, and into the venerable sanctuary of the Nativity or of the Holy Manger. They made away with everything that belonged to the Latins and attested their right. They tore up and carried off the carpets and three magnificent paintings. They broke and stole the nineteen lamps, five of which were of silver. Eight Franciscan religious were wounded, two of them seriously.”

26 December

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY

At Jerusalem, the heavenly birthday of St. Stephen, the first martyr, who was stoned by the Jews a short time after the Ascension of Our Lord. 35. — At Rome, St. Marinus, of senatorial rank, who, having been arrested under the emperor Numerian by the prefect Marcian because he professed the Christian religion, was tormented on the rack with iron claws like a slave. Then he was thrown into a burning frying-pan; but, the fire being changed into dew, he felt no harm from it. He was also exposed to wild beasts, but they dared not touch him. Finally, being led for the second time to an altar of the false gods, as the idols were overthrown by the power of his prayer, he was beheaded and by this torment won the palm of a most illustrious martyrdom. 3rd c. — Again at Rome, on the Appian Way, the death of St. Dionysius, pope, whose great labours for the Church and the fine teaching he gave on the mysteries of the faith have made very famous.[1] 269. — In the same place, St. Zosimus, pope and confessor.[2] 418. — In Mesopotamia, St. Archelaus, bishop, renowned for his learning and holiness.[3] 277. — At Maiuma (in Palestine), St. Zeno, bishop. 5th c. — At Rome, St. Theodore, sacristan (*mansionarius*) of the church of St. Peter, of whom Pope St. Gregory makes mention. 6th c.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED

In the dioceses of Agen, Ajaccio, Arles, Beauvais, Blois, Cahors, Châlons, Chartres, Clermont, Cologne, Coutances, La Rochelle, Laval, Le Mans, Le Puy, Lyons, Meaux, Nancy, Nantes, Pamiers, Rodez, Saint-Brieuc, Sens, Strasbourg, Tarbes, Tours, Verdun and Viviers, St. Stephen, first martyr, cited in the Roman Martyrology of today. 35. — In the dioceses of Aix, Albi, Angers, Autun, Bayeux, Beauvais, Carcassonne, Chartres, Clermont, Cologne, Dijon, Laval, Limoges, Lyons, Marseilles, Meaux, Mende, Montpellier, Nancy, Pamiers, Perpignan, Poitiers, Quimper, Rennes, Rouen, Saint-Flour, Soissons, Tours, Versailles and Viviers, feast of all the holy

Martyrs. — In the Gâtinais (*Vastiniensis pagus*, an old country of France forming today part of the department of Loiret and some portions of those of Nièvre and Yonne), three hundred and sixty-six martyrs, who were massacred by the Vandals in hatred of the Christian religion they professed. 5th c. — At Messac (Ille-et-Vilaine, arrondissement of Redon, canton of Bain), in the diocese of Rennes, St. Convoyon, founder and first abbot of the monastery of Saint-Sauveur de Redon; we gave his life on 5 January. 868. — In the former Cistercian abbey of Villers-en-Brabant (*Villarium*), in the diocese of Namur (Belgium), Blessed Daniel, cellarer of that monastery. Date uncertain.

MARTYROLOGIES OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS

Martyrology of the Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary of Mount Carmel. — At Jerusalem, the heavenly birthday of St. Stephen, the first martyr, who was stoned by the Jews a short time after the Ascension of the Saviour. 35. — At Rome, St. Marinus, of senatorial rank, who, having been arrested in hatred of the Christian religion under the emperor Numerian by the prefect Marcian, was punished like slaves with the torment of the rack and torn with iron claws, then thrown into a burning frying-pan; but, the fire being changed into dew, he was delivered. He was then exposed to the beasts, which did him no harm; finally, led a second time before the altar, and the idols having been overthrown by the power of his prayer, he was struck with the sword and obtained the triumph of martyrdom. 3rd c. — Again at Rome, on the Appian Way, the

death of St. Dionysius, pope, who, having laboured much for the Church, became famous by his religious instructions. His feast is kept on 12 February. 269. — Likewise St. Zosimus, pope and confessor. 418. — In Mesopotamia, St. Archelaus, bishop, famous for his learning and holiness. 277. — At Maiuma, St. Zeno, bishop. 4th c. — At Rome, St. Theodore, sacristan of the church of St. Peter, of whom Pope St. Gregory makes mention. 6th c.

Martyrology of the Order of Discalced Carmelites. — The same as above.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS

Among the Friars Preachers, Blessed Paganus of Lecco (Lombardy), martyr, of the Order of St. Dominic. He received the habit from the hands of St. Dominic himself in the year 1220, at the convent of Padua. During the fifty-four years he lived in the Order (1220–1274) he showed admirable fervour in prayer, in study and in a rigorous observance of the monastic rules. He taught theology for forty years and held the office of prior in several convents. Four years after the martyrdom of St. Peter of Verona (1256), he replaced him in the office of inquisitor. He shared with him the same kind of death: assassins posted by the heretics, having found him at prayer, stabbed him pitilessly. His last words were those of Our Lord on the cross: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” During the seven days his body remained unburied, the wounds the murderers had made in it shed a bright red blood from which a sweet odour came forth. The many miracles due to his intercession have won him the honours of public veneration. His precious relics are today in the chapel of the bishop’s palace at Como. This holy Martyr is represented pierced with blows of swords and lances. 1274.

ST. STEPHEN, FIRST DEACON OF THE ROMAN CHURCH AND FIRST MARTYR (35)

Posuisti, Domine, super caput ejus coronam de lapide pretioso.

The stones with which the Jews overwhelmed him were changed upon his head into a crown of precious stones.

— Ps. 20 (21), 4.

It would be useless to set down here the countless fine eulogies with which the holy Fathers extol the merit of this illustrious Abel of the Gospel, who was the first to give back to Jesus Christ the blood He had shed for love of us; for he has had as his panegyrist the Holy Spirit Himself, who seems to have wished to set no bounds to the praises He gave him in the Acts of the Apostles. We know nothing of his family, nor of the actions of his childhood, nor of the first years of his youth, except that he was a Jew by origin, though perhaps a Greek by birth, and that he studied the holy Scriptures under the doctor Gamaliel, with St. Paul, who is believed to have been his cousin, and with St. Barnabas. St. Augustine, in a sermon on his feast, doubts whether he had been a disciple of Our Lord or whether he was won to the Gospel only by the preaching of St. Peter immediately after the descent of the Holy Spirit; St. Epiphanius held the first opinion, and it is certainly the more probable, but the matter is still undecided. What is certain is that in the following year St. Stephen stood out among his brethren as an admirable man, filled with all the gifts of the Holy Spirit. To a ravishing beauty and an angelic chastity he joined a humility, patience, gentleness and charity so perfect that he drew the esteem, affection and admiration of all the faithful.

Meanwhile there arose in the infant Church of Jerusalem a murmuring of the Jews born outside Palestine, who were for that reason called Greeks, against those who were natives of Judaea and were called Hebrews: the former complained that their widows were less considered than those of the others in the distribution of the common goods; that is, either that they were not given such honourable charges at the feasts of charity and in the assistance of the poor, or that they were not treated so well as the others and not so much care was taken to help them. The Apostles, wishing to forestall the harm this division might cause, held a general

assembly of the disciples and, having pointed out to them that they could not leave the work of preaching and instruction to take charge of these outward ministries, and among others to preside at the tables in order to keep there the order of temperance and charity, they proposed that they choose seven from among them of known wisdom and probity and full of the Holy Spirit, to be charged with these functions, so that the Apostles might continue to give themselves to prayer and to announcing the word of God. This proposal pleased the whole company, who saw well that on the wise administration of the Church's goods depended peace and union among the faithful. So they proceeded at once to the election, and the first on whom they cast their eyes was our great St. Stephen.

Indeed he had all the qualities one could wish for in an apostolic minister. The sacred text attributes to him five fullnesses. A fullness of faith, because he believed the mysteries of our religion with unshakable firmness, had a particular gift for explaining them well and persuading men of them, and had given proof of irreproachable fidelity. A fullness of wisdom, because, being supremely enlightened on the eternal truths and on the finest secrets of holy Scripture, he spoke of them in a wholly divine manner and with such force and eloquence that his adversaries could in no way resist him. A fullness of grace, the praise the Gospel gives to the Saviour and to the Blessed Virgin, because he possessed all graces: for not only had he the grace we call sanctifying (*gratum faciens*), which made his soul perfectly pleasing to God, but he had also all the gratuitous graces (*gratis datae*); grace was even shed upon his face and his lips, and all his actions had a heavenly air that charmed those who witnessed them. A fullness of fortitude, because there was no great thing he was not ready to undertake, nor any torment, however atrocious, that he would not willingly have suffered for the glory of God; and besides, he had had the courage to despise all the advantages the world could make him hope for, in order to embrace the poverty and humility of Christianity. Lastly, a fullness of the Holy Spirit, whether he had received Him on the day of Pentecost, when He was poured out on the whole infant Church, or only afterwards by the imposition of the Apostles' hands, because he possessed His Person and all His gifts, both those that belonged to his own sanctification and those that could make him a perfect preacher of the Gospel.

St. Augustine does not doubt that he was a virgin and even of a most eminent chastity, since, notwithstanding his youth and his excellent beauty, the Apostles did not hesitate to give him the charge of the widows. The same holy Doctor makes no difficulty in comparing him to the Apostles his masters, and in saying that he was at least, with regard to the first deacons of the Church, what St. Peter was with regard to the whole apostolic college. So admirable a virtue soon showed itself in the midst of Jerusalem. Stephen preached Jesus Christ with intrepid courage and proved clearly, by the testimonies of the whole Old Testament, that He was the true Messiah. What is more surprising, young as he was, he worked extraordinary and unheard-of miracles, which the sacred text for that reason calls *prodigia et signa magna*, "wonders and great signs", by which he admirably confirmed the truths he taught; and by this means he drew a great many Jews, and even Doctors, to Christianity.

These happy successes made his schoolfellows jealous, such as St. Paul, then called Saul, and other young men. Partly from this secret envy, partly from a false zeal for the law, which they imagined was being destroyed by the Gospel, they began to dispute against him and to try to confound him. The Acts of the Apostles mention in particular some of the synagogue of the Freedmen, that is, of those who, born of fathers made slaves by the Romans, had been set free, and of the synagogues of the Cyrenians, the Alexandrians, the Cilicians and those of Asia. They had various debates with our Saint and used all the subtlety of their minds to destroy his doctrine; but he always gloriously had the upper hand: the spirit of wisdom that spoke by his mouth struck them dumb, and he answered all their arguments so perfectly that they were left without reply.

The shame of having been beaten drove these proud men to a wholly unworthy extreme. They suborned false witnesses to accuse him of having uttered blasphemies against Moses and against God. They spread the report on every side and so stirred up the people by it, and even the Elders and the Scribes, that they seized

this innocent deacon and led him with violence to the great council of the Jews, to answer and be judged there on this charge. The false witnesses at once appeared and impudently maintained that he did nothing but speak against the temple and against the law, and that they had heard him say that Jesus of Nazareth would destroy this place and change the traditions of Moses. Those who made up the council fixed their eyes on him and saw his face all shining with light and like the face of an angel. St. Augustine says that it shone like the sun, and St. Hilary declares that he bore the likeness of the glorious resurrection.

The high priest, without regard to this heavenly sign, asked him whether what was said against him was true. The blessed Levite could easily have refuted these calumnies and shown the malice and impiety of his accusers; but, without stopping at his own defence, wishing to proclaim his Master's glory in the midst of that illustrious assembly of pontiffs and doctors, he began to set before their eyes, starting from God's first appearance to their father Abraham, the graces and priceless favours their nation had received from His divine goodness, and on the other hand the hardness, ingratitude and continual rebellions of their fathers, who had never been able to bear the yoke of the Lord but had shaken it off countless times. Then, addressing them directly, he said to them: "Stiff-necked and untamed, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit: your fathers did so, and you do so after their example. Which of the prophets have they not persecuted? Did they not put to death those who foretold the coming of the Just One? And you, what have you done? Have you not delivered Him into the hands of the Gentiles, and made yourselves His murderers? You received the law by the ministry of angels, but you have in no way kept it."

This just rebuke, which the Holy Spirit put into Stephen's mouth for their conversion, only stirred up their rage. They were furious at it, and they were even seen to gnash their teeth at him. Then heaven opened, as if to applaud the generosity of this great preacher, and he, full of the Holy Spirit, raised his eyes on high and saw the glory of God and Jesus standing at His right hand; which made him cry out, full of wonder and joy and burning with zeal for the conversion of his hearers: "Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God." The heavens were opened to him because a wonderful light strengthened his sight and so lit up the whole intervening space that he had no difficulty in seeing as far as the throne of Jesus Christ in heaven. He saw the Saviour standing because, says St. Peter Damian, this adorable Master showed Himself to him in the posture of a combatant and a victor.

At these words the pontiffs, the priests, the doctors and all the others who made up the assembly, with the band of accusers, stopped their ears as though they had heard a horrible blasphemy and, throwing themselves impetuously upon him, dragged him violently out of the city. No trial or sentence appears here, nor that the consent of Pilate or of any other magistrate for the Romans was obtained; yet these impious men stoned our innocent deacon; and the witnesses who had calumniated him, having given their garments into the keeping of Saul, who was exceedingly glad of this execution, were the first to take up stones and throw them at him.

The holy Martyr's first word was to commend his soul to Jesus Christ: *Domine Jesu*, he said, *suscipe spiritum meum*, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then, the charity of this divine Master urging him, and the memory of what He had done on the tree of the cross being ever present to him, he knelt down and cried with all his strength: "Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!" And it was in this eminent act of charity that he gave up his spirit and fell asleep in Our Lord: *Et cum hoc dixisset, obdormivit in Domino*. It was 26 December in the year 35 of Our Lord. He thereby gave us the rarest example of the love of enemies and of a perfectly Christian death. Of the love of enemies, because three things raise this love and make it more heroic: first, when one has been persecuted most unjustly and against every kind of right; second, when the persecution has been most violent and cruel; third, when the love one bears them, notwithstanding these violences, is full of cordiality and goodwill. These three things met in the love St. Stephen had for his persecutors. His persecution could not have been more unjust, nor the ill-treatment done him more cruel, and his affection for his enemies could not have been more ardent or more tender; and we can say after St. Augustine that it merited for the Church the great Paul, Doctor of the nations: *Si Stephanus non orasset, Ecclesia Paulum non*

haberet, "If Stephen had not prayed, the Church would never have had St. Paul."

He also gave us the example of the finest and most desirable of all deaths: for he died in the flower of his innocence, in the rigour of martyrdom, and in the actual exercise of charity towards God, towards the Church and towards his own enemies. The Christians mourned this great man as one of their chief supports, and paid him the last duties with the care and honours due to a martyr who had in a short time won most signal victories over Judaism, and whose blood was to be the seed of countless Christians and martyrs.

He was stoned outside Jerusalem, at the North Gate, in a valley set apart for the execution of blasphemers, who according to the law of Moses were to be put to death by stoning. There a raised platform like a scaffold was set up, onto which the criminal was made to climb; then the denouncer or the chief witness threw the first stone, and the others went on until the sufferer was beaten to death. His body had been left a day and a night exposed at the very place of his execution, so that it might be devoured by beasts; but the doctor Gamaliel had it taken up and carried to his country house, six or seven leagues from the city. That is the place where it was found, as we said on 3 August, the day on which the Church keeps the feast of the Finding of his body.

St. Stephen is represented: (1) kneeling under the death-blow, his eyes turned towards the Saviour who appears to him; (2) carrying on a book, or in the raised fold of his dalmatic, some pebbles, the instruments of his martyrdom; (3) in a group with St. Lawrence, because they are the honour and model of their Order.

St. Stephen is patron of Agde, Agen, Arles, Auxerre, Besançon, Bourges, Breisach, Cahors, Karlsruhe, Cattaro, Châlons-sur-Marne, Chalon-sur-Saône, Dijon, Épinal, Gien-sur-Loire, Halberstadt, Limoges, Lyons, Mâcon, Marsal, Meaux, Metz, Mulhouse, Nijmegen, Passau, Pavia, Périgueux, Ratisbon, Saint-Brieuc, Sens, Speyer, Toul, Toulouse; of Bavaria, Lorraine, the Palatinate, and of stonecutters and slingers.

Veneration and Relics

The memory of the first martyr St. Stephen has always been held in great veneration among Christians: France above all has at all times borne him a singular devotion, dedicating in his honour a great number of chapels, priories, abbeys, parishes, collegiate churches and cathedrals.

The oratory of Saint-Étienne at Metz, today the cathedral, was, according to St. Gregory of Tours, one of the most famous in Gaul for its antiquity and its miracles. The oldest chronicles attribute its foundation to St. Clement, first bishop of Metz and disciple of the Prince of the Apostles. The holy bishop is said to have endowed it with notable relics, and in particular with a pebble that had served in the stoning of the first Martyr and was still stained with his blood. But the most precious relic is a phial of the blood of this glorious Martyr. St. Gregory of Tours attests the existence of relics of St. Stephen's body in the oratory of Metz in the fifth century. Paul the Deacon likewise records, in the eighth century, the presence of the precious blood of the martyr deacon, which was kept fresh and red without corruption. The same fact is attested by Charlemagne in a charter addressed to

St. Angilram, bishop of Metz, and by all the chroniclers who have had occasion to speak of this famous sanctuary, in particular the deacon Donatus in the Life of St. Trudo, the two authors of the Life of St. Glossinda, writers of the ninth and tenth centuries, and lastly St. Notker of Saint Gall, a ninth-century writer, in his Hymns in honour of the first Martyr addressed to Robert, bishop of Metz. But the event that gave most celebrity to the oratory of Saint-Étienne was its miraculous preservation amid the sack of the city by Attila.

The oratory of Saint-Étienne thenceforth became the most venerated sanctuary of the province, and its fame spread through all Gaul: the holy Martyr's *confessio*, made illustrious by striking miracles, was the most sacred and inviolable asylum. Offerings flowed in from every side. St. Bertrand, bishop of Le Mans, disciple of St. Germanus of Paris, made it several donations confirmed in his will, so that his name might be inscribed

in the diptychs and he might share in the prayers offered in this famous sanctuary. St. Remaclus, bishop of Maastricht, induced the young Trudo, lord of Hesbaye, to consecrate his immense riches to it. The bishops of Metz above all vied in enriching it with precious ornaments and with relics of the holy martyr deacon himself. St. Arnulf, St. Goeric and their successors made it magnificent gifts, which made the treasury of Metz cathedral one of the richest in Europe. Theoderic II, in the eleventh century, obtained an arm of the holy Martyr for the church of Saint-Étienne. In 1376 Theoderic Bayer of Boppard gave it the very head of St. Stephen, which he had from the liberality of the emperor Charles IV, to whom Pope Urban V had presented it. So the treasury of Saint-Étienne at Metz became like a sacred mine from which, at various times, the bishops of Metz drew precious relics of the holy Martyr to enrich other churches. Thus Hildeward, bishop of Halberstadt, obtained in 980 from Blessed Theoderic I some of St. Stephen's blood and two joints of the holy Martyr's fingers, which he carried to his church. But the most glorious monument raised to St. Stephen's memory by the piety of the people of Metz is the basilica still consecrated today under his invocation. Of all these precious relics of the first Martyr, the Church of Metz now possesses only the pebble that served in his stoning and some portions of his bones. A great number of churches of the diocese, in particular the former collegiate churches that depended on the Chapter of Metz, have St. Stephen as patron. According to the chronicles, the Church of Metz possessed in the Rouergue, from the conquests of Theoderic I, king of Austrasia, over the Visigoths, the little bishopric of Arisitum, a kind of coadjutorship in the beginning, which was probably lost in the eighth century. Arisitum has kept, as a memorial of the jurisdiction of the bishops of Metz, the dedication of its churches to St. Stephen. Ten of that title still remain, and they are thought to mark by their sites the boundaries of the old diocesan territory.

Over the crypt consecrated by St. Benignus at Dijon a basilica was built about the year 343, which became the cathedral church in 1731. In 1141 there was in the high altar a phial of St. Stephen's blood.

Before the Revolution a notable relic of the first Martyr was kept at Cluny; it had passed from the chapel of the emperors of Constantinople into the treasury of the Church of Edessa. The archbishop of that city gave Geldoin, a monk of Cluny, a finger of the holy Martyr, which was brought to Peter the Venerable. This notable relic was received at the abbey with the greatest honours and enshrined in a splendid phylactery of crystal, set off with gold and enriched with precious stones.

At Rome, the church of Santo Stefano Rotondo possesses a pretty little Greek temple containing relics of St. Stephen. The holy Martyr's body rests in a crypt behind the high altar of the basilica of San Lorenzo fuori le Mura, beside St. Lawrence. The basilica is dedicated to the two Martyrs. On St. Stephen's feast two of the stones brought from Jerusalem that served in the Saint's stoning are exposed in a silver reliquary. This basilica has been restored and greatly embellished by Pope Pius IX.

The skull of St. Stephen is at Vienna, in the metropolitan church placed under the holy Martyr's invocation. This relic had been given to the church of Our Lady at Wetzlar by Hermann and Udo, counts of Habsburg; at the time of the Reformation, the emperor Leopold had it brought to Vienna.

When one leaves the city of Jerusalem to go down into the valley of the Kidron, one passes through St. Stephen's Gate. It is to this place that the Jews dragged the holy Martyr who reproached them with the hardness of their hearts, and stoned him. The rock is shown on which Stephen fell while praying for his persecutors, and the place where they laid their garments at the feet of Saul.

We have completed Father Giry's account with local notes; *Les Saints Lieux* by Mgr Mislin; the *Vie des Saints de Dijon* by the Abbé Duplus; the *Légendaire d'Autun* by the Abbé Pequegnot; the *Hagiologie nivernaise* by Mgr Crosnier; the *Histoire des soixante-douze disciples* by the Abbé Maistre; and the *Caractéristiques des Saints* by Fr. Cahier, S.J.

[1] Dionysius, born in Calabria, a priest of the Roman Church under the pontificate of St. Stephen I (254–257), is counted by the Carmelites among their religious. He ascended the chair of St. Peter on 29 September 259. His first care was to make a new ecclesiastical division of Rome and the suburbicarian territory. After the disasters of the eighth general persecution, which had fallen by preference on bishops, priests and church titulars, this reorganisation had become indispensable. After his zeal, the new pontiff had to exercise his charity. The city of Caesarea (Cappadocia) having been sacked by the barbarians, faithful to the generous traditions of his predecessors, he sent to those churches consolations and help to ransom the Christians from slavery. St. Dionysius also had to fight heresy: he condemned Sabellianism and other errors that attacked the faith; he also later refuted the blasphemies of Paul of Samosata. St. Athanasius and St. Basil made use of his writings to prove, the one the divinity of the Word, the other that of the Holy Spirit. We read in St. Athanasius that the Fathers of the Council of Nicaea, in defending Catholic doctrine, used no other expressions than those that the bishops their predecessors had used, and that they copied above all the words of St. Dionysius of Rome and St. Dionysius of Alexandria. — Darras, *Histoire de l'Église*, vol. VIII, pp. 383–438; Artaud de Montor, *Histoire des Souverains Pontifes*, vol. I, p. 122; Godescard; Baillet.

[2] "Zosimus," says the *Liber Pontificalis*, "was Greek by origin; his father was named Abraham. He sat one year, eight months and twenty-one days. He made several regulations of ecclesiastical discipline; decreed that deacons should wear the linen pallium on the left arm; extended to all the parishes the faculty of blessing the paschal candle on Holy Saturday; forbade clerics to enter public houses of refreshment, and prescribed that they take their meals only in the houses of the faithful if they could not do so in a clerical dwelling. He held an ordination at Rome in the month of December, and laid hands on ten priests, three deacons and eight bishops destined for various churches. He was buried near the body of the blessed martyr Lawrence, on the Via Tiburtina, on the seventh of the calends of January (26 December) 418." The short pontificate of St. Zosimus was entirely taken up by two considerable questions: one dogmatic, that of Pelagianism, which was troubling East and West and endangering the integrity of the faith throughout the Catholic world; the other disciplinary and purely local, concerning the ecclesiastical hierarchy of the Gauls and the traditions relating to the origins of the faith in our country. The first was settled by the solemn condemnation of Pelagius and Caelestius; the second by the affirmation of the prerogatives of the metropolis of Arles, founded by St. Trophimus, disciple and special delegate of the Prince of the Apostles. — Darras, *Histoire générale de l'Église*, vol. XII, pp. 362– 445.

[3] Archelaus, bishop of Cascar (a city of Mesopotamia on the borders of Arabia), is known only through the controversy he sustained against the heresiarch Manes or Manichaeus. He held with him a famous debate known in history as the Colloquy of Cascar, in which Manes was utterly confounded. Archelaus wrote his *Disputations* in Syriac. They are found in the Abbé Migne's Greek Patrology (vol. VII of the Latin edition; vol. XVIII of the Greek-Latin edition). — Cf. Dom Ceillier, *Histoire des auteurs sacrés et ecclésiastiques*, vol. II, p. 453.

27 December

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY

At Ephesus, the heavenly birthday of St. John, apostle and evangelist, who, after writing the Gospel, suffering exile and composing the divine book of the Apocalypse, lived until the time of the emperor Trajan. In that interval he founded and governed the churches of all Asia; at last, worn out with old age, he died in the sixty-eighth year after the Passion of Our Lord, and was buried near the city of Ephesus. About 101. — At Alexandria, St. Maximus, bishop, whom the confession he made of Jesus Christ has rendered illustrious and commendable in the Church. 282. — At Constantinople, the holy confessors Theodore and Theophanes, brothers, who, brought up from childhood in the monastery of St. Sabas, fought vigorously for the veneration of the holy images against Leo the Armenian, and were scourged and banished by his order. After his death they resisted with the same constancy the emperor Theophilus, who imitated the impiety of his predecessor, and they again suffered the same punishments of the scourge and banishment. At last Theodore died in the darkness of a prison; as for Theophanes, having survived the persecution, he became bishop of Nicaea and died peacefully in the exercise of that office. 9th c. — In the same place, St. Nicarete or Nicerata, virgin, who shone by her holiness in the time of the emperor Arcadius. About 440.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED

At Valenciennes (Nord), in the diocese of Cambrai, the death of Blessed John Stirlin, religious of the Order of St. Dominic. Born of a noble family, he carried in a weak body a generous soul which pain seemed unable to reach. He was, moreover, a man of meditation, a remarkable preacher, a religious full of gentleness and amiability. One night, in his sleep, it seemed to him that he was carried into a palace, in the midst of a numerous and brilliant assembly. There he heard sung, with the sweetest harmonies, these consoling words: "Behold him who despised the life of the world and has come to the kingdom of heaven. He prayed to the

Most High, and has been found among the number of the Saints." This vision preceded by a few days his death, which took place in 1259. — In the diocese of Quimper, St. Alan of Courlay (*Alanus de Curia Lata*), confessor. Date uncertain.

MARTYROLOGIES OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS

Martyrology of the Canons Regular. — At Ephesus, the heavenly birthday of St. John, apostle and evangelist, who, after writing the Gospel, suffering exile and composing the divine book of the Apocalypse, lived until the time of the emperor Trajan. In that interval he founded and governed the Churches of all Asia; at last, worn out with old age, he died in the sixty-eighth year after the Passion of Our Lord, and was buried near the city of Ephesus. About 101.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS

Among the Friars Preachers, Blessed Bonaventure Tolomei, confessor, of the Order of St. Dominic. Born at Siena (Tuscany), he was remarked during his childhood and the first years of his adolescence for the holiness of his life and the divine favours that were its reward. Perverted afterwards by two libertines, he spent four years in impurity and sacrilege; but his conversion was so sincere that it is rare to see in the lives of the Saints examples of a more austere penance than his. Disciplines, chains and hair-shirts left him only at death. He visited on foot and without provisions the principal sanctuaries of Italy, Spain, Palestine and Egypt, everywhere bearing abundant fruit by his preaching. Having returned to Siena, he caught the contagion while serving the plague-stricken: it was on his knees, his hands and eyes raised to heaven, that he expired. He had been buried some days when there was laid beside him the corpse of a religious lately dead: this man came back to life, to the wonder of the bystanders, at the touch of the sacred body. The Lord continued to honour the tomb of the holy religious by multiplied wonders: hence the veneration with which the faithful surround his memory. 1348. — At Rome, St. Claudia, widow, mother of that St. Eugenia whose life we gave on 25 December. 3rd c.

ST. JOHN, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST (about 101)

Filioli, diligite invicem.

My little children, love one another.

— St. John's favourite precept.

As evangelist, St. John was an oracle of truth; as apostle, a model of fidelity; as disciple of Jesus, an example of charity.

— Du Jarry, Essais de panégyriques.

The mere name of "the disciple whom Jesus loved", which the Gospel gives this divine Apostle in four different places, and in treating of our most august mysteries, contains in itself so many excellences that there is no need to seek other praises to set forth his merit and to show him as one of the greatest Saints who have ever been on earth. For Jesus would not have loved him so singularly if he had not been worthy of that love, or rather, if in loving him He had not made him worthy of it; and what purity, what innocence, what degree of grace, virtue and holiness must one have to deserve the pre-eminence in the love of that adorable Wisdom which loves nothing without making it good, and loves nothing by preference without making it eminently good! Let us believe, then, that we have said much, and have said everything of St. John, in calling him by excellence the disciple whom Jesus loved. But this does not dispense us from relating here his most glorious actions and giving an abridgement of his life, which was nothing but a perpetual chain of heavenly favours and of works worthy of a favourite of God.

We shall not relate here what he has in common with St. James the Greater, his elder brother: that is, what concerns his country, his parents, his calling to follow Our Lord, his election to the dignity of Apostle, the

name Boanerges, or son of thunder, which was given him; his presence at the raising of the daughter of Jairus and at the mystery of the Transfiguration; his zeal against those who had refused his divine Master entry into their town; the request he had his mother make for one of the first places in His kingdom; nor the liberty he took, with three others, of asking Him, in the week of His Passion, when the things He was telling them of His second coming would come to pass. We have treated all these points at great length in the life of St. James himself, on 25 July, and we did not there separate these two brothers, whom the sacred text of the Gospel everywhere unites very closely.

The first time the Gospel speaks of him in particular is when it was a question of preparing the Supper which Our Lord wished to eat with His Disciples before instituting the Eucharist and giving His blood for the salvation of the world. St. John was deputed for this with St. Peter, to show us that contemplation, signified by St. John, and the good life, represented by St. Peter, must be joined together when one wishes to prepare worthily for the mystical Supper. He carried out this commission very well, and made ready a large room, where, after Jesus had eaten the paschal Lamb with His Apostles, He washed their feet and sat down again at table to give them a share in the heavenly food of His body and His precious blood.

It is properly here that the singular favours of this great Master towards His disciple begin; it is here that He gives occasion for the first time to call him “the Disciple whom Jesus loved”. At that mysterious meal He had him placed beside Him, as the one who, being a virgin, was also the most worthy to draw near His person and to be familiar with Him; and because this dear Disciple was pressed by St. Peter to ask Him secretly which of the company it was who would deliver Him into the hands of the Jews, this lovable Saviour, to speak to him more confidentially, allowed him, as a mother her child, to rest on His bosom and lean his head upon His breast. But the grace he received at that moment far surpassed what Salome his mother had dared to ask for him, since he had the honour of having his face resting upon His heart, whereas she had only asked that he might sit at His left hand, yielding the right, no doubt, to his elder brother.

The holy Fathers make admirable reflections on this favour. Some say that John fell asleep on that mysterious couch, which is the seat of wisdom; but this must be understood of the sleep of contemplation and ecstasy. So St. Lawrence Justinian speaks of it, in chapter v of the book *De Agone*. St. Augustine repeats in several places that, having drawn near that source of light, he drew from it the highest secrets of our mysteries, which he has shared with the whole Church; that is why, on Psalm cxliv, he calls him *Avidissimus epulator, cui non sufficiebat ipsa mensa Domini, nisi discumberet supra pectus ejus, et de arcano ejus biberet divina secreta*: “a most eager guest, for whom the Lord’s table itself was not enough unless he reclined upon His breast and drank divine secrets from His hidden depths”. The author of the Epistle on the Perfect Man, among the works of St. Jerome, says that he rested his head on the Saviour’s breast as on the Ark of the Old and New Testament, and that by this means he entered not only into the court of the divine oracle but into the sanctuary and the most mysterious place: that is why he gives him the name of *Diligens Inquisitor* and *familiaris Sacerdos*.

He asked his Master, then, who was the perfidious traitor who would make himself guilty of His blood. Jesus Christ wished still to spare the honour of one who did not wish to spare His life; but, being unable to refuse His beloved anything, He pointed him out to him in secret, telling him that it was the one to whom He would give a morsel of bread, and He at once offered some to Judas. The other Apostles did not perceive what He meant; and even when He said to the traitor, “What thou doest, do quickly”, they supposed that He was telling him to buy what was needed for the feast, or to give some alms to the poor, because he was as it were the steward of the sacred College. It appears, from the sequel of the Saviour’s life, that after the institution of the Supper and the thanksgiving rendered to His Father, He began that admirable discourse which St. John alone has passed on to the Church, in chapters xiii, xiv, xv, xvi and xvii of his Gospel. He then went to the Mount of Olives and, wishing to pray there in secret, took with Him only St. Peter, St. James and our blessed Apostle. The sadness and bitterness with which his soul was filled, because of what he had just learnt of the

betrayal of Judas, so overwhelmed him that he fell asleep three times, with the two other Apostles.

He showed cowardice again at the arrest of his dear Master, since St. Mark does not except him from this general statement: *Tunc discipuli ejus relinquentes eum, omnes fugerunt*: "Then His disciples, leaving Him, all fled."

If St. John committed a cowardice on that occasion, he soon repaired it by his fervour and by the assiduity he showed to his adorable Master and to the Blessed Virgin, His Mother, through all the rest of His Passion. He came to the house of Caiaphas; and although he was known there, and so had reason to fear being arrested, he did not fail to go in, and even to bring St. Peter in. It is very likely that he remained there all night, and left only to go and inform the Blessed Virgin of everything that was happening to her beloved Son. He consoled her in her sorrow and, since, as if to fulfil all justice, she was to be present at the last violences of His Passion, he led her to Calvary. He was the only one of all the Apostles who saw this innocent victim crucified and immolated; he was the only one who remained at the foot of the cross until the moment of His death; he was the only one on whom drops of His precious blood fell; he was the only one to whom this lovable Saviour spoke, to give him the last pledges of His love. But what did He say to him, and what did He do for him?

Here is what surpasses all our thoughts and raises St. John above all greatness and all imaginable dignities. He made him the vicar of His love towards His Mother; He gave him His place; He willed that he should acknowledge her as his own; He said to him: *Ecce Mater tua*: "Behold thy Mother. She has been Mine; she is and henceforth will be yours; I give her to you for a Mother and I make you her son; I desire that she have for you all the affection, all the tenderness and all the kindness a mother has for her son, and I wish you also to bear her the respect and love, and render her the help and obedience, that a son owes his mother." Some Doctors have thought that Jesus, by an effect of His omnipotence, then produced in Mary and in John physical relations of maternity and sonship which made them really Mother and Son; so speaks St. Thomas of Villanova, in an admirable sermon he preached on St. John. But there is no need to have recourse to this miracle: it suffices to say that John was then penetrated with all the feelings of a son towards Mary, and Mary with all the feelings of a mother towards John. The Evangelist adds that from that hour this beloved disciple took her to his own home and kept her in his care: *Accepit eam discipulus in sua*.

The Fathers remark that the great Apostle on this occasion represented all the faithful, and that thus Mary was given to us for Mother and we were given to her for children; but John was the eldest in this adoption; and so, although Mary is the Mother of all the faithful, she nevertheless regards the glorious St. John, after Jesus Christ, as the first and dearest of all her children. From this we must conclude that, if he was "the disciple whom Jesus loved", he was also the son whom Mary loved. We have no words eloquent enough to express the excellence of the treasure given him in the person of this Virgin of virgins: as Mary by herself was worth more than all other creatures together, and as Jesus loved her more than He loved all the angels and all men, it is certain that the gift He made His disciple was above all gifts, and the greatest He could make him after giving Himself to him; and as, speaking of Himself to Nicodemus, He exclaimed with wonder, "God so loved the world as to give His only Son for its redemption and its salvation", so, considering this inestimable benefit, we have reason to exclaim in holy amazement: "Jesus Christ so loved John as to give him His Mother for his consolation and his happiness."

But this signal favour was accompanied by a very great martyrdom; for what did our Apostle not suffer in seeing his dear Master, his adorable Benefactor, fastened to the cross and expiring in the midst of so many insults, torments and ignominies? What sorrow for him to see all the torments of the Son fall back upon the Blessed Virgin, who had been given him for Mother! Let us not doubt that on this occasion he had a greater share in the passion of the Mother and the Son than all the other martyrs; that, according to Our Lord's prediction, he drank all the bitterness of His chalice and endured a martyrdom more painful and more noble than those who suffered death by the torments of executioners. Love for the Son and for the Mother did in

him what scourges, scorpions, iron hooks, arrow-shots, boiling oils and burning beds did in the other victims of Jesus Christ.

When the Saviour of the world had expired, His side was pierced with a lance by the cruelty of a soldier who wished to test whether He was dead. Then St. John, in spite of his excessive grief, attentive to all that was happening on Calvary, saw blood and water come forth from that holy wound. He considered this mystery with wonder; it was indeed the symbol of two of our Sacraments; and he is the only Evangelist who has revealed it to the Church, on which he makes this most solemn declaration: “And he that saw it hath given testimony, and his testimony is true.” It is also to be believed that he was at the foot of the cross when the Saviour’s body was taken down; that he received it in his arms, placed it in those of the Blessed Virgin, washed it with his tears, kissed it with extraordinary devotion, and helped to lay it in the sepulchre.

Afterwards he was the first to give visible signs of the love he bore Him. For, having learnt from Mary Magdalen that He was no longer in the tomb, he ran there in haste with St. Peter and arrived first; and if he did not go in before the arrival of that prince of the Apostles, it was only from humility and from respect for his age and for the dignity to which he had been designated. Moreover, when Our Lord appeared to a small number of His disciples who were fishing on the sea of Tiberias, John was the only one who recognised Him at once; on which St. Jerome says very well: *Solus virgo Virginem agnoscit*: John, being the only virgin, was also the only one who, by a divine sympathy, recognised Jesus Christ, the King of virgins. In this appearance the Saviour ate with them; He took bread and fish and distributed them; and after the meal He established St. Peter shepherd of His lambs and His sheep; He foretold that he would die with his arms stretched out, that is, that he would die on a cross for the confession of His name; and as He went away He said to him: “Follow Me.” As this Apostle was following, he saw St. John coming after him and, wishing to know what would become of a disciple so dear and so precious, he asked Our Lord what He intended to do with him; Jesus, to take away this anxiety, answered: “If I will have him to remain till I come, what is it to thee? Follow thou Me.” The other disciples, interpreting these words of the last coming, and as if Our Lord had said them not conditionally but absolutely, inferred that John would not die: this opinion is still followed by some authors, who do not believe him actually dead, but kept in reserve to come with Enoch and Elias to fight Antichrist at the end of the ages. However, this interpretation of the disciples was not accepted by St. John; and it seems it was to exclude it and prevent its currency that he noted in his Gospel that Jesus Christ did not say, “This disciple shall not die”, but only, “If I will have him to remain till I come, you need not trouble yourself about it.” We have nothing more about our blessed disciple in the text of the Gospel.

In the Acts of the Apostles St. Luke everywhere speaks of him with great honour and always names him immediately after St. Peter. He assisted the first of the Apostles on three memorable occasions which we have described in his life. The first was the healing of a lame man at the gate of the temple called the Beautiful Gate. This lame man asked alms of them both, and for alms they gave him the use of his legs, which he had not had in the forty years he had been in the world. The second was when the priests and magistrates of the temple had them arrested to demand an account of so great a miracle and of the zeal with which they preached the glory of Jesus Christ. They appeared with wonderful constancy before their tribunal; they told them that no one could be saved except by faith in Jesus Christ, whom they had put to death; and when these priests forbade them ever to speak of this doctrine, they answered with the same firmness: “Judge, if you please, whether we ought to defer to your command rather than to God’s.” Finally, the third occasion was when, the Samaritans having believed the word of God and received baptism at the hands of St. Philip the deacon, there was question of conferring the Holy Spirit on them by the sacrament of Confirmation, the administration of which is reserved to bishops. The Apostles who had remained at Jerusalem gave the honour of it to St. Peter and St. John, and the imposition of their hands was so effective that the Holy Spirit came down upon these new Christians not only invisibly but also in a visible manner, as He had come down upon the disciples at Pentecost. St. Paul, in the Epistle to the Galatians, chapter ii, says

that, having come to Jerusalem, he found there James, Peter and John, who were as it were the pillars of the Church, and that they received him into their fellowship for the preaching of the Gospel, recommending him only that, in preaching to the Gentiles, he should take care to move them to help the poor of Judaea.

We must now draw from ecclesiastical History and from St. John's Apocalypse the rest of his Acts until his death. In the first place, it is very certain that his chief care, together with the conversion of peoples, was to provide for the needs of the Blessed Virgin for all the time she lived, to keep her company and to render her all the duties that the character of child of such a mother, instituted by Jesus Christ Himself a moment before His death and while He was shedding His blood for love of her, could demand of him. This he did not only at Jerusalem and in Judaea, but in Asia, and particularly in the city of Ephesus, to which this adorable Virgin withdrew for some time when the infant Church was dispersed by the persecution of Herod. The synodal Letter which the general Council held in that same city wrote to the clergy of Constantinople bears witness to this retreat. It is not possible to relate here all the graces he received through her during the time he lived with her: the lights she poured into his soul by her words, the ardours of divine love she kindled in his heart by her examples, and the favours she drew down on him from heaven by her prayers. For if she is so liberal and beneficent towards those who invoke her and have recourse to her, though they are only her servants, what will she not have done for an adoptive child of whom Jesus Christ, her only Son, had made her the Mother? And if her mere presence produced such prodigious effects in those who had the honour of approaching her for a short time, as in St. John the Baptist, St. Zachary and St. Elizabeth, what will she not have worked in one who lived with her, who witnessed her actions and her ways, who heard her speak of our mysteries, who saw her pray and receive Communion, and who often gave her Communion himself and prayed with her? With what splendours was his mind not then enlightened, with what flames was his soul not set afire, and with what humility and fervour did he not pass his life in so holy a company? These are secrets to be admired rather than represented by the weakness of our words. In the division of the world which the Apostles made among themselves to undertake its conquest, Asia Minor fell to St. John, and this was perhaps the reason why he took Mary to Ephesus, which was one of its greatest cities. It is true that he also travelled through other parts of the East, among which is reckoned the country of the Parthians, because his first epistle formerly bore the inscription "To the Parthians". The Jesuits who in these last centuries have proclaimed the name of Jesus Christ in the Indies report that he penetrated to the furthest bounds of the East, and that the people of Basra claim to have received the faith through his ministry. But it is certain that his longest stay was in Asia. It is held that he remained at Hierapolis, a city of the province of Phrygia, until the coming of St. Philip. The bishops of Ephesus, another city of this province, called themselves his successors and disciples, and relied on his authority for not celebrating Easter on the same day as the Roman Church; St. Jerome even affirms that he founded and governed all its churches: *totius Asiae fundavit rexitque Ecclesias*; but this does not prevent St. Peter from having preached there also, nor St. Paul from having established St. Timothy bishop of Ephesus about the year 55. Indeed, we see in the Apocalypse that this beloved disciple of the Saviour wrote to the bishops of the seven principal churches of this province, namely, to the bishops of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Philadelphia, Sardis and Laodicea, whom he calls angels because of the care they were to have of the peoples divine Providence had entrusted to them.

We do not repeat here what we said on 6 May of his martyrdom at Rome, where, having been brought by order of the emperor Domitian, he was scourged and plunged into a cauldron of boiling oil; nor of his exile in the island of Patmos[1], one of the Sporades, where he wrote that admirable book called the Apocalypse, which, in St. Jerome's judgement, contains no fewer mysteries than words, and which represents, under figures still sealed, all the persecutions of the Church until the coming of Antichrist and the end of the world. He also proclaimed to the inhabitants of that island the truth of the Gospel and drew them to faith in Jesus Christ. After the death of Domitian, Nerva his successor, a very mild prince, having annulled all his acts because of their excessive cruelty and recalled from exile all whom he had banished, our blessed Apostle was free to return to Ephesus to resume the direction of the Churches of Asia, which this persecution had

interrupted. Metaphrastes says that before his departure the Christians of Patmos begged him to leave them in writing the doctrine of salvation he had taught them, and that to satisfy them he composed his Gospel, which he dictated to St. Prochorus, one of the first seven deacons, who had followed him.

He adds that before undertaking this great work he ordered all the faithful to fast, and kept the fast himself with extreme rigour; that afterwards he withdrew with his disciple Prochorus to a high mountain where, standing like Samuel, with his arms stretched out towards heaven like Moses, he entered into a very high contemplation of eternal truths; that, while he was thus rapt in God, fearful lightnings were seen and furious thunderclaps heard, and after a great crash a voice was heard saying: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”; and that finally, after these words, which he had written down, he went on dictating his Gospel to St. Prochorus, who had the honour of being his secretary for so admirable a work. Dorotheus of Tyre, Theophylact and Nicephorus agree with Metaphrastes as to the place of these wonders; but St. Irenaeus, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Isidore, St. Gregory of Tours and most other authors, after Eusebius of Caesarea, say that they happened in Asia, and that it was there that St. John composed his Gospel history, at the request of the bishops of the country, against the nascent heresies of Cerinthus and Ebion, who said that Jesus Christ was a mere man. It was, then, about the year 98, under the reign of Nerva or of Trajan, and under the pontificate of St. Clement I.

In this book he is more concerned to report the discourses of Our Lord than to describe His actions, and he dwells more on the first two years of His preaching, which the three Evangelists who had written before him had only touched upon in passing, than on the following ones. He chiefly inculcates in it the doctrine of His divine sonship and His unity with His Father; and he does so in so sublime a manner that he has deserved from the most ancient Fathers of the Church the name of the Theologian par excellence and the Eagle of the Evangelists; as indeed he is represented in Ezekiel and in the Apocalypse under the symbol of an eagle. From the first page he makes it plain enough that he had flown into the very bosom of the Godhead to discover its deepest secrets. He speaks there of the eternal generation of the Word, of His immutable abiding in God and of His perfect consubstantiality with God, and thereby destroys the heresies of Sabellius, Arius and Acacius. He explains there the creation of the world by this Word, and how all things, having had life in Him as in their principle, received through Him life in themselves. He proclaims there the mystery of the Incarnation, saying that this Word, coeternal and consubstantial with the Father, was made flesh: which overthrows the errors of Paul of Samosata, Nestorius and Eutyches. He teaches there the mystery of justification, affirming that those who received Him had power to be made children of God by a birth which is not of the flesh nor of man, but wholly divine. In short, there is hardly any Catholic truth of which he does not give the principles and lay the foundations.

It is true that St. Paul, caught up to the third heaven, discovered secrets that are impenetrable to us; but those revelations were for him alone, for he admits that at the moment they were communicated to him he was forbidden to publish them to others. Our divine Evangelist, however, was instructed for the benefit of the whole world, and these supernatural lights were put into his mind only to be shared with the universal Church. The angels themselves, according to St. John Chrysostom in his first homily on this Gospel, learnt from it things they did not know, in keeping with what the Apostle says to the Ephesians, chapter iii, that the manifold wisdom of God has been made known to the principalities and powers in heaven through the Church which is on earth. The pagan philosophers were in such admiration of the depth and loftiness of those first words, “In the beginning was the Word”, etc., that some inserted them entire in their books as a doctrine above all others. St. Augustine even says that a Platonist wished them to be written in letters of gold in the most prominent place of the assemblies. See this holy doctor in his *Confessions*, book vii, chapter ix, and in book x of the *City of God*, chapter xxix. Finally, the Church has so great a veneration for the Gospel of St. John that she has its first chapter recited every day at the end of Mass; and Maldonatus relates in his commentary that in the time of the fury of the Arians the Catholics always carried it on them, to distinguish

themselves from those heretics, as a rosary is now carried to distinguish oneself from the Calvinists, and so as to have always in hand weapons to fight them.

Besides the Apocalypse and the Gospel, our Saint wrote three Epistles: the first to the faithful in general, though formerly it bore the title “To the Parthians”, as we have already said; the second to a lady named Electa, illustrious for her piety and her nobility; the third to Gaius, a very charitable Christian and a great giver of hospitality. One of his chief aims in these letters, besides the zeal he shows in them against the heretics who denied the divinity of Jesus Christ, like Cerinthus and Ebion, or the reality of His flesh, like Basilides, is to bring everyone to charity towards the neighbour, this virtue being the surest mark of the love one has for God and of the profession of Christianity. He explains its precept, which he calls old and new; he declares its advantages, which are to obtain easily from God all one asks of Him and to have a happy fellowship with Him; he marks its qualities, and says that it is sincere, true and beneficent, that it is not content with words but comes to deeds. This he does chiefly in his first Epistle. In the second he shows how careful one must be to flee the company of heretics; and he proves it by his example, for although he had no need to fear that they would corrupt him, he nevertheless fled them and avoided meeting them. It is even said that, having one day found Cerinthus and Ebion in the public baths where he went to wash, according to the custom of that time, he withdrew at once with his disciples, saying to them: “Let us go out of here, my children, lest the building fall upon us because of such bad company.” Neither the place nor the time at which these letters were written is known. It seems likely that the Apostle was already very old when he composed them, since in the first he speaks to the faithful as to his little children, *filioli*, and in the other two he calls himself *senior*, the elder.

It is impossible to express adequately the joy of the city of Ephesus and of all Asia Minor at the return of this wholly heavenly Apostle, whom they regarded as their master, their shepherd and their father. Yet he had to sustain no lesser combats in that city against Apollonius of Tyana, a famous magician who by his enchantments, his apparent prophecies and his false miracles had bewitched the minds of part of the people, than the apostle St. Peter had had at Rome against Simon Magus. But Our Lord made him triumph over this impostor by real miracles, which he set against his conjuring tricks and which exposed his impostures, and by the sword of the word of God, which had power to destroy his impieties. We do not know what these miracles were; his Acts, attributed to Prochorus, say that he changed rods into gold and pearls into diamonds; but this is purely apocryphal, like the book from which it is taken. Baronius approves only, under the year 98, some raisings of the dead to which Eusebius and Sozomen bear witness.

The celebrated conversion of a young man who had made himself captain of robbers is the most certain thing we have of what he did after his return. He had taken him into his affection before his exile and, wishing to make him a good servant of God, had put him under the guidance of a bishop, whom he strongly charged to watch over him, give him a good education and sow in his heart the seeds of all the Christian virtues. The prelate applied himself to this for some time; but after giving him the first tincture of Christianity, baptising him, confirming him and preparing him for the sacrament of the Eucharist, he neglected him so much that, no longer seeing himself guided, he frequented bad company and became a libertine among libertines. Then, to have the means to satisfy his debauchery, he joined some robbers and made himself their captain. The memory of the holy instructions he had received and the remorse of his conscience, not yet quite extinguished, held him back at first and kept him from committing the greatest crimes; but at last he stifled this remnant of good feeling and gave himself up to disorders so strange that he was the most dreaded of all the brigands. The Apostle, having gone to see the bishop to whom he had commended him, asked him back as a precious deposit he had entrusted to him. “I no longer have him,” said the bishop, quite confounded, with a deep sigh. “I no longer have him; he is dead.” — “He is dead,” replied St. John, “and in what manner did he die?” — “He is dead to God,” said the bishop, “since he preferred to join bandits to rob travellers on those mountains rather than remain in the Church in restraint and modesty.” — “To what a guardian,”

returned the holy Apostle, “had I entrusted my brother! … But let a horse be brought me, let me be given a guide!” Then, leaving the assembly, he set out at once.

When he reached the mountain he met the bandits’ sentinels, who seized him. “I have come here,” he told them, “to speak to your chief, and I beg you to take me to him, because I have an important matter to communicate to him.” They felt respect for his old age and for the majestic gravity that appeared on his face, and led him to the one he asked for. The captain recognised him at once and, unable to bear the sight and presence of so holy a man, whom he revered as his master, immediately took flight; but the Saint ran after him, crying with all his strength: “Why, my child, do you flee your father? What do you fear from an unarmed man? Have regard for my white hairs, have pity on the flower of your youth; do not think there is no more salvation for you. Stop, my son, I beg you, stop. It is Jesus Christ Himself who has sent me to you.” At these words the young man stopped; he kept his eyes on the ground. Then he threw down his arms, and began to tremble and weep bitterly. John came up to him; but he, embracing his knees, could only implore him with his groans. He was bathed in his tears as in a second baptism; but he still kept his right hand hidden under his robe. St. John again encourages him, reassures him, swears to him that he will obtain his pardon from the Saviour; in his turn he implores him, goes down on his knees to him. Then, taking that hand, now purified, he kisses it tenderly. The young man was brought back into the assembly of the saints. John prayed with him; he fasted with him, doing penance together; he healed his soul by the word, as by a sovereign charm, and did not leave him until he had raised him to life again and restored him to the Church.

Such deeds had no parallel in profane antiquity. St. John showed by this conduct that he had not only drawn the secrets of heaven from his Master’s bosom when he rested on it, but had drawn from it the fire of charity and mercy towards sinners. And how should he not have been filled with it, he who had seen Him expire on the tree of the cross for them? So St. Jerome relates that, when he had become extremely old and his weakness no longer allowed him to make long discourses to the faithful, when his disciples had carried him to the church in their arms, he would say to them only these words: *Filioli, diligite alterutrum*: “My little children, love one another.” And when these same disciples, weary of always hearing the same thing, at last asked him why he repeated this lesson so often, he gave them, adds St. Jerome, an answer worthy of John, that is, of the disciple whom Jesus loved: *Quia praeceptum Domini est, et si solum fiat, sufficit*: “I do it because it is the Lord’s precept, and if it is well kept, nothing more is needed to be saved.”

That is all we have been able to find that is authentic about St. John in ecclesiastical History. It remains only to speak of his blessed death. We have already said that some authors have believed that he did not die, but that Our Lord kept him in reserve with Enoch and Elias to fight Antichrist at the end of the world. This is the opinion of St. Hippolytus, bishop of Porto, in his Treatise on the consummation of the world; but it is not tenable. For besides the fact that St. John himself rejects it in his Gospel with these words, *Et non dixit Jesus: Non moritur*, “And Jesus did not say that this disciple was not to die”; and besides the fact that in his Apocalypse, speaking of the combats against Antichrist, he mentions only two witnesses, who will prophesy a thousand two hundred and sixty days clothed in sackcloth and will at last be slain by the beast, all antiquity has never doubted his death, any more than that of the other Apostles. The Menology of the Greeks marks it on 26 September. Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus, speaks of it clearly in his Letter to Pope Victor; Tertullian in his Treatise on the soul; St. Chrysostom in the Homily on the twelve Apostles; St. Ambrose, St. Jerome, St. Augustine, St. Isidore, St. Gregory of Tours, Nicephorus Callistus, Metaphrastes and countless others. Pope St. Celestine I, in his Letter to the Fathers of the Council of Ephesus, also speaks of his relics, which were honoured in that city. Finally, Cardinal Baronius, Godeau, bishop of Vence, and all our most learned historians hold it as beyond doubt.

It is not known, however, in what manner he died. Some have said that Trajan put him to death by violent torments; but this has no foundation. The Church believes that his death was natural, and that, after drinking the Lord’s chalice at the foot of the cross and when he was thrown into a cauldron of boiling oil at Rome, he

expired peacefully at Ephesus on 27 December. He none the less deserves the title and possesses the crown that the Martyrs receive, having suffered much more than they in seeing Jesus Christ on Calvary. He was a martyr of the martyrdom of Jesus Christ Himself, and the instruments that tore and pierced the body of the Master tore and pierced the heart of the disciple. There are also several opinions about the number of years he lived. St. Jerome says that he lived sixty-eight years after the Passion of Our Lord, from which it follows that he died in the year 101 or 102 under the emperor Trajan; but it is not certain what age he was when he was called to the apostolate. Baronius gives him only twenty-two years; others give him twenty-seven or thereabouts.

Veneration and Relics

The church of St. John Lateran possesses, in a fine urn of silver-gilt, the chains with which St. John was bound when he was brought from Ephesus to Rome. In the chapel of St. Francis is shown the cup or bowl in which St. John, at Domitian's order, drank a deadly poison which, by God's permission, did him no harm. Under the high altar, in the Confession, which was the prison where he was held, there is also exposed, enclosed in a silver-gilt casket, the tunic with which the Saint raised to life the emperor's ministers, who had died suddenly from tasting the same poison he had drunk with impunity. John the Deacon, in the Life of St. Gregory the Great, particularly observes that when it was unfolded in time of drought rain was obtained, just as it brought back fine weather when the rains were too abundant; and lastly that the lamps before the altar where this precious relic had been placed sometimes lit of themselves and burned without the oil being consumed. St. Gregory of Tours says that it never rained on the place where he had dictated his Gospel, although it was in the open air.

All the Fathers of the Church and ecclesiastical writers give him very great praises, which may be seen in their works and which are drawn from the admirable lights and extraordinary favours he received from heaven. To end this life it will suffice to remark that he united in himself all the kinds of saints: we mean that he was prophet, apostle, evangelist, doctor, martyr and virgin. But above all he was the Disciple whom Jesus loved, the disciple most cherished by his Master, the disciple best instructed by his Master, the disciple most devoted to his Master: *Hic est discipulus ille*. St. John is represented accompanied by an eagle. Historian, if one may so speak, of the eternal generation of the Word and of the divine action of the Son of God apart from the Incarnation, he has been compared to the eagle that fixes its gaze on the sun without blinking, because human language had never approached those heights of doctrine, nor rendered it in terms so brilliant with light. Sometimes a chalice from which a serpent issues is put in his hand. This attribute is probably drawn from a doubtful legend in which the Apostle is said to have been condemned at Ephesus to drink poison, which, moreover, did him no harm. Others think that this chalice represents the chalice of the Eucharist, of which he spoke in so admirable a manner: the serpent, which among the ancients was the symbol of life, would signify the eternal life drawn from the Blessed Sacrament.

This account is from Father Giry, revised and completed. Cf. the Histoire de l'apôtre saint Jean *by the abbé Baunard, honorary canon of Orléans.*

ST. NICARETE OR NICERATA OF NICOMEDIA, VIRGIN (about 440)

Nicarete or Nicerata, whose name means "Victory of virtue", was of one of the most illustrious families of Nicomedia, in Bithynia. She was brought up with great care in the maxims and sentiments of a solid piety and the practice of all the Christian virtues. Her distinctive qualities were a profound humility and an admirable modesty. It is not known when or on what occasion this humble virgin left her native city; it is only certain that she left Nicomedia and came to live at Constantinople, where she made profession of spending the rest of her days in the service of God and her neighbour, in perpetual virginity, using all the riches of her ample patrimony in works of charity. She set herself to study the properties of medicinal plants

and to prepare remedies from them for the sick poor, very often healing those whom the physicians had been unable to relieve, and effecting cures that seemed miraculous and sometimes really were.

Nicarete lived at Constantinople in deep retirement, taking great care to hide her good works so as not to risk losing their fruit: for the applause of men contains a poison that can corrupt everything, by inspiring a vain complacency in oneself and one's actions. She would never consent, despite the entreaties of St. John Chrysostom, her bishop, to be raised to the rank of deaconess. Nor could he ever persuade her to take charge of the virgins of Constantinople who lived without being enclosed in monasteries, alone or within their families. Her whole happiness was to remain unknown and to lead a life hidden in God.

Yet so rare a virtue could not remain unknown to the world; so brilliant a merit drew upon her envious people and enemies, and the handmaid of the Lord had to be tried by the fire of tribulation. Having remained inviolably faithful to her great and holy bishop, in whom she venerated the Saviour, the sole object of her attachment on earth and in heaven, the charitable virgin deserved to share in the persecutions so maliciously raised against that illustrious doctor of the Church. After he had been driven from his see in the year 404, attempts were made to force Nicarete and many other virgins, St. Olympias and many other pious widows, to recognise the authority of the intruder Arsacius. None of them would do so.

A good number of these courageous women, for whom conscience comes before everything, rather than see themselves constantly exposed to every kind of insult, preferred to leave Constantinople and condemn themselves to a voluntary banishment. Nicarete took this course: joining great courage and perfect disinterestedness to her wonderful humility, without complaining of the odious injustice that had stripped her of the best part of her goods, she hastened into exile. By her thrift, and above all by her abstinence, the little that had been left her as strictly necessary sufficed her not only to live but also to make gifts and give alms.

This holy woman spent the rest of her days in the continual exercise of the virtues, never departing from her first fervour, until a venerable old age, profiting many by her good example, her wise counsel and her pious liberality. The Lord, wishing to reward so much perseverance, deigned to take her from this world to place her in the company of His virgins in heaven, on the 27th of December, about the year 440. It is not known what country witnessed her last moments, nor in what place her mortal remains were laid: God, who has kept the secret, will know how to find them again on the day of His justice.

M. l'abbé Chapia, parish priest of Vitel.

STS. THEODORE AND THEOPHANES, BROTHERS, CONFESSORS (9th century)

St. Theodore was born in the land of the Moabites. His parents, as virtuous as they were rich, came to settle at Jerusalem in order to be able to give him a Christian education. He was still very young when they placed him in the monastery of St. Sabas. There in a short time he reached a high degree of virtue and became very celebrated in the world. The patriarch of Jerusalem ordained him priest. During the persecution that Leo the Armenian had stirred up against the holy images, he was deputed to that prince to exhort him to trouble the peace of the Church no more. But his exhortations did not have the effect hoped for: the emperor, after having him cruelly beaten, exiled him to an island at the entrance of the Euxine. Theophanes, his brother, who had accompanied him and was also a monk of the monastery of St. Sabas, was treated in the same way. Both suffered much from hunger and cold. The emperor having died in 822, they were free to return to Constantinople, where Theodore published some writings in defence of Catholic doctrine.

Michael the Stammerer succeeded Leo the Armenian. This prince was reputed to have no religion or at most to hold to the sect of the Manichaeans. At first he affected a kind of neutrality between the Catholics and the Iconoclasts. He nevertheless had St. Theodore put in prison and then sent him into exile. Theophilus, his son, succeeded him in 829; he declared himself for the heretics and persecuted the orthodox with fury. Theodore

and his brother were ill-treated again and relegated to the island of Aphusia. Two years later they were brought back to Constantinople. The emperor had them stripped and beaten in his presence. They were struck so violently that they were quite stunned and almost fell at the prince's feet. They were taken to prison, where they remained some days. As they still refused to communicate with the Iconoclasts, the emperor ordered twelve iambic verses to be engraved on their foreheads and faces, of which this is the sense: "These men appeared at Jerusalem as vessels of iniquity full of superstitious errors, and were driven out of it for their crimes. Having fled to Constantinople, they did not renounce their impiety; they have been driven out of it also, after having their faces branded." Although the wounds with which their bodies were covered were very inflamed and very painful, they were tied on benches to have the iambics we have just mentioned engraved on their faces. This operation, as long as it was cruel, was interrupted only by nightfall. They were taken back to prison with their faces all bloody. Shortly afterwards they were exiled to Apamea in Syria, where St. Theodore died of his sufferings (about 850). From the inscription of the iambics he was surnamed *Graptos*, which means in Greek "marked" or "engraved". Theophanes survived him for some time. Meanwhile the empress Theodora, a zealous Catholic, governed the empire during the minority of Michael her son. The holy patriarch Methodius restored the veneration of the holy images in 842. Theophanes was elected bishop of Nicaea, so as to work more effectively to destroy a heresy over which he had already triumphed. He is named together with his brother in the Roman Martyrology. The Greeks honour St. Theodore on this day, and St. Theophanes on 11 October. They surname the latter "the Poet" because of the sacred hymns he composed.

Godescard.

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[1] Halfway up a high, spreading mountain, which is the main part of the island, is the place believed to have been inhabited by St. John; a small but quite neat monastery has been built there. From the monastery one goes down into the grotto by some thirty steps: one enters first a little church set against the rock; the grotto has two compartments, the larger of which is about ten paces long, six wide and eight high. The rock above the entrance is split in two places. This place is called the School of St. John because, according to the traditions of the country, the holy Evangelist taught the truths of the faith there, and a school has continued to be kept there under his patronage. On the highest point stands the ancient monastery of Patmos, dedicated to St. John: a vast and solid building which has defied the greed of the barbarians for centuries. — *Les Saints Lieux*, by Mgr Mislin.

28 December

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY

At Bethlehem of Juda, the heavenly birthday of the holy Innocents, who were massacred for Jesus Christ by the command of King Herod. — At Ancyra, in Galatia, the holy martyrs Eutychius, priest, and Domitian, deacon. — In Africa, the triumph of the holy martyrs Castor, Victor and Rogatian. — At Nicomedia, the holy martyrs Indes, officer of the palace, Domna, Agape and Theophila, virgins, and their companions, who, after long and cruel trials, won the crown of martyrdom by various kinds of death during the persecution of Diocletian. 303. — At Neocaesarea, in Pontus, St. Troadius, martyred during the persecution of Decius. St. Gregory Thaumaturgus appeared to him in the midst of his combats and encouraged him to suffer martyrdom. 250. — At Arabissus, in Lesser Armenia, St. Caesarius, martyr, who suffered under Galerius Maximian. — At Lyons, the precious death of St. Francis de Sales, bishop of Geneva, canonised by Pope Alexander VII for his most ardent zeal in converting heretics. His feast is kept on 29 January, the day of the translation of his body to Annecy, by a decree of the same Pontiff. 1622. — At Rome, St. Domnio, priest. — In Egypt, St. Theodore, monk, disciple of St. Pachomius. 367. — In the monastery of Lérins, St. Antony, monk, famous for his miracles. About 525.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED

At Bourges, St. Cadus (*Chadus*), bishop of that see and confessor, whose body was kept in the church of Saint-Sulpice in that city. 472. — At Pontoise (Seine-et-Oise), in the diocese of Versailles, anniversary of the

solemn Dedication of the original sanctuary of Notre-Dame de Pontoise (1484). The present sanctuary was dedicated on 16 April 1599; it contains a statue of the Mother of God dating from a period earlier than the 13th century. Tradition relates that at that time a pious young man, moved by the bloody wars that were desolating France and burning with zeal to revive devotion to Mary in hearts, felt inspired to make a statue of the Blessed Virgin to offer it for public veneration; that at once he went to work in a quarry at Blangis, near Abbeville; and that, the statue once finished, it was carried to Pontoise, where it rested successively in several sanctuaries. The fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries witnessed numerous pilgrimages, and signal graces rewarded the faithful for their confidence in the Mother of God. The Revolution of the last century was disturbed by these pious demonstrations; on 30 April 1791, by an order of the National Assembly, seals were put on the doors of the sanctuary: the silver, the pictures, the ornaments of worship, the sacred furniture, the statues, the bronzes, all was removed, and the oratory was turned into a fodder store. However, a pious inhabitant of Pontoise bought the statue and part of the furniture that had served for the cult of Mary. After the Terror the sanctuary reopened; the generous purchaser offered to return the statue, and on 4 October 1800, in the midst of an immense crowd, it was solemnly carried back to its oratory. Since that time the pilgrimages have resumed their course, and Mary grants new graces to her children.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS

Among the Ethiopians, St. Abel, the first of the just and the first figure of Jesus Christ; we have given his life on 30 July. Year of the world 128. — In Russia, Blessed Nicholas de Mello, a native of Lisbon and Canon Regular of St. Augustine, martyred at Astrakhan, in hatred of the orthodox religion, by the schismatic Greeks. 17th c. — At Rome, St. Iolanda or Iolanthe, virgin and martyr. She was about twenty years old when, under the reign of Marcus Aurelius (169–180), this young patrician was arrested to give account to the judges of the earth for her devotion to the Christians who were victims of the persecution. Thrown first into a foul prison, she found herself, on the day after her arrest, in the presence of an unjust judge who, smitten with her beauty, tried to seduce her; but the innocent dove was, with the grace of God, to overcome the vulture. A secret interview was arranged by the judge: seeing his flatteries vain, he threw himself violently upon the young virgin. She cried to God, and God came to her help: her hideous tormentor was struck by an invisible hand; his arms became paralysed. The monster then changed his love into fury; he had Iolanda brought to him and ordered her to be struck in the face with bronze gauntlets. However, the girl’s guardian angel came to take her from her prison and led her to a solitary mountain. After some time Iolanda was discovered and dragged before the judge, who had her hung up by the hair. She was then shut up in a dungeon, where she remained seven days without food. Condemned to be crushed between two stones, she again withstood this torment. Exposed to the beasts, they respected her virginal innocence. At last a guard, fiercer than the lions and leopards, struck off the young victim’s head with a stroke of the sword. About 109.

THE HOLY INNOCENTS, MARTYRS, AT BETHLEHEM OF JUDAH AND IN ITS NEIGHBOURHOOD (year 1)

Salvete, flores martyrum, Quos lucis ipso in limine Christi insecutor sustulit, Ceu turbo nascentes rosas.

Hail, flowers of the martyrs, reaped on the very threshold of life by the sword of the enemy of Christ, as the raging storm breaks the roses that have just opened. — Prudentius.

The name of martyr ought properly to be given only to those who have lost their life for the glory of the true God, who have died for the faith, confessing and upholding His doctrine before the unbelievers, or who, wishing to keep a virtue whose practice He has commanded, have been slain for justice, for the defence of chastity, of piety or of the rights of the Church. Nevertheless the Catholic Church, inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit in all her ceremonies, has no difficulty in granting this glorious title to the Holy Innocents, because they confessed Jesus Christ by the shedding of their blood when they were not yet able to confess

Him in words; for it was indeed on His account, and even as it were in His place, that they were cruelly massacred by the command of King Herod.

St. Matthew tells us that this prince, who had obtained the kingdom of Judaea only by the favour of the Romans and was always afraid that it would be taken from him, fell into extreme fear and anxiety when the Magi, arriving at Jerusalem, asked where the King of the Jews had been born, whose sign they had seen in the East. They meant the star which Balaam had foretold. He nevertheless hid his fear, and, in order to learn exactly the place where this child was to whom the heavens were already promising the sceptre and the empire, he told them to go and adore Him at Bethlehem and, when they had paid Him their duty, to take the trouble of passing back through Jerusalem to bring him news of Him, so that he too might go and present his homage to Him with all his court.

His design was to have Him slain and, by this means, to make vain the hopes of the Patriarchs, the predictions of the Prophets, the prayers of the Jews and all the expectation of the Old Testament. But the wisdom of God confounded his false prudence. The Magi went to the stable, adored the Child, offered Him their gifts, received His blessing and, warned by an angel, did not pass back through Jerusalem, but returned to their own country by another way. Herod, not seeing them return, thought that they had found nothing of what they were seeking, and that the shame they felt at having undertaken so long a journey on a false fancy had kept them from appearing a second time in his royal city; so that he troubled himself no more about it. But when he was informed of what had happened in the Temple, when the Blessed Virgin had brought her divine Son there, and learned that the just Simeon had foretold wonderful things of this Child, that Anna the prophetess had recognised Him as the Redeemer of Israel, and that all who were present had been filled with admiration at what these persons, inspired by God, proclaimed of Him, he began to realise that he had been deceived by those princes. So this monster of cruelty, whom ambition and the passion to reign had already driven to execrable murders, resolved to find this incomparable Child at whatever cost, and to make Him the victim of his fury and his pride.

For this purpose he sent officers in every direction and had inquiries made everywhere to learn what had become of Him. But what can the malice of man do against the eternal counsels of the divine wisdom? An angel was sent to St. Joseph to reveal to him the execrable design of this cruel prince, and to order him to take the Child and His Mother, lead them into Egypt and remain there with them until further order. St. Joseph obeyed this command punctually. He rose at that very hour, took the Child and His Mother and fled into Egypt; and by so humbling a means, which the Providence of God had chosen rather than an infinity of others that His almighty power could have used, the Child could not be found and was preserved from the cruelty of Herod.

The tyrant, to satisfy his passion and free himself from the mortal vexation and anxiety that gnawed him to the marrow, imagined that this Child might well be hidden in some house of Bethlehem or its neighbourhood, and that the way to be rid of Him was to include Him in a general massacre of all the children of that district. So he gave orders to slay all the little children of two years old and under, according to the time he had had the Magi tell him, both in the little town of Bethlehem and within its borders, that is to say in the villages round about. Sacred History does not record the particulars of so detestable an execution; it has left readers free to think of it what their piety might inspire. But St. Gregory of Nyssa and St. Augustine have used all their eloquence to depict for us the cruelty of the soldiers who were its ministers, the cries of the mothers who saw torn from their breasts those whom they had just brought into the world, the wounds of these innocents who were slaughtered before they could have committed any crime deserving punishment, and the glory of their death, since they died for Jesus Christ, died in His place, and as though they had been Jesus Christ.

The number of these innocents massacred on that day is not certain. Some have raised it to a hundred and forty-four thousand, because St. John in his Apocalypse, speaking of the innocent souls who follow the Lamb

in heaven, speaks of that number. But it is not at all likely that so small a town as Bethlehem and its borders should have nourished, in so short a time, so great a number of little children. Alfonso Salmerón, in his Commentaries on the Gospels, says that there were fourteen thousand, and that the Christians of Ethiopia, whom we call Abyssinians, commemorate them in the Canon of the Mass. Génébrard also says that the Greeks record this number in their calendar. But these figures are evidently exaggerated. Besides, it is not necessary to know the number, and it would have been very difficult to count them. What is certain is that God kept an exact account of them, and that there is not a single one to whom He has not given the precious crown of glorious martyrdom. St. Augustine says on this subject: "He who does not believe that the Baptism of Jesus Christ is of profit to infants might also doubt that your death and your blood shed for Jesus Christ have obtained for you the crown of immortality. You were not of an age to believe that He was to suffer; but you already had a body capable of enduring death for Him who was to die for us." And St. Bernard adds: "If you seek for what meritorious actions these children were crowned by the hand of God, seek also for what crimes they were cruelly massacred by Herod. Could it be that the goodness of the Saviour gave way to the impiety of this tyrant, and that, Herod having been able to put them to death in spite of their innocence, Jesus Christ was unable to give them eternal life, although they died on His account?"

It was right also that the Church should celebrate every year a feast to honour their martyrdom and to implore their protection. We shall not say precisely when it was instituted, for we have no very certain knowledge of it. There is a Homily *de Diversis* attributed to Origen which speaks of it quite clearly, but it is not certain that it is his. Some also doubt the sermons of St. Augustine which we read on this feast and on the day of its octave, which are the first and the third *On the Innocents* among the sermons *On the Saints*. The Church nevertheless proposes them as the work of that holy doctor, and they are indeed in his style. Even if they were not his, they would still be by a very ancient author not far removed from his time, for it is certain that they speak distinctly and in clear terms of the feast of these blessed crowned ones. In them we have a testimony that they were called "Flowers of the martyrs", *qui jure dicuntur Flores Martyrum*, because, having budded early amid the frosts of unbelief, like the first buds of the newborn Church, they were at once consumed by the frost of persecution.

If it is asked why the Saviour, on coming into the world, permitted the death of so great a number of innocents, we say first that He did so for His greater honour, for the exaltation of His name, so that news of His birth might be spread everywhere, and that not only the Jews but the Gentiles and even the Romans, however distant they might be, should not fail to be informed of it. Thus St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine and the other Fathers agree that Herod, by the massacre of these children, did more for the glory of Jesus Christ and to publish His coming than if he had gone to adore Him with all his court; for, had he paid Him that homage, it would scarcely have been spoken of outside Judaea and the report of it would not have reached Rome; whereas the cruelty he exercised towards the Innocents, and the cause that drove him to so barbarous a resolution, flew immediately through the whole earth, and, spreading thus on every side, taught the most distant nations that a child had newly been born at Bethlehem whose power Herod, king of the Jews, dreaded, and who was said to be destined to be the master and sovereign of the whole world. St. Augustine further adds that, God having willed to be born on earth, it was fitting that victims should be offered to Him, and that these victims should be children without malice, because He had come to condemn and destroy the iniquity of men: *Deus est qui natus est; Innocentes ei debentur victimae*. Let us add that the Child Jesus was to have His martyrs, as well as Jesus crucified and dying on the Cross. If, then, so many Saints have mounted the scaffold and endured martyrdom since Jesus was consumed by the rigours of His Passion, let us not be astonished that thousands of innocents were martyred to be the glorious witnesses of the adorable holiness of His divine childhood.

We say in the second place that the Saviour permitted this massacre for the glory and particular happiness of these children. Those who have only human and carnal views regard their death as a great misfortune; they

pity them for having been carried off almost at their birth. Indeed, Scripture presents Rachel to us as a mother inconsolable at the death of her children: *Rachel plorans filios suos, et noluit consolari, quia non sunt*. But St. Augustine, whose soul was enlightened by the lights of eternity, does not hesitate to say: *Nunquam profanus hostis beatis parvulis tantum prodesse potuisset obsequio, quantum profuit odio*: "Never could that barbarous and inhuman enemy have procured so much advantage for these blessed children by his kindness and his services as he procured for them by his hatred and his fury." Indeed, he drew them out of the miseries of this life; he delivered them from the danger of offending God and of being lost eternally by sharing in the hardness of heart and unbelief of their parents and of their whole nation; he was the cause of their triumphing without knowing it and being crowned without ever having thought of resisting sin; he made them illustrious in heaven and on earth, and, in making them the victims of his ambition and rage, he made of them at the same time most noble citizens of paradise and most glorious companions who have followed the Lamb.

How happy is this age, the same holy doctor exclaims again, which, not yet able to pronounce the name of Jesus Christ, nevertheless deserved to be slain for His honour; scarcely could it receive a wound, and it was found fit for martyrdom. How fortunate these children were to find eternal life at their very first entry into the world, a moment after their birth! So let Rachel be comforted; let her no longer say, to justify her grief, that her children are not. They *are* far more truly than they were before. They were without speech and without reason, and now they are eloquent preachers who proclaim to us the greatness of the Saviour of the world. They were frail, weak and subject to sin, and now they enjoy an innocence and holiness that will never be impaired. They were exposed to an infinity of miseries and in danger of falling into the last of penalties, that is to say eternal damnation, and now they are exempt from all these misfortunes and possess a happiness that will never end. They therefore truly *are*, and they ought to be a subject of joy, consolation and praise rather than of affliction and tears. This is what makes our holy doctor say in his first sermon: *Nascente Domino luctus coepit non caelo, sed mundo*: "At the birth of Our Lord mourning began, not in heaven, but in the world."

In the third place, the Saviour permitted this horrible execution of the innocents for the advantage of their own parents; for, besides its being a great honour for them to be the fathers and mothers of the first martyrs, it is certain that the grief they felt at their death served them before God as satisfaction for their sins; and we must not doubt that Jesus Christ, whose liberality and magnificence are infinite, gave them in consideration of it particular graces to make them conceive sentiments of compunction and penance and to lead them into the ways of justice and holiness. The mere knowledge they thereby gained of the birth of the Messiah, whom heaven and earth had awaited for so many centuries with holy impatience, was so great a treasure that one may say they lost nothing in acquiring it by the death of their children.

Finally, we may add that this massacre was permitted for the good of the whole Church; for is it not a great honour for her to have among the number of her children this glorious army of innocent victims, slain and sacrificed for Jesus Christ her divine Spouse? Does not their blood, lovelier than vermilion, wonderfully enhance her beauty? And, as they mingle the milk of their innocence with the blood of their martyrdom, do they not make her like her Beloved, of whom she says: *Dilectus meus candidus et rubicundus*, "My Beloved is white and ruddy"? Moreover, they instructed the Church of Limbo and taught it the blessed birth of a Redeemer; and now they powerfully assist the Church militant by their intercession with God. For we must not doubt, says St. Augustine in his fourth sermon, that they obtain by their prayers more than the other martyrs, since they preceded them all in the shedding of their blood. Further, we learn by their death that there is no age that is not fit for the service of God and cannot contribute to His glory; and fathers and mothers must likewise learn that it is their obligation to offer and dedicate their children to Him as soon as they appear in the world, and that they must not grieve inconsolably or give themselves up to mortal sorrow when divine Providence takes them from the earth to place them in heaven. We add that the glory of these Innocents shows that Baptism, which has the force of martyrdom, as martyrdom has the force of Baptism, is

of service not only to adults but also to little children, to whom it is conferred in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

It remains for us to note here that the cruel Herod was not, even in this life, without a just punishment for his impiety. He had feared without cause that the Saviour of the world would take from him his sceptre and his crown; for, as the Church says, *Non eripit mortalia, qui regna dat caelestia*: "He who comes to give the kingdom of heaven has no intention of taking from monarchs the kingdoms of the earth." St. Augustine says to him on this point: "What has your cruelty profited you, impious and barbarous king? You were able to make martyrs, but you could not find Jesus Christ whom you wanted to slay. You imagined that, in coming into the world, He would drive you from your throne; but you were in error. He did not come to take the glory of others, but to give His own. He did not come to seize the kingdoms of the earth, but to offer the kingdom of heaven. He did not come to lay hold of the grandeurs and dignities of this world, but to suffer insults and opprobrium. He did not come to have His head crowned with diadems, but to wear a crown of thorns upon it. In short, He did not come to be raised above empires, but to be nailed to a cross and to endure death there." Herod therefore was mistaken; and his error, inflaming his ambition, was the cause of the murder of the Innocents, but it was at the same time the cause of his own ruin.

Here is how the historian Josephus describes the evils with which divine justice afflicted him: "A slow fever, which did not show outwardly, burned and devoured him within. He had so ravenous a hunger that nothing could satisfy him. His bowels were full of ulcers. Violent colics made him suffer horrible pains. His feet were swollen and livid, and his groin no less; several parts of his body were so corrupted that worms could be seen coming out of them. His sinews were all contracted, and his breath was so foul that it was almost impossible to come near him." So wretched a state drove him to despair and made him ask for a knife to kill himself; and he would actually have done so, had not the frenzy that possessed him been checked. Finally, instead of making amends for so many crimes of which he was guilty by some act of clemency, knowing that the Jews would rejoice at his death, he gave orders that at the hour when he should give up his soul all the persons of rank whom he was holding in prison should be put to death, so that every considerable family of his kingdom should have cause to shed tears when he left the world. This order, however, was not carried out; he died alone, hated by everyone, with the reputation of a monster of nature and of the wickedest man that had ever been on earth. St. Augustine adds that at the judgement of God he will have the whole army of the Holy Innocents against him, no longer children and dumb, but at the age of the fulness of Jesus Christ, and with strong and eloquent tongues to demand justice for his cruelty; and how will he be able to withstand so numerous and powerful an army, above all having for his judge that adorable Child whom he sought to stifle in the cradle?

We leave the reader to compare the happiness of the Holy Innocents with the misfortune of that perfidious king. They reign with God, and he is reprobate with the demons. They rejoice, and will rejoice for ever, in heaven, and he is condemned to eternal pains. Their memory is in benediction in the world, and his is and always will be held in execration and malediction. Finally, his body was put into the earth as corrupt flesh reserved for the flames of hell, and the bodies of our Innocents will one day be glorious in paradise; some of them have long been venerated in the Church. Before the Revolution there was one entire at Saint-Denis, in its cradle made of palm branches and enshrined in a case of silver-gilt given to that abbey by the emperor Charlemagne; and another at the church of the Innocents in Paris, still in flesh and bone, enclosed in a crystal mounted in silver and enriched by the magnificence of King Louis XI.

At Bethlehem, not far from the grotto of the Nativity, is a chapel bearing the name of the Holy Innocents. It was dedicated to these innocent victims either because it was fitting that they should be honoured near the cradle for which they shed their blood, or because their bodies, as the traditions say, were thrown into the cave that is found at that place.

Popular art has treated the subject of the massacre of the Holy Innocents: witness the frieze of a sarcophagus, probably earlier than the fifth century, which is in the crypt of St. Mary Magdalen at Saint-Maximin [PB: “Saint-Maximin de Rome”]. Herod is seen seated on a folding stool of antique form, making an imperious gesture with his hand, and before him two soldiers who, carrying out his orders, are each carrying off a child. One of the two, who is armed with a sword, holds his victim raised above his head and seems about to dash it violently to the ground. Further on appears a woman with dishevelled hair, who is doubtless the mother claiming her child. This scene fills one of the sides of the lid, which is divided in two by the tablet intended to receive the *titulus* of the deceased; and it is worth noting that the other part is occupied by the Adoration of the Magi, a subject offering with the first a contrast that escapes no one, and which was doubtless meant by the artist to encourage persecuted Christians by showing them that God knows how to thwart the plans of the wicked and to withdraw whom He will from their fury. An ivory diptych of the cathedral of Milan, of about the same period as the tomb, presents the same subject represented almost exactly in the same way. It is found again in the mosaic of the triumphal arch of St. Mary Major, a work likewise dating from the fifth century. But here it is only the first scene of that bloody tragedy. The soldiers sent by Herod seem to be notifying the orders they have received to a great number of women who hold their children in their arms. The first of these soldiers, doubtless their leader, turns towards his companions and with his hand points out their victims to them.

The Holy Innocents are the patrons of choirboys and of foundlings.

Father Giry, revised and completed with Les Saints Lieux *by Mgr Mislin; the* Caractéristiques des Saints *by Father Cahier; and the* Dictionnaire des Antiquités chrétiennes *by M. l’abbé Martigny.*

ST. THEODORE THE SANCTIFIED, ABBOT OF TABENNISI, IN EGYPT (367)

Ille perfectus est monachus qui huic saeculo et corpore et corde discretus est.

He is a perfect religious who is separated from the world both in body and in heart. — St. Isidore of Spain.

One of the most illustrious solitaries of the Thebaid was the abbot Theodore, who had been a disciple of St. Pachomius, and whom the Greeks surnamed the Sanctified because of the extraordinary purity of life he showed from his childhood. He was born in the Upper Thebaid about the year 314, of parents distinguished by birth and by wealth. He felt the dangers of the world early. At the age of eleven or twelve, on the feast of the Epiphany, he was more keenly penetrated than ever by the great truths of the Gospel, resolved to consecrate himself without reserve to the service of God, and asked of Him the grace of being always faithful to his vocation. So as not to be mistaken on a point of such importance, he began from that moment to refer all the movements of his heart and all his actions to God alone; he gave considerable time to prayer and practised rigorous fasts. He spent two years in this way in the house of his mother, who was also very pious. He continued to go every day to a master of grammar who lived in the neighbourhood. When he was in his fourteenth year he left the world, with his mother’s consent, and went to finish his education in a monastery of the diocese of Latopolis. The reputation of St. Pachomius afterwards drew him to Tabennisi, where all the monks were so many Saints, and his zeal for perfection soon distinguished him among the others there. His mother came to the monastery to see him; but he so feared the temptations that might recall to him the world, which he had renounced in order to follow Jesus Christ with all his heart, that he begged St. Pachomius not to permit the interview. The mother, edified to find in her son so perfect a renunciation, took the veil in a community of women near Tabennisi, so as to think of nothing but her own sanctification; she sometimes had the consolation of seeing her son in the company of the other monks.

Theodore was still only twenty-five when St. Pachomius took him as his companion in the visitation he made of his monasteries. Five years later he ordered him to prepare to receive the priesthood. He then entrusted to

him the government of the monastery of Tabennisi and went to shut himself up in that of Pabau. Theodore went there every evening to hear the instructions that St. Pachomius gave to his monks, and came back to repeat them to those of Tabennisi; which did not prevent him from instructing them on his own account in private conferences.

Having one day accompanied his blessed father to a monastery near Panopolis, in Lower Egypt [*sic*], a philosopher of that city asked to confer with Pachomius. The holy abbot thought it right to send Theodore to him. The philosopher put various questions. Theodore answered him with as much wit as precision; then he exhorted him to renounce speculations as vain as they were sterile, and to occupy himself henceforth only with the science of salvation.

The pious solitary sometimes suffered greatly from a violent toothache. St. Pachomius consoled him by telling him that involuntary afflictions borne with patience were more profitable for salvation than voluntary abstinences and long prayers.

St. Pachomius fell ill at Pabau two years before his death. The monks of Tabennisi made Theodore promise that he would take charge of the government of the whole congregation when the holy abbot was no longer living. Although he had made this promise only against his will and after long resistance, St. Pachomius severely reproved him for it and took from him the superiorship of Tabennisi. He submitted with joy, acknowledging that he had made himself guilty of presumption and vanity. For two years he was the last of the community, even after the novices. He bore this humiliation in silence and practised great austerities. His virtue shone with a new lustre, and the abasement in which he lay was more profitable to him than the superiorship, as St. Pachomius often told the other monks.

St. Pachomius died in 348, and he was given as successor the one he had himself designated: this was Petronius, whom death also carried off a month later. St. Orsisius was elected to replace him; but, finding the burden beyond his strength, and knowing that there were some troubles in the congregation, he had Theodore elected in his place, assuring him that in this he was following the order St. Pachomius had given before he died. Theodore assembled the monks, exhorted them to peace and removed all the causes of division. His prayers, his discourses and his example restored union and charity everywhere. Orsisius served as his assistant. There was the most perfect understanding between them, because they had banished every feeling of pride and jealousy. They sought to outdo one another in attentiveness and humility; Theodore never did anything without consulting Orsisius, and they visited the monasteries one after the other.

Theodore instructed each of his monks individually; he consoled them in their troubles and encouraged them to walk in the ways of penance. He corrected faults with a gentleness that won him all hearts, and there was no one who did not disclose to him with entire confidence his most secret thoughts. He had recourse to prayer and fasting to bring back to duty those who had strayed from it, and this means always succeeded with him. He was favoured with the gift of miracles and that of prophecy.

Being one day on the Nile with St. Athanasius, he told him that Julian the Apostate was dying at that moment and that his successor would restore peace to the Church; which was soon verified by the event. The Saint also foretold to the monks of Nitria, in 353, that the pride of the Arians would not be long in being confounded. This prediction is contained in a letter that we still have. We have a second letter of the holy abbot, which is an exhortation to celebrate Easter devoutly.

Gennadius speaks of three other letters which Theodore wrote for the instruction of his monks; but they have not come down to us.

The following incident is read in St. Nilus and other ancient authors. One day when Theodore was giving an instruction to his monks during the time of work, two vipers fastened on his feet. He made no movement, for fear of distracting his audience, who were listening attentively. When the discourse was finished, he allowed

the vipers, which had not bitten him, to be killed.

On a Sunday of the year 367, he was told that one of his monks was near death; he left the divine office to go and assist him in his last moments. He told those present that the death of this monk would soon be followed by another that was little expected. The monks watched through the night beside the body of their brother, and he was buried on Easter day with the singing of psalms. After the octave of the feast, Theodore gave a very moving discourse to his monks, who were assembled for Easter, and sent them back to their monasteries. Shortly afterwards he fell ill; then, having commended the community to Orsisius, he prepared by redoubled fervour for the passage from time to eternity. He died on 27 April 367, in the fifty-third year of his age. His body was carried to the top of the mountain and buried in the monks' cemetery to the chanting of psalms; but shortly afterwards it was placed with that of St. Pachomius. St. Athanasius wrote to the monks of Tabennisi to console them for the loss they had suffered and to set before their eyes the glory their blessed Father enjoyed.

The Greeks honour St. Theodore on 16 May, and the Latins on 28 December.

Godescard and Dom Ceillier.

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, BISHOP AND PRINCE OF GENEVA (1622)

Monsieur de Genève is truly the phoenix of prelates. In others there is almost always some weak side: in one it is learning, in another piety, in others birth; whereas Monsieur de Genève unites everything in the highest degree — illustrious birth, rare learning and eminent piety.

— Judgement of King Henry IV on St. Francis de Sales.

This illustrious Saint came into the world at the castle of Sales, in Savoy, on 21 August 1567, and was baptized the very next day in the parish church of Thorens. At baptism he received the names Francis Bonaventure. His father, of the ancient and illustrious house of Sales, was named Francis, lord of Nouvelles, and his mother was the daughter of the lord of Boisy. The young Francis showed from the cradle what he would one day be. He was not yet two years old when the first glimmerings of his piety and of his love for the poor could already be seen dawning in him, and they only grew with age. "This blessed child," says Father de la Rivière, "bore the mark of goodness in his whole person: his face was always gracious, his eyes gentle, his look loving, and his little bearing as modest as could be: he seemed a little angel." The first words he was able to utter were: "The good God and mamma love me well." His parents resolved from then on to give him a good education; and, understanding that religion alone, by taking possession of the heart, can make it truly and solidly virtuous, they initiated him as early as possible into the elements of Christianity. The young Francis, with his lively mind and quick memory, made wonderful progress in this teaching. Horror of lying and of vice, love of the true and the good — such was the fruit of this first education given in the paternal manor.

At about the age of seven, Francis de Sales was sent to the college of La Roche, a league and a half from the castle of Sales. After two years spent in this school, where he astonished his masters still more by his virtues than by his rapid progress, he was sent to the college of Annecy, where he brought the same ardour for learning and virtue. For five years he studied the Latin language and the humanities there, and always took the first places, thanks to his talents and his assiduous application. The propriety of his outward bearing and his amiable manners edified everyone; his presence kept his fellow pupils to their duty: "Let us be good — here comes the Saint," they would say. Not content with keeping them from doing evil, he led them to good by his words as by his example: "Let us learn early, my friends, to serve the good God and to bless Him while He gives us the time."

At the age of ten he made his first communion in the church of the Dominicans at Annecy, and on the same day received confirmation from the hands of Mgr Angelo Giustiniani, bishop of Geneva, who, seeing the

wholly heavenly air that shone on the young Francis's face, foretold that this child would be a great light in the Church of God and the marvel of his age. After receiving these two great sacraments, Francis de Sales redoubled his zeal for his sanctification and made sensible progress every day in learning and piety. From then on he had only one desire, to consecrate himself wholly to God in the ecclesiastical state. His father, to whom he had opened his mind, at first would not consent; but, seeing his son's insistence and the deep pain this refusal caused him, he finally acquiesced. Francis, then eleven years old, went joyfully to Clermont, in the county of the Genevois, where he received the tonsure on 20 September 1578. From that day he approached the holy table more often, multiplied his visits to the Blessed Sacrament, and gave his moments of leisure to reading the Lives of the Saints.

Having finished his humanities at Annecy, he was sent to Paris, to the college of Clermont, kept by the Jesuits, to study rhetoric and philosophy there. He gave himself ardently to study and took the first places among his fellow pupils. Thanks to his modesty and simplicity, these successes never flattered his self-love, for above all he sought his advancement in the science of the Saints and in solid virtues. "Our Lord," he used to say, "is my master in the science of the Saints; I often go to Him so that He may teach it to me; for I should care very little about being learned if I did not become a Saint." His admission to the Sodality of the Blessed Virgin established at the Jesuits' college was for him the beginning of a wholly new life. Mary was the confidant of his sorrows as of his joys, and he often said in holy transport: "Ah! who could fail to love you, my dearest Mother? May I be eternally all yours, and with me may all creatures live and die for love of you!" Churches and monasteries were the places he loved best: after prayer he liked to converse with the religious in these refuges of piety, and so to renew his fervour beside men who had given up everything to embrace a life of penance, humility and prayer.

Having completed his course of rhetoric, Francis de Sales passed on to philosophy: he was then fifteen. To this study he joined that of theology, to which he gave himself ardently. With his tutor's permission he followed at the same time the courses in Holy Scripture and Hebrew at the Collège Royal. These many occupations made him cut nothing from his exercises of piety. His inclination for the ecclesiastical state kept growing, and with it his love for chastity, which he had resolved to keep until death and whose keeping he had entrusted to the Queen of virgins. But the spirit of darkness could not let this flower of holiness open on so vast a stage without trying to wither and blight it under the wind of temptation. Until then his efforts to make Francis's virtue stumble had been vain: neither the grandeurs of the world nor the sweetness of family life had been able to check in his heart the impulse that carried him towards the Church; the sight of worldly festivities, no more than the insinuations of perverse companions, had been able to lessen in his soul the love of God and the treasures of perfection of which this pure love is the principle and the source. The father of lies understood that he must try another way to shake a virtue so firm and so precocious. He began to attack it by discouragement, suggesting to him the thought that perhaps he was not in the state of grace. This temptation kept increasing, to the point that he came to imagine that hell would probably be his portion for eternity. So painful and cruel a thought made him say: "Lord, if I am not to see You, at least grant this alleviation of my pain: do not permit that I should ever curse and blaspheme You. O love, O charity, O beauty to which I have vowed all my affections! shall I then never enjoy your delights? shall I never be inebriated with the plenty of the good things of Your house? shall I never pass into the place of the wonderful tabernacle where my God dwells? O wholly lovable Virgin, whose charms cannot gladden hell, shall I then never see you in the kingdom of your Son, fair as the moon, bright as the sun? What! shall I have no share in the immense benefit of the resurrection? Did not my sweet Jesus die for me as well as for the others? Ah! whatever may be, Lord, if I cannot love You in the other life, since no one praises You in hell, let me at least use every moment of my short existence here below to love You!" In so cruel an anxiety Francis was soon reduced to a sad state of wasting and weakness. His piety might suggest to him the most just and consoling reflections; he could not recover confidence and hope.

Yet the hour of deliverance was about to strike. One day on leaving the college he entered the church of Saint-Étienne-des-Grès, threw himself at the feet of the statue of the Blessed Virgin and, with many tears, made her this prayer: “Remember, O Virgin Mary, my tender Mother, that it has never been heard that any of those who had recourse to your protection and implored your help was rejected. Full of this confidence, O Virgin, mother of virgins, I run to you, I cast myself at your feet, groaning under the weight of my sins. O Mother of the Word, despise not my prayers, but be propitious to my needs and graciously hear me.” After this prayer he makes a vow of perpetual chastity and promises to recite every day the chaplet of six decades. It is done: at once the temptation vanishes, the anguish disappears, and with hope return serenity and health! Purified in this way by the fire of trial, Francis de Sales drew from this school a tender and deep compassion for persons tempted or wearied by interior pains, and became very skilful in the direction of souls.

After six years’ stay in Paris, Francis de Sales, accompanied by his tutor, returned to the bosom of his family. To say what was the joy of his parents at the sight of the noble young man in whom the graces of body vied with the graces of soul, and who joined to a perfect distinction of manners knowledge as deep as it was varied, is impossible to express. They were in rapture at what they saw and heard, and he was happy in his family’s happiness and referred to the author of every gift the well-deserved praises addressed to him on all sides. But his stay with his parents was not to be long. Wishing to give him an education in every way worthy of his high birth, and above all to have him take up the career of the magistracy, his father lost no time in sending him to the University of Padua, in the State of Venice, to follow the courses of the celebrated Guido Panciroli, the first jurist of the time.

Under his tutor’s guidance, Francis de Sales crossed the Alps and arrived without accident at Padua at the beginning of the year 1587. He applied himself ardently to the study of jurisprudence and theology, and the time left free by the University classes he spent in exercises of piety. He took as his director a pious and learned Jesuit, Father Possevino, told him of the attraction that drew him to the ecclesiastical state, laid bare his whole soul to him and abandoned himself to his wise counsels. The holy religious, after carefully examining his vocation, recognized in it the finger of God; he even went further and, in a prophetic impulse, declared that Providence was calling him to become one day bishop of Geneva and one of the greatest prelates of the Church.

Under Father Possevino’s skilful direction Francis de Sales studied theology: the *Summa* of St. Thomas and the works of St. Bonaventure, together with the *Controversies* of Cardinal Bellarmine, became his favourite books. To this study he joined the reading of the Fathers, such as St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, St. Bernard and St. Cyprian. This extra work did not make him neglect his exercises of piety, to which he encouraged himself with these words: “For what end are you in this world? *Ad quid venisti?* The days of man are short and pass like a shadow. Let us do good while we have the time: the night is coming when no one can work.” It was then that he entered the Congregation of the Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin and drew up for himself rules of conduct divided into four parts. In the first he resolves to make an examination every morning so as to spend the day well. After humbling himself before God, he begs the Lord to come to his aid in the dangers to which he might be exposed; then, passing in review what he will have to do during the day, he examines before God the way to conduct himself well, and after a firm resolution to do what he has judged most perfect, he commends his whole being to God and asks Him to conform himself in all things to His holy will.

The second part concerns the sanctification of the day and of the night. “As soon as I wake,” says St. Francis de Sales, “I will address my thanksgiving to the Lord; I will think of the devotion of the shepherds who came at dawn to adore the divine Child of Bethlehem, and of the fervour of the three Marys who, moved by a lively feeling of piety, rose very early on the day of the Resurrection to go and see Jesus Christ at the tomb. After these fine models I will honour Our Lord as the light of the world, who scatters the darkness of sin and shows the way to paradise, and I will consecrate my whole day to Him. During the day I will assist at the

holy sacrifice of the Mass, and I will summon all the powers of my soul to this great action with these words: *Venite et videte opera Domini, quae posuit prodigia super terram; transeamus usque Bethlehem et videamus hoc verbum quod factum est, quod Dominus ostendit nobis* [Come and see the works of the Lord, what wonders He has done on earth; let us go over to Bethlehem and see this word that has come to pass, which the Lord has shown us]. I will make my meditation exactly every day; and if I have not time for it during the day, I will take it from my sleep rather than miss it. To dispose my soul for it, if I wake during the night I will awaken my heart with these words: *Media nocte clamor factus est: Ecce sponsus venit, exite obviam ei* [At midnight there was a cry: Behold the bridegroom comes, go out to meet him]; then, thinking that it was during the night that Jesus came into the world, I will pray Him to be born again in me; the outward darkness will make me think of the inward darkness into which tepidity and sin cast souls, and I will beseech the Lord to scatter this darkness by His sweet and beneficent light. I will also recall these words of the Psalmist: 'In the night lift up your hands to the Lord and bless Him. Weep upon your beds for the sins of the day. I will water my couch with my tears.' If some terrors of the night come to besiege me, I will reassure myself by the thought that my guardian angel watches over me, and above all by the consideration of the presence of God, saying within myself: What can he fear who is with God? 'He that keeps Israel shall not slumber; the Lord is at my right hand, that no harm may befall me. His truth shall compass you with a shield; you shall not be afraid of the terror of the night. The Lord is my light and my salvation: whom shall I fear?'"

The third part covers the way of occupying oneself in prayer. "I will begin," he says, "by recalling all the good God has done me, all the good thoughts and pious feelings He has inspired in me in the past, all the graces He has granted me, especially the grace of certain illnesses and infirmities which, by weakening my body, have been so useful to my soul; and from this I will draw the firm purpose never to offend the God who has been so good to me. Against this picture of God's goodness I will set the vanity of the grandeurs, riches and pleasures of the world, their short duration, their uncertainty, their end; I will despise them, hold them in horror, and say to them: Depart far from me, deceitful goods by which the devil seduces and ruins souls: I want none of you, I have nothing in common with you. Then I will consider the ugliness and misery of sin, which degrades man, which is unworthy of an honest heart, which, far from giving a true and solid contentment, brings with it only remorse and bitterness, and which finally displeases God — a consideration that alone is more than enough to make one detest it for ever. With these reflections I will compare what my conscience tells me of the excellence of virtue, which is so beautiful, so noble, so worthy of an upright and honest soul, which sanctifies man, makes him an angel and almost a god, makes him taste on earth the pleasures of paradise and renders him the object of his Creator's good pleasure. To stir up in me still more strongly the horror of vice and the love of virtue, I will admire the beauty of reason, that torch come down from heaven to light our steps: alas, we go astray only by shutting our eyes to its light. But above all I will consider death, the judgements of God, purgatory, hell, saying to myself: What will all present things profit me then? From there I will rise to the contemplation of the perfections of God, which I will study first in the life and death of Jesus Christ, in Mary and all the Saints, in whom an emanation of these beautiful attributes shines with so pure a radiance, then in heaven itself, which I will enter in thought, and where, after admiring the happiness of the angels and Saints, I will rest sweetly in the love of the divine goodness: I will taste it in itself, this infinite goodness; I will drink of this life-giving water at its very source, and I will say to it: O Lord, You alone are good by essence, goodness itself, goodness eternal, inexhaustible, incomprehensible…"

St. Francis de Sales then examines the rules to be followed in the dealings of civil life. "I will despise no one," he says, "and will not seem to shun anyone; I will beware of acting too freely with anyone at all, not even with my best friends; I will say and do nothing that is not in order; I will above all avoid wounding, needling or mocking others, and will honour each according to his merit or dignity; I will observe modesty, speaking little and well. I will be a friend to all and familiar with few; I will keep a gentleness that has nothing affected, a modesty that banishes every air of pride, an ease that keeps austerity away, a complaisance that forbids itself contradiction whenever conscience does not require it; I will be cordial

without dissimulation; yet I will open myself more or less according to the persons I am with. I will vary the kind of my conversation according to ranks and characters. If necessity forces me to have dealings with the great, I will keep carefully on my guard; for one must be with them as with fire — one must not come too near; in their presence I will have much modesty and at the same time an honest freedom…"

These rules, approved by his tutor and his director, served not only for his own sanctification but for that of several others. Francis's chastity was several times put to hard trials, but he always came out the victor in this struggle against hell. To preserve this virtue the better in the midst of a corrupting world, he added to fasts and hair shirts the discipline, with which he chastised his innocent flesh. After some time he fell into a state of languor, to which were added an acute fever, gout, dysentery and a general rheumatism. Francis received these ills with entire resignation to the will of God.

Stretched on his bed of pain, pale and wasted, he was a prey to the cruellest sufferings. The physicians having declared that there was no hope of cure, the holy young man asked to receive the Sacraments. At the height of the illness, when all hope seemed lost, an extraordinary change took place; his strength returned little by little and soon his recovery was complete. Attributing this unhoped-for cure to God and to the Blessed Virgin, he gave them the most fervent thanks and from then on consecrated himself with new ardour to the service of the altar and the practice of the Christian virtues.

While seeking means to sanctify himself more every day, Francis de Sales gave himself to study with ever-growing ardour; he followed the course in jurisprudence with honour, and in the first days of September 1591, after the most brilliant examinations, he was able to receive solemnly from the hands of the bishop of Padua the crown and the cap of doctor. Having thus reached the goal he had set himself in coming to that city, he left it amid a unanimous chorus of blessings and praise. But before taking the road back to the land of his birth, he wished, with his father's approval, to make the pilgrimage to Rome and to Loreto. He visited with great feelings of faith and piety all the monuments of the capital of the Christian world, then went to Our Lady of Loreto. "Scarcely," says Father de la Rivière, "had he bent his knees in that wonderful sanctuary, than, as if he had entered a burning furnace, he felt himself inflamed with an extraordinary charity." He received the sacraments of Penance and the Eucharist in that venerated sanctuary, consecrated himself there anew to Our Lord and to the Blessed Virgin, and renewed his vow of chastity: God granted him extraordinary graces in return. From Loreto he went to Ancona, sailed for the port of Cattolica and from there for Venice. Francis left that city to return to his native land, passed through Pavia, Milan, Turin and Mont Cenis, and arrived in Savoy in the spring of the year 1592. He was then in his twenty-fifth year, tall and well made, skilled in almost the whole range of human sciences, and setting off by an unequalled modesty and gentleness the happy expression of his face and the good grace of his bearing.

Justly proud of such a son, the marquis de Sales was not content with holding him up as a model to his other children; he also wished to bring him forward in society. The first person to whom he presented him was Claude de Granier, bishop of Geneva. No sooner had this venerable prelate seen Francis than he felt himself, as he said himself, "supernaturally inclined, not only to a quite special affection, but also to a great feeling of veneration." Then he added, addressing the priests around him: "This young lord will become a great personage, a pillar of the Church: he will be my successor in this bishopric." Such, however, were not the views of the marquis de Sales: he dreamed for his son of the honours of which the world is so jealous. Scarcely was Francis back at Annecy when his father required him to go to Chambéry to be received as advocate at the Senate of Savoy. Francis consented the more readily because that illustrious tribunal counted two ecclesiastics among its advocates. Nor had he cause to regret having yielded to his father's demands on this point: his reception, which took place at Chambéry in the most solemn manner on 24 November 1592, gave him first the occasion to form a close friendship with the pious and learned Antoine Favre, the ornament of the Senate of Savoy and an intimate friend of his family; and then, in his thanks to the Senate, the occasion to deliver a magnificent eulogy of justice, which he presented as "the most beautiful of all the virtues, virtue

entire, come down from heaven and born of God, the bond of the world, the peace of nations, the support of the fatherland, the safeguard of the people, the strength of a country, the protection of the weak, the consolation of the poor, the inheritance of children, the joy of all men and the hope of an eternal happiness for those who administer it worthily."

The marquis de Sales was overjoyed and, thinking now only of securing his son's future by a match worthy of him, cast his eyes on the daughter of the lord of Végy, who joined to a great fortune the finest qualities of mind and heart, and wished Francis to come with him to visit this young lady. Francis, whom this step vexed, nevertheless lent himself to his father's wishes; he went with him to Sallanches in Faucigny, where she lived; but he was so cold, so little forthcoming in his interview with the young person, that nothing made her suspect that he had come to her house for anything more than a simple courtesy visit. Meanwhile the baron d'Hermance arrived from Turin at the marquis de Sales's house to offer Francis, on behalf of the duke of Savoy, the dignity of senator in the Senate of Chambéry. Nothing more was needed to increase the hopes his father had conceived. But the young man declared that no power in the world would make him accept this high position and that he was resolved to embrace the ecclesiastical state. This determination upset all the marquis de Sales's plans; so he did everything to hinder its execution. But nothing could shake this beloved son who, seeing everyone opposed to his just desires, left it to divine Providence to hasten their fulfilment.

Canon Louis de Sales, his cousin, in whom he had the greatest confidence and who knew all the secrets of his heart, was the instrument heaven used on this occasion, and in this way. The provost of the chapter of Geneva having died, the virtuous canon thought that the lustre of this dignity, the first in the diocese after the bishop's, might, if it were conferred on Francis, bring the marquis de Sales at last to give him permission to embrace the ecclesiastical state. To this end, with his bishop's consent, he had the title of provost solicited at the court of Rome for Francis de Sales. The Holy See promptly granted his request, and in May 1593 the good canon presented himself to his uncle with the bulls of collation in his hand. This nomination, which Francis expected less than anyone, for the matter had been done without his knowledge, caused the greatest surprise to the de Sales family; but it could not at first defeat the all-too-human designs of the marquis. Francis had to throw himself at his feet, beg him with tears in his eyes, tell him that he had made a vow of chastity at Paris, and relate how, some time before, God had shown him that He wanted him under the standard of the cross, by permitting him to fall three times from his horse in the forest of Sonnaz onto his sword, which had come out of its scabbard and formed with it a perfect cross.

Scarcely was the paternal consent given to the holy young man when he hastened to strip off his secular clothes and put on the ecclesiastical habit that his pious mother, the confidant of his plans and the soul of his resolutions, had long since had made ready for him. This happy day for Francis was 13 May 1593. He was then twenty-six. A few days later he was solemnly installed as provost, and received from his bishop the invitation to prepare for the Trinity ordination to receive minor orders and the subdiaconate. Mgr de Granier conferred these holy Orders on him himself and enjoined him to preach in his cathedral on the Octave day of Corpus Christi. Francis, distrusting himself, acquiesced trembling at his bishop's voice; but, after turning to God with confidence, he felt extraordinarily strengthened and encouraged, and he appeared in the pulpit for the first time with as much assurance as if he had exercised the ministry of preaching for many years. The immense crowd that had gathered round him to hear him withdrew so astonished at his eloquence and doctrine that on all sides people exclaimed: "Blessed the womb that bore this blessed fruit of holiness!"

Francis de Sales left the castle of his fathers to settle at Annecy. That town offered a vast field to his zeal and charity. To visit the sick, assist the needy, reconcile enemies, console the afflicted, instruct the ignorant, catechize children, bring sinners back into the ways of salvation — such was his daily occupation outside the time taken by the duties of his office in the chapter. To appease the anger of heaven, offended by the crimes of earth, he founded, under the title of the Holy Cross, after the pattern of the pious associations that existed in Italy and Provence, a Confraternity of Penitents, whose members were bound to frequent the Sacraments,

to prayer and to good works, and obliged to visit the sick and prisoners and to reconcile enemies. The confraternity was erected on 1 September 1593, and Francis de Sales was at once its revered head and its wise legislator.

While working in this way for the sanctification of his neighbour, he took care not to forget his own. Despite the outward works his devotion to the cause of God and of His Church required, he gave himself more and more to the interior life, uniting himself by continual aspirations to the Author of all good and constantly absorbing himself in the meditation of the greatness and mercies of that infinitely great and infinitely merciful Being. In this way he prepared to receive the priestly anointing. Ordained deacon on 18 September 1593, he was ordained priest on the following 18 December. In laying hands on him the venerable bishop of Geneva could not hold back his tears; he seemed to see at his feet a seraph rather than a man. The prelate's emotion spread to those present, and the ordination ceremony ended amid the sobs of all who were its happy witnesses.

Francis de Sales rose as if transfigured. He was no longer the humble Levite who had chosen for his portion the lowest steps of the sanctuary; he was the priest of Jesus Christ, who felt all that was royal and great in his priesthood and knew all the sublimity and holiness of the dignity to which he had just been raised; so, not judging himself yet sufficiently disposed to go up to the holy altar, he chose to prepare for three days for his first Mass. It was in fact on 21 December, the feast of St. Thomas, that he celebrated the sacred Mysteries for the first time, in the cathedral of Annecy. His recollection during this awesome action filled all around him with deep admiration, and on his face there "shone," to use the words of one of them, "I know not what of angelic and divine, which compelled people to love, honour and esteem him."

He began the exercise of the priestly ministry with truly apostolic preaching in the various churches of Annecy and in the parishes near that town. His sermons, in which elegance of form vied with solidity of doctrine, made a deep impression. The report of them spread as far as Geneva, among the heretics, who from that moment began to tremble and regarded him as their most formidable adversary, the only one able to stand up to their ministers and floor them by the vigour of his word. From the pulpit he passed to the confessional, and for whole days he was occupied in hearing at the holy tribunal the faithful of every rank, age, condition and sex, who came to ask his ministry to reconcile them with God. The crowd that pressed round this zealous and charitable director every day grew so large that, at the request of the whole Chapter, Mgr de Granier appointed our Saint to the office of grand penitentiary of his diocese, although he was still only twenty-seven. From then on the wonderful gift St. Francis had received from heaven for directing consciences appeared in its full light.

Meanwhile the duke of Savoy, informed of his brilliant successes and ever-growing merit, had the dignity of senator in the Senate of Chambéry offered to him a second time. But however insistently his sovereign made the offer, whatever reasons his father and Senator Favre alleged to make him accept it, he opposed to all their urging the refusal and the reasons he had opposed to the same offer a year before. It would seem that so much disinterestedness and self-denial should have silenced envy. It was not so, however, and the provost of Geneva not only found himself the target of jealousy but was also slandered in the most odious way. It is the mark of the works of God to be contradicted: the work Providence was about to accomplish through the ministry of Francis de Sales could not fail to bear this divine seal. The tribulation, however, was not of long duration: the holy priest's detractors were soon confounded, and he could in complete safety busy himself with the salvation of souls and the glorifying of our Father who is in heaven.

The Lord, moreover, was about to make his apostolic zeal shine with a brighter lustre by calling him to display it on a larger stage. A portion of the diocese of Geneva, the province of the Chablais, although situated in Savoy, was frightfully ravaged by Protestantism, which reigned there as master thanks to the signal weakness of the diplomacy of the time. The duke of Savoy resolved to put an end there to the progress of heresy: to this end he asked the bishop of Geneva to send a missionary endowed with courage proof

against everything. Francis presented himself to his bishop to fulfil this delicate and perilous mission; and despite his father's opposition he set out resolutely, with no baggage but his breviary and a few books of controversy and no companion but his cousin, Canon Louis de Sales, for the fort of Les Allinges, which by its commanding position dominated the country. He had chosen this citadel as his headquarters. On his arrival he could not hold back his tears at the sight of the ruins left by the heretics, and poured out his grief in these words: "See then how the Lord has torn up the hedge of His vineyard and thrown down the wall that protected it; there it lies deserted, uprooted and trampled underfoot; this land, once so fair, has been made desolate by its own inhabitants, because they have violated the law of God, changed His ordinances, broken His covenants. The ways of Sion mourn, because there is no longer anyone who comes to her solemnities. The enemy has laid his hand on all that was most precious to her; the law and the Prophets have vanished, the stones of the sanctuary have been scattered… O Jerusalem! O Chablais! O Geneva! be converted to the Lord thy God, and let thy contrition become great as the sea!"

The very next day they went together to the town of Thonon, the chief seat of the heresy, where what remained of the Catholics was reduced to a small number. Francis de Sales, always followed by his companion, went one after another to all the surrounding villages, travelling constantly on foot, staff in hand, preaching several times a day with a perseverance all the more meritorious as it was less crowned with success and tried by more difficulties and obstacles. Among the Protestant ministers who flooded the province, it was a contest who could most hinder the progress and efforts of the tireless apostle: slanders, insults, threats, ambushes — everything was set to work to stop him. Hell, which drove these ministers of error, even stirred up against Francis the tenderness of his relatives, who, alarmed at the dangers to his life, did everything to recall him to Annecy. But nothing could make him give up. Neither rain nor snow, nor ice, nor cold, nor roads made impassable could interrupt the course of his apostolic journeys. Privations of every kind did not cast him down for a single moment; and although he knew for certain that he was marked out for the dagger and the musket of vile hired assassins, he continued no less ardently to evangelize a population that error held under its despotic rule in a veritable state of trembling and fear.

The slight hope there was of converting such obstinate heretics could not cast down his courage: "I am still only at the beginning of my work," he said, "and I mean to continue and to hope in God against all human appearances." He spent almost a year without seeing success crown his undertaking: the happy results of the mission he had preached to the Catholic garrison of Les Allinges had been the only encouragement given by heaven to his efforts. As he could not make himself heard by the Protestants, he resolved, to make the truth enter families more easily, to put in writing the defence of the Catholic religion together with the refutation of heresy. To this end he composed the book of the *Controversies*. The victorious way in which he answered the attacks of the Protestant ministers, and the spectacle of the apostolic life he led, struck many heretics: his courage and intrepidity amid dangers of every kind finished opening their eyes, and they yielded to his fatherly exhortations by returning to the bosom of the Catholic Church. As these new converts might, by staying in the country, be exposed to relapses, he had his father take them in at the castle of Sales, where their needs were generously and liberally provided for.

The impulse once given, conversions multiplied; the heretical ministers, in public conferences as in private colloquies, were reduced to silence, and on all sides religion regained the place that heresy had made it lose sixty years before. Public report carried far and wide the admirable fruits produced by the holy Apostle's zeal, especially after the baron d'Avully and the advocate Poncet, the two pillars of Protestantism in the Chablais, had solemnly abjured Calvinism. Francis's father and mother leapt for joy at it; his bishop was in rapture; Father Possevino and Senator Favre, who were both at Chambéry, wrote to congratulate him. But instead of growing proud at the chorus of praise that rose around him on this occasion, the fervent missionary on the contrary referred all the glory to God, and sped to new conquests.

The town of Thonon, which he had renewed, so to speak, no longer sufficed for his zeal. He saw, moreover, that it was necessary to strike heresy at the centre of its hearth if he wished to put the Chablais beyond its reach. So he went to Geneva with the baron d'Avully and a few other persons, to hold a disputation with La Faye, one of the most famous ministers of the time: it was not hard for him to confound him, for to all his arguments he got in answer only insults and abuse. This brilliant victory over heresy had an immense effect. The apostle of the Chablais was looked upon as the invincible champion of the truth.

At this news the duke of Savoy hastened to send him the expression of his congratulations and asked him to point out by what means he could, for his part, second his zeal and help to develop the fruits of his mission. Francis begged him first to increase the number of apostolic labourers in the Chablais and to assure them revenues for their upkeep, then to restore the ruined churches there and have those that were closed opened, and finally to invite the inhabitants of the province to attend the Catholic sermons. He suggested to him besides the idea of stationing in the country a company of infantry or cavalry, to occupy the dangerous idleness of an unemployed youth; of founding a Jesuit college at Thonon itself; and above all of removing the heretics from public offices.

Pope Clement VIII, who then sat in the chair of St. Peter, learning for his part all that the holy priest was doing at the gates of Geneva for the Catholic religion, thought he should entrust to no one but him the glorious but delicate mission of grappling hand to hand, in Calvin's very city, with the learned Theodore Beza, who still passed, and rightly, despite his great age, for the standard-bearer of the heresy and its firmest support. Francis received the Pope's order as if it had come to him directly from heaven; but before carrying it out he thought he should go to Turin, so as to turn more effectively to the success of his work the good dispositions of the duke of Savoy, who summoned him to his side. This journey succeeded admirably for him, and he soon returned to Thonon, where his first act, despite the well-founded fears the rage of the heretics aroused, was to celebrate publicly the midnight Mass of Christmas 1596 in the church of Saint-Hippolyte. Heaven rewarded him for this act of courage: three parishes of the Chablais, Les Allinges, Mésinges and Brens, returned at his voice a few days later to the fold of the Father of the family, and he was able without hindrance to perform in complete freedom at Thonon the ceremony of the blessing and imposition of the Ashes on the first day of Lent. And, as if these labours were not enough for his apostle's heart, he composed and published at the same period his *Considerations on the Creed*. The minister Viret tried to attack this book. Francis answered him with a refutation that reduced to silence that skilful and deceitful artisan of error and falsehood. This new defeat of heresy brought about the conversion, and then the solemn abjuration, of some Calvinists.

The moment had come, however, for Francis to measure himself against Theodore Beza. He had just received the abjuration of the chief municipal magistrate of Thonon and completed the conversion of the garrison of that town. This was more than enough to excite the hatred of the Protestants and put them on their guard against him. But the man of God feared nothing. Although he knew beyond doubt that the Genevans were disposed to make him pay with his head for the boldness of penetrating into their city to try to snatch from heresy its chief support, he went several times to Geneva at the peril of his life in the first months of the year 1597, without being able to find a favourable occasion for a face-to-face interview with the heresiarch. At last, on Easter Tuesday, after giving holy communion by night and in secret to some Catholics of Geneva, he went and knocked at Theodore Beza's door. It was Beza himself who received him, and he did so with a politeness and urbanity from which, moreover, he never departed during all his conversations with the Saint. This conference lasted three hours: its only result was to excite Theodore's anger against the Catholic religion; but once the first moment of passion had passed, urbanity got the upper hand in his heart, and he politely invited his visitor to come and see him again.

As soon as Francis was back at Thonon he hastened to give the sovereign Pontiff an account of his interview with the minister. The Pope answered him praising his zeal and exhorting him to continue the battles of the

Lord. However precious the encouragement and congratulations of the Holy See were to him, our Saint did not need, one may say, this testimony of solemn approval to pursue his mission to the end. His heart was too consumed with the salvation of souls for him to leave his work unfinished. He went twice more to Theodore Beza's house. But unhappily he had no power over that heart of stone, long hardened in evil: the old heresiarch acknowledged the truth, but had not the strength to embrace it, and, held back by human respect, he died, outwardly at least, in the practice of the so-called reformed religion.

While working with all his strength to bring Theodore Beza back into the bosom of the Catholic Church, Francis de Sales did not neglect the labours he had begun in the Chablais: thus he installed parish priests in several parishes that had long been without guide or pastor; he assembled several times the priests placed under his orders to confer with them about the needs of the mission; he vindicated the exorcisms of the Church by writing a *Treatise on Demons*; he sought to restore the ancient monastic observances in the abbey of Abondance, on the borders of the Chablais and Faucigny, which had fallen from its first regularity; he calmed at Thonon a formidable and threatening popular riot raised against the life of Father Esprit de Baume, who was helping the Saint in his apostolic labours; he took an active part in the diocesan synod assembled by his bishop; he solemnly planted a cross on the road from Annemasse to Geneva; he then sped to Annecy to devote himself to relieving the plague-stricken, and with such zeal that he himself caught at their bedside the contagious disease from which they suffered; he established a Jesuit college at Thonon; in a word, he made himself all things to all men and became, by his labours, his virtues and his learning, the terror of the heretics, to the point that the Protestant ministers ended by refusing altogether to enter the lists with so formidable a jouster.

Francis de Sales was wholly given to these occupations when the duke of Savoy, who had crossed the mountains to examine the fortifications of his States on the French frontier, wished to judge for himself the progress the Catholic religion had made in the Chablais thanks to such a herald. In the first days of October 1598, His Highness, accompanied by Cardinal Alessandro de' Medici, legate of the Pope in France, by the bishop of Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux and by the bishop of Geneva, went to Thonon, where our Saint was preaching the exercises of the Forty Hours in the church of Saint-Augustin. Enhanced by the presence of such great personages, the pious exercises took place with a solemnity impossible to describe and amid an extraordinary concourse: the Blessed Sacrament was twice carried in procession through the streets of the town; several hundred persons, among them ministers of error, abjured Calvinism in the hands of the prelates.

After God, who alone does great wonders, the honour of these splendid feasts went entirely to Francis de Sales, who had been the instrument of divine Providence in arranging them. "Here is the apostle of the Chablais," exclaimed the duke of Savoy, presenting him to the cardinal: "he is a man of God whom heaven has sent us; it is he who first dared to enter this country alone at the peril of his life, he who sowed the divine word, pulled up the tares, planted the cross and made the Roman faith spring up again in these regions, from which it had been banished for more than sixty years by the efforts of hell. I have indeed seconded so holy an undertaking with my sword, but all the glory of this good work is due to this zealous missionary." The virtuous prince did not stop there: he charged our Saint with distributing abundant alms to relieve the countless miseries found in the Chablais, and drew on his experience and counsels in taking new measures and issuing new ordinances in the interest of the Catholic religion among these populations, recently restored to unity and continually exposed to relapsing into their former errors.

(The life continues in the next part: the Chablais mission after October 1598, the coadjutorship and the episcopate.)

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, BISHOP AND PRINCE OF GENEVA (continued, 2)

He did more still: at the request of Mgr de Granier, whom the chill of age was warning that he would soon have to render account to God for his episcopal administration, he offered Francis the coadjutorship of the bishopric of Geneva. This was a thunderbolt for Francis. He thought too little of himself ever to aspire to such a dignity, and although heaven had very recently glorified his holiness at Thonon itself by granting to his prayers the raising to life of a child that had died without baptism, he looked on himself as the last of men, as an earthworm, as the most contemptible of sinners. He therefore gave a formal refusal to his sovereign and his bishop, and came to take a few days' rest with his family, refusing any reimbursement of the expenses he had incurred for his own keep during his four years of mission among the heretics.

The bishop of Geneva did not consider himself beaten by this refusal; but instead of renewing his entreaties he sent him his first almoner with the letters patent of the duke of Savoy naming him coadjutor of Geneva, and a letter from Cardinal Alessandro de' Medici, who undertook to have the nomination approved by the Pope. At this sight the Saint understood that he could no longer draw back: overwhelmed, he ran to the church of Thorens to throw himself at the foot of the altar where the holy Eucharist was reserved; then, rising after remaining a few moments in prayer, he gave his consent, deeply moved, to the bishop's messenger.

The news soon spread on all sides, and everyone vied in congratulating the new coadjutor and his virtuous parents. But the shock had been too strong and too violent for the Saint's constitution, considerably shaken by the fatigues of every kind inseparable from his apostolic labours in the Chablais. He fell ill, and so gravely that within a few days he was at the last extremity. Everyone was in consternation; his family, the bishop, the canons could not be consoled. But the Lord had His designs: this sickness was not unto death; it came so that God might be glorified. Indeed, the prayers that rose on all sides to the supreme arbiter of life and death obtained for the holy patient, against all hope and expectation, the grace of a prompt cure and a still prompter convalescence.

In February 1599 Francis left for Rome, sent by Mgr de Granier to lay before the Pope the sad and deplorable position in which the political events between France and Savoy had placed the diocese of Geneva. He stopped a few days at Turin to confer about his mission with the apostolic nuncio; then he travelled by forced stages to the holy city, where his brother Louis and his friend Antoine Favre had preceded him by a few hours. Clement VIII received him with extreme kindness, publicly calling him the Apostle of the Chablais, and, ratifying the choice the bishop of Geneva had made of him for his coadjutor, he preconized him bishop of Nicopolis *in partibus infidelium*. His Holiness, never tiring of seeing and hearing him, and departing from the customs of the Roman court towards the bishops of Savoy, wished, in a solemn examination over which he himself presided, to display before all the eminent personages of Rome the learning of the new Prelate. The sovereign Pontiff was not disappointed in his expectation: Francis justified it on every point and earned this praise from the august lips of the Vicar of Jesus Christ: *Bibe, fili mi, aquam de cisterna tua et fluenta putei tui; deriventur fontes tui foras et in plateis aquas tuas divide* [Drink, my son, water from your own cistern and the streams of your own well; let your fountains be spread abroad, and divide your waters in the streets]. This occasion brought him into contact with Baronius and Bellarmine, who were among his examiners and with whom he formed from that moment a close friendship. During his stay at Rome he became especially attached to the Venerable Ancina, priest of the Oratory, who was later raised to the episcopal see of Saluzzo. So it is that Saints seek out Saints: there is between them a kind of secret attraction, and when they have met, their souls cleave to one another, as of old the soul of David to that of Jonathan.

After satisfying his devotion at St. Peter's and in the Catacombs, Francis de Sales left Rome on 31 March of the same year: he had completely succeeded in his mission to the Pope. The pilgrimage he had made in 1591 to the venerated sanctuary of Loreto had left memories too deep in his heart for him not to wish, being in Italy, to renew himself again in meditation on the Incarnation of the Son of God under the humble roof that had seen that adorable mystery accomplished. So on leaving the eternal city he made for Loreto, and there, kneeling on the marble of the Santa Casa, he let fall from his blessed lips this prayer, which posterity has

preserved and which would deserve to be written in letters of gold on the walls of Mary's holy dwelling: "Here then, O fair Spouse of the eternal King, are your beams of cedar and your floors of cypress! And it is then behind these walls, O divine Love, that You were once held, looking through the windows and through the lattices! You fed here among the lilies, until the day declined and the shadows were lowered. It is in this place, O Lord, that You were made my brother. Ah! who then will give me the grace to find You without, at my mother's breasts, and to kiss You without being any longer despised by anyone? O God, You have taught me from my youth; but I would gladly have You teach me more here, and I will offer You a draught of the best wine and of the juice of my pomegranates!" From Loreto he went to Bologna, following the shores of the Adriatic, then to Milan, where he venerated the precious remains of St. Charles Borromeo, and finally to Turin, where he communicated to the duke of Savoy the apostolic letters the Holy Father was addressing to the bishop of Geneva in answer to all his requests.

A month later he was back at Annecy, where he marked his presence by restoring health to a sick woman and by publishing his book, *The Standard of the Cross*, to vindicate the veneration of the cross against the invectives of the minister La Faye. He then left for Thonon, where, under the title of the Holy House (*Sainte-Maison*), he founded with the approval of the Holy See a kind of University, in which all trades and all sciences were to be taught and where new converts could find a sure refuge and honourable means of subsistence. At the same time he had the duke of Savoy restore to the bishop of Geneva the priory of Thonon and its revenues. Then he placed priests in all the parishes and obtained from His Highness the funds needed to maintain these zealous ministers of Jesus Christ. This was to put the finishing touch to his work and to perpetuate the good his preaching had produced in the Chablais.

An unfortunate event, however, nearly compromised, if not destroyed, his work at the moment he was crowning it. Hostilities had broken out between France and Savoy. Henry IV himself, at the head of his troops, had advanced as far as Annecy. The Protestants of Geneva and Bern wished to profit by this circumstance to snatch from the Catholic religion the province of the Chablais, which the preaching of Francis de Sales had brought back from the paths of heresy: they offered the Most Christian King their help in his expedition. Henry IV was too shrewd not to guess their secret designs: he accepted their offers; but when they asked him to extend to the countries conquered or to be conquered in Savoy by his arms the Edict of Nantes, which permitted the free exercise of Protestantism throughout French territory, he did not even deign to answer them. He did more still: at the solicitation of the Saint, who had come to plead the cause of

Catholicism before him at the castle of Annecy, he ordered the French governor of the Chablais to maintain intact in that province all that had been so happily done there for the Catholic faith. Francis undertook to deliver the royal ordinance to the governor himself. It was in discharging this errand that he fell into a French ambush: he was taken prisoner by the soldiers and brought by them to the marquis de Vitry, their captain, who, on recognizing who he was, hastened to set him free and had him escorted with honour to the fort of Les Allinges, where the governor was. The latter, Calvinist though he was, received him with extreme kindness and, after reading the papers he handed him, hastened to carry out the king's orders and recommendations.

Thanks to Henry IV's protection the holy missionary was in this way able to complete his work, both by bringing about more striking and more numerous conversions and by organizing new parishes. The peace treaty concluded between France and Savoy most happily inaugurated for the Chablais an era of peace and prosperity. Completely reassured about the perseverance of those he had restored to Jesus Christ and to the Church, Francis de Sales was able to come and preach the Lent at Annecy. But a great trial awaited him on his arrival in that town: his old father was at the point of death. Religion does not stifle the feelings of nature; it only purifies them. Francis, whose heart was so loving and who seemed to have gentleness for his portion, could not learn this sad news without being moved to the depths of his soul. He hurried in all haste to the castle of Sales, and had the consolation of himself preparing for the terrible passage from time to eternity the

man to whom he owed his life and whose glory and joy he was. Called back soon to Annecy by the duties of his ministry, he was not present at the venerable old man's last moments. One day as he was about to go up into the pulpit, a messenger came to tell him that this beloved father had ceased to live. As he had to preach on the raising of Lazarus, he had enough self-command to restrain his emotion throughout the sermon; but at the end, unable any longer to contain his grief and hold back his tears, he told his congregation, sobbing, of this cruel event, and asked the help of their prayers. At the sight of his desolation those present in their turn burst into sobs, and for some moments there was nothing but a deep moaning throughout the church.

His filial piety brought him back the same day to the castle of Sales. He arranged in person the funeral pomp of his father's procession. During the ceremony he kept constantly behind the coffin, and did not leave it until he had seen it laid in the family tomb. He then returned to his pious mother, whose immense grief he sought to soften by all that faith and tenderness could suggest. This duty of a good son fulfilled, he returned to Annecy, where he finished his Lenten preaching amid the greatest success. God, who has a balm for every wound, a remedy for every ill, a consolation for every sorrow, and who never forgets to set compensation beside sacrifice, was preparing a pleasant surprise for him in the midst of his mourning. The bailiwick of Gaillard, consisting of seven or eight parishes and lying a short distance from Geneva, abjured heresy entirely at the voice of two Jesuit Fathers whom the Saint had sent there in his place. This event was a true happiness for him; for he rejoiced at the good others did more than at the good he himself could do, so great was his humility. He possessed this virtue to such a degree that he would not receive episcopal consecration all the time he remained coadjutor. When pressed on this point he merely answered: "As long as God leaves us Monseigneur our Bishop, I will change neither my rank in the Church nor the colour of my habit."

His friends' entreaties on this point redoubled at the beginning of the year 1602. He was leaving for Paris, where Mgr de Granier was sending him to the court of France to combat the claims of the Genevans, who were asking Henry IV to confirm the usurpation they had committed, to the detriment of the Church of Geneva, of several villages enclosed in the Pays de Gex. But while accepting this most delicate of missions, Francis refused to be consecrated, preferring to present himself to the Most Christian King with all the simplicity of a priest. We will not relate the various incidents of this journey. Let us say only that it began tragically: a violent storm struck the boat the Saint and his companions had taken to cross the Saône; the boatmen could not resist the current, the furious waves were about to swallow everything, the passengers were in despair; Francis alone remained calm and unmoved, raising his eyes to heaven as if to ask it for help and assistance. At the moment when all was thought lost, the skiff rose above the waves and by dint of rowing they managed to reach the bank. All wished to thank the Saint for the protection from on high he had obtained for them by his prayers; but he hastened to turn the conversation, directing their gratitude to Him who commands the waves and knows how to calm their fury.

Passing through Dijon, he took letters of recommendation for the king, to whom, moreover, the apostolic Nuncio made it his duty to present him the day after his arrival in Paris. Henry IV referred him to his minister Villeroy, whom he charged with examining the affair. Despite this easy beginning, the blessed prelate had to make a fairly long stay in the French capital before obtaining a settlement. He took great care to turn this time to profit for the religion whose minister he was. Thus he preached the Lent at court; he delivered at Notre-Dame the funeral oration of the duc de Mercœur; he preached on Low Sunday at the castle of Fontainebleau before Henry IV; he converted to Catholicism several ladies of high rank who were unhappily engaged in the paths of heresy; he took up the direction of several persons notable for their piety, among others the celebrated Madame Acarie, beatified by Pius VI under the name of Mary of the Incarnation; and he took a large part in the work of establishing the Carmelites in France, a work in which the duchesse de Longueville, together with M. de Bérulle, was then actively engaged.

But these affairs, however important, did not make him lose sight of the chief purpose of his journey to Paris. He gave the minister Villeroy neither pause nor truce, so that he finally yielded to his entreaties by obtaining

from the king all that the bishop of Geneva asked. As soon as our Saint had received the assurance that success had crowned his negotiations, he set out to return to Annecy: he had been six months in Paris. On reaching Lyons he learned of the death of Mgr de Granier. That prelate, laden with years and merits, had succumbed to an illness he had contracted at Thonon, where he had just solemnly opened the holy year of the Jubilee. Francis, seeing himself called by this event to replace him henceforth in the exercise of his office and pastoral functions, took the road to Annonay in the Vivarais to consult the great experience of Mgr Pierre de Villars, retired archbishop of Vienne and his former metropolitan, who had been living in retirement in that town for a year. From Annonay he returned to Lyons; then he went to Gex, where he installed as parish priest his cousin and faithful companion, Canon Louis de Sales, and withdrew to the castle of his fathers to make there for twenty days, under the direction of Father Fourier, a Jesuit of Thonon, the retreat preparatory to his consecration. His mother, for her part, also wished to make a retreat, so as to dispose herself for the graces she hoped to receive during the episcopal consecration of her dear son. It was in the days before this retreat that he wrote to the Community of the Filles-Dieu of Paris a remarkable letter, to recall to the fervour of their first observance these hospital nuns, who had fallen somewhat from their former regularity. During his retreat Francis de Sales drew up for himself a rule for the interior life, in which he speaks thus of mental prayer: “It is there that one looks at heaven from nearer and finds the earth far removed from one’s eyes and one’s taste; it is there that souls engaged for the public make for themselves in their heart a kind of closet, where they study the law of their master and receive it from His own hand. It is that mountain so high that the noise of creatures is not heard there, where one tastes how sweet and gracious God is.”

His retreat over, the ceremony of his consecration took place with the greatest pomp on Sunday, 8 December 1603 [*sic*: 1602], the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the most holy Virgin, in the parish church of Thorens where he had been baptized. The holy temple had been sumptuously adorned through the care of Madame de Sales. Mgr Vespasiano Gribaldi, former archbishop of Vienne, was the consecrating prelate: he was assisted by Mgr Thomas Pobel, bishop of Saint-Paul-Trois-Châteaux, and Mgr Jacques Maistret, bishop of Damascus *in partibus infidelium*.

“The ceremony began early,” says M. Hamon, following all the historians of his life; “but a miraculous occurrence interrupted it, to the great admiration of all present. While the holy prelate was kneeling, motionless in recollection, before the consecrating bishop, his face suddenly appeared aflame and radiant, a symbol of the divine light which at that moment filled his whole interior and which made him see, as in broad daylight, as he himself related shortly afterwards, the three persons of the holy Trinity consecrating him pontiff, the Blessed Virgin covering him with her love and protection, and the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul standing at his two sides as his defenders and supporters. After remaining thus half an hour in ecstasy without any movement, more like an angel of heaven than a man of earth, he fainted, but soon rose again to everyone’s astonishment, assuring them that he was in the full possession of his strength and that his consecration could be continued. This was in fact done; and as the consecrating bishop performed the outward ceremonies upon him, he saw clearly and distinctly — these are his own expressions — the holy Trinity working in his soul the mysterious effects signified by the visible rites the pontiff was performing. All this while the three prelates felt, as they later declared, such an abundance of interior sweetness that they seemed to be in paradise, so visibly did holiness stamp its character on the whole person of the consecrated prelate, or rather so much did the Godhead, working invisibly in his soul, make as it were a ray of its presence shine out. As for him, responding to the abundance of graces he was receiving, he vowed to consecrate himself wholly, without any reserve, to the service of souls, and to die for them if it were expedient.”

The day after his consecration he sent his cousin, Canon Louis de Sales, to Annecy to take possession of his see in his name. On the following Saturday, 14 December, a day consecrated to the Blessed Virgin, he made his solemn entry into his episcopal city. “I am very glad,” he said, “that the holy Mother of the sovereign

Shepherd should be the one to introduce me into her Son's fold."

His first care after taking possession of the bishopric of Geneva was to organize his household. Rightly judging that it ought to be the model house of the diocese, he introduced into it a rule worthy of a religious community. He wished the greatest simplicity to preside over it, and whatever might be said to him, he never consented to buy an episcopal palace. "It makes me happy," he said, "to think that I have no dwelling of my own and that my landlord can put me out when he pleases; it is a point of conformity with Jesus Christ, my master, who had nowhere to lay His head. I want to die with the glory of having nothing of my own; that is my ambition." And in fact he had nothing of his own, for he was truly prodigal towards the poor. Moreover, the revenues of the episcopal mensa were exceedingly modest: they amounted at most to three thousand six hundred and eighty francs of our money; and with so small an income he had to meet his own keep, that of the persons attached to his service, and his many alms. But his wise economy allowed him to satisfy every demand. He had two priests with him: one fulfilled the office of almoner to him, the other those of bursar and steward. His servants numbered six, not counting a poor deaf-mute whom he kept out of charity; there was no woman among them. The inside of his house was forbidden to women: he received them in the gallery, and he never departed from this reserve, not even towards his mother.

Having chosen the staff of his household, as might be expected of him, he applied himself to choosing well also the members of the clergy called to share with him the cares and labours of the diocesan administration, and even this he did only after taking the advice of his chapter and of the deserving ecclesiastics who lived at Annecy. Despite the occupations inherent in his pastoral office, he took care not to abandon the confessional, where he was the providence and consoling angel of all who were afflicted and all who suffered. Nor did he neglect the ministry of the word, letting no occasion pass of making his apostolic voice and teaching heard by the faithful of his episcopal city. Above all he took care not to give up his catechisms for the poor and the ignorant. His solicitude extended especially to the new ministers of the sanctuary, whom he formed with a wholly fatherly care, inculcating in them the principles of the ecclesiastical life and setting out for them the excellence of the priesthood, and the purity of heart and exemplary life that the daily offering of the holy sacrifice requires. "Good priests," he said, "are no less necessary than good bishops: in vain do bishops labour for the salvation of the souls entrusted to their guidance if they are not seconded by pious, exemplary and well-instructed priests; experience shows that as the parish priest is, so is the parish: when peoples are directed by a priest who instructs and edifies, they turn easily to virtue; and the contrary happens if the priest, unfaithful to his duty, fails to give instruction or good example."

Meanwhile the holy bishop addressed to his clergy a circular which was soon translated into several languages and did immense good, not only in Savoy but in France and Italy. In it he gives his priests admirable counsels for administering the sacrament of Penance: "Remember," he tells them, "that the poor penitents call you their father, and that you must have for them a wholly fatherly heart, receive them with gentleness, bear patiently with their rusticity, their ignorance and all their defects, like the father of the prodigal son, who does not let himself be repelled by the disgusting state of nakedness and filth in which he sees his son, but embraces him effusively and kisses him tenderly, because he is a father and the hearts of fathers are tender towards their children." About the same time he published the Ritual of the diocese, to help his clergy in the fulfilment of their duties.

Called to Turin on the affairs of his diocese, he went from there to Annecy, where he had to settle a dispute between the canons of the cathedral of Geneva and those of the collegiate church of Annecy. Concord once restored between the two Chapters, the holy bishop went to the monastery of Sixt, which had fallen from its first fervour, removed the abuses committed there and restored regular discipline. His pastoral solicitude led him to another part of his diocese which then belonged to France: the Pays de Gex and its surroundings were at that time being worked upon by heretical ministers, who everywhere preached hatred of Catholicism and drew the revenues of the ecclesiastical benefices. To put an end to these intrigues he went to see the governor

of Burgundy and the baron de Lux, the king's lieutenant, who were then at Belley: they gave him the kindest welcome and granted him all that was in their power. This victory of the holy prelate and the conversion of several gentlemen so exasperated the heretics that they used poison to get rid of him. Francis was soon seized with sharp pains and vomiting; but, full of confidence in the Mother of God, he vowed to go on pilgrimage to Our Lady of Thonon if he escaped the danger. His hope was not disappointed. Scarcely out of danger, he pursued with new vigour the work of securing the free exercise of the Catholic religion, and ended by triumphing over all the difficulties raised by the heretics.

While watching in this way over the interests of the souls entrusted to him, Francis de Sales did not forget the vow he had made to go on pilgrimage to Our Lady of Thonon: so he set out for that town, which he entered amid universal joy. He conferred holy orders there on Saturday, 20 September, and went from there to Viuz-en-Sallaz, where he had the consolation of receiving the abjuration of the baron d'Yvoire. On 1 October he convoked a synod at Thonon, in which it was decided that the diocese of Geneva, because of its extent, should be divided into twenty sections, at whose head would be placed the priests most notable for their learning and virtue. The holy bishop then published synodal statutes: in them he prescribes residence, the tonsure, the observance of the decrees of the Council of Trent, and in short all that concerns the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Before closing this assembly he recommended his priests to catechize the people every Sunday, and ordered the office of the Blessed Sacrament to be celebrated every Thursday. This first synod did so much good that Francis de Sales resolved to hold one every year, on the Wednesday of the second week after Easter.

Our Saint's zeal could not be confined within the diocese of Geneva. Invited in 1603 to go and preach the Lent in the city of Dijon, he could not refuse the word of God to those who asked it of him. So he went to the castle of Sales to spend a few days there in retreat: there, free of all cares, he gave himself ardently to prayer and meditation. Thus prepared, he went to Dijon, where he was received with the greatest honours. The holy bishop set to work at once: an immense people, eager to hear his word, crowded round his pulpit and showed by its attention and its tears that it was impossible to resist the divine word announced by a prelate whose holy and apostolic life was as it were the consecration of his discourses. The holy preacher's word produced wonderful fruits of grace and conversion: he could scarcely suffice for confessions and preaching at the same time. "I never met," he says, "so good and gracious a people, nor one so gentle in receiving holy impressions. Some fruit has been produced: notwithstanding my unworthiness, some Huguenots have been converted, some doubtful and wavering people have been strengthened; many have made general confessions, even to me, such confidence had they in my affection; many have taken up a new form of life, so good is this people. I have come to know there several hundred lay persons who lead a very perfect life and, amid the bustle of business, make their meditation every day." It was during this mission that Francis de Sales came to know the baronne de Chantal, and from then began between these two souls the relations which united them for the glory of religion and the salvation of a great number, as we have said in the life of that Saint.

(The life continues in the next part.)

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, BISHOP AND PRINCE OF GENEVA (continued, 3)

The Lenten station over, Francis de Sales hastened to return to his diocese. Back at Annecy, he did not forget those who had become attached to him during his stay at Dijon. One of them, M. Bourgeois de Crépy, having written to him on behalf of one of his daughters, who was in a most delicate position because of the continual opposition she met with in governing the abbey of Le Puits-d'Orbe,[1] of which she was abbess, the holy bishop hastened to help this virtuous daughter with his counsels and took quite particular care of her soul. Speaking of true devotion, he gives her the means of attaining it in this way: "One must purify oneself of all sin, of all attachment to what is not the service of God; pray much, saying the office well, making the

meditation well in the morning, and plenty of ejaculatory prayers or sighs of love during the day; every day one must read some books of piety and practise some particular act of virtue; every first Sunday of the month one must meditate on why one is on earth, whether one has not here below some other aim than God and one's salvation; and after communion one must bring one after another before Jesus Christ, seated on the throne of our heart, all our senses and all our powers, to receive His orders and promise Him fidelity." As she was subject to various infirmities, he consoles her by telling her to accept this cross for the love of Him who sends it; to picture to herself Jesus Christ crowned with thorns and so torn that all His bones can be numbered; to take a drop of the blood that trickles from the Saviour's wounds and apply it by meditation to her ill, adding to it the name of Jesus, which is an oil poured out; to make ejaculatory prayers, and often to cast her heart into the hands of God, suffering for love of Him and offering Him her sufferings.

To console her in her interior pains the holy bishop wrote to her: "Let the devil knock and shout at the door of your heart, presenting a thousand importunate images or thoughts there; he can enter only by the door of consent: keep it always shut and remain tranquil. Let the waves roar around your boat, and do not be afraid, for God is in it. Do not let yourself be troubled either by dryness — it does not offend God and is the school of humility — or by the imperfections or faults that escape you: without being astonished that a bad soil produces bad weeds, return gently to doing well, casting yourself lovingly into the abyss of the divine mercies. Keep your heart thus always in peace, receiving pains with resignation, because we deserve them, and joys with moderation, because we do not deserve them. Never vain sadness and anxiety; to do good and to do it joyfully is a double good. To be saddened by one's defects is to add defect to defect."

As it was a matter of bringing regular discipline back into her monastery, he gave her counsels so admirable in wisdom and prudence for bringing her daughters back to obedience that we do not think we should pass them over here in silence: "Take care," he wrote to her, "not to give the alarm by letting it be thought that you mean to reform: they would stiffen against you and everything would fail. So bear in silence what has been borne until now. Confine yourself, to begin with, to being gentle and amiable towards all; to making devotion honoured, esteemed and desired by the charms they will find it has in you; to showing by your conduct and example what must be done; to showing a special friendship to those who do as you do, without however failing to look kindly on the others, so as to win them; and when by your example and your gentle ways you have brought everyone to live well, you will turn into rules or constitutions what people have become accustomed to doing. So, to bring them little by little to obedience, command the youngest first easy and pleasant things, in this gentle manner: If I told you to do such a thing, would you not do it gladly for the love of God? And after they have obeyed, praise their obedience, promising them that God will reward them for it. Spread through the house books that speak of this virtue; speak of it yourself; say that you would think yourself very happy to be commanded in everything, that then one does not fear to go wrong, that all actions enhanced by the merit of obedience are much more pleasing to God; and to prove how convinced you are of these truths, make profession of doing nothing except by the advice of your director — I mean for your private conduct; for, as to the conduct of the house, it would be an extreme misfortune if you were suspected of letting yourself be governed by him." — "Persevere," he said to her in another letter, "for great things are done only by dint of time and patience: what grows in a day dies in another. So work gently, showing to all the heart of a gentle mother who forgets faults, and making obedience lovable by the manner of commanding. When you meet opposition, do not strike it head-on, but bend gently and wait gently; do not seem to wish to conquer, but excuse in one her infirmity, in another her age, and never say that it is disobedience. Carry the weak and the imperfect on the shoulders of charity, without ever showing them a melancholy or discontented face. For this, attach yourself more and more to humility; humility makes our heart gentle towards the perfect and the imperfect — towards the first out of respect, towards the second out of compassion. Humility makes us receive pains gently, knowing that we deserve them, and good things with gratitude, knowing that we do not deserve them."

Francis de Sales, by a sustained correspondence, directed a great number of persons in the ways of perfection. The archbishop of Bourges himself asked him to draw up for him rules for preaching the word of God well: the holy bishop of Geneva willingly granted his friend's wish. These many occupations, however, did not prevent him from attending to the government of his diocese and from going to preach the Lent of 1605 in the little town of La Roche. Besides preaching, he was assiduous in the confessional, in visiting the sick and the poor, and in making his spiritual exercises every day. So much zeal, so many good works and holy examples produced the happiest fruits of conversion.

Back at Annecy, he held his second synod, after which he established in that town a confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament: this confraternity soon spread to Thonon and to several other places in his diocese, where it produced the happiest fruits. While working in this way to strengthen Catholics in the faith, he never ceased to combat the heretics. Immediately after Eastertide of the year 1605 he undertook the general visitation of his diocese: he began with the Chablais, where he organized a great number of parishes that were without a pastor. From there he came back to spend a few days at Annecy, and on 15 October set out again to visit the part of his diocese that belonged to France. Everywhere he preached, catechized and heard confessions, shrinking from no fatigue. An acute fever, brought on by so much sustained labour, obliged him to stop at Saint-Gras de Musignan. About the same time the Lord granted him a special grace for delivering the possessed, and during his visitation he delivered a great number. But what gave the holy prelate's heart most joy was the return to God of a great number of hardened sinners and of some heretics.

The approach of the Jubilee, which was to be preached at Annecy, brought Francis de Sales back to that town. Weak as he was, he set resolutely to work and laboured untiringly, with a success and graces that made him forget the toil. "I feel myself a little more in love with souls than usual," he said; "that is all the progress I have made, despite great dryness and dereliction — not long, however, for my God is so sweet to me that not a day passes without His coaxing me to win me to Himself: wretch that I am, I do not respond to the fidelity of the love He shows me. The heart of my people is almost all good now." After the Jubilee the holy bishop went to Chambéry to preach the Lent there.

Arriving in that town, he withdrew to the Jesuits' college to make a preparatory retreat there: the holy Prelate, after the example of the divine Master, always prepared himself in this way in solitude for preaching. He began his station in the church of Saint-Dominique, in the presence of the senators and of an immense crowd come to hear him: one would have said it was the Holy Spirit speaking by his mouth. A striking wonder took place in the presence of the crowd gathered at the foot of his pulpit: one day when the sky was dark and covered with thick clouds that hid the sun from view, the crucifix of the rood-loft was seen to dart luminous rays upon the holy bishop which, covering him entirely with a dazzling brightness, made him appear to all resplendent and radiant like a star. At this sight the whole audience gave a cry of surprise and admiration; but the holy preacher was in inexpressible confusion. These sermons were followed by numerous conversions, and the holy bishop, encouraged by these successes, seemed to multiply himself by going to preach in the other churches of the town as well.

On 18 June 1606 Francis de Sales resumed the course of his pastoral visitation, passing through the Faucigny. In the parish of Villard he had the sweet consolation of bringing back into the fold of the good Shepherd a scandalous public sinner. In that of Samoëns he reconciled the inhabitants, who were divided into two camps and waging an implacable war on each other. While occupying himself with the sanctification of others, he did not lose sight of his own. The spectacle of nature made him admire, bless and taste God in His works: "I have met God," he wrote to St. Chantal, "full of sweetness and gentleness, even among our highest and harshest mountains, where many simple souls adored Him in all sincerity and truth, where the roe-deer and the chamois ran hither and thither among the frightful glaciers to proclaim His praises. For lack of devotion I understood only a few words of their language; but it seemed to me that they were saying very beautiful things." Francis de Sales returned to Annecy on 28 October, to celebrate the feast of All Saints in

his cathedral. After seeing to the most urgent business, he drew up an exact report on his diocese and sent it to Rome by his brother Jean-François de Sales, canon of his cathedral.

The Pays de Gex then presented a distressing spectacle in respect of religion; the king of France, Henry IV, having allowed the holy bishop of Geneva to send missionaries to evangelize it, the bishop welcomed this news joyfully and sent chosen religious there, while he for his part was busy preaching the Lent of 1607 at Annecy itself. Meanwhile he founded the Florimontane Academy, intended to teach the young letters, philosophy, theology, jurisprudence, mathematics and the natural sciences. The aim of this institution was the greater glory of God through the practice of the virtues, and the public good through the service of the prince. The duc de Nemours, Henri de Savoie, having accepted its presidency, it had as assessors the bishop of Geneva and President Favre. This fine work soon flourished and made the town of Annecy the meeting-place of the finest minds, eager to learn or to display their learning.

The Lenten preaching over, he went to Thonon to celebrate the Jubilee, and established in that town a Confraternity of the Blessed Sacrament and of the Blessed Virgin. Called back in all haste to his episcopal city to attend the funeral of the duchesse de Nemours, Anne d'Este, who had died in Paris and was to be buried in the church of Notre-Dame at Annecy, Francis de Sales went there at once to await the body of the illustrious deceased. The obsequies over, the holy Bishop went back to Thonon; from there he went to Villaret, where he had the consolation of blessing a chapel built by the faithful on the very spot where Blessed Peter Favre was born, the first companion of St. Ignatius and the first priest of the Society of Jesus. In the course of this visitation he learned of the death of his youngest sister, whom he loved tenderly and whose education had been entrusted to Madame de Chantal. Understanding the terrible blow this death would deal his mother's heart, he hurried to the castle of Sales to console her; but this Christian and resigned mother had already submitted entirely to the will of God.

Having consoled all his family, Francis de Sales resumed his interrupted visitation, preaching in towns and market towns, bringing back sinners, warming the tepid and stirring the good to greater fervour; then he returned to Annecy on 23 November to preach the Advent there. When Lent came he went to preach it at Rumilly, a little town two leagues from Annecy. The people crowded round his pulpit and his confessional to such an extent that he had to ask his canons to come and help him in this great labour, which they did with praiseworthy eagerness. This station brought him the sweetest consolations; so he could not help saying: "Oh! how much better it is to preach in little towns or villages than in great cities! In the latter, pride and the love of riches stand in the way of conversion; the poor country people, on the contrary, listen avidly, receive docilely and faithfully practise all they are taught." Back at Annecy, he had the joy of converting two Calvinist ladies of Geneva.

As Francis de Sales's reputation grew from day to day, Henry IV sought to draw the holy Bishop to France, "so as," he said, "to give him a position more in keeping with his merit"; but the Saint thanked the king for his kindness and told him that he owed himself above all to his own country.

Invited by the duke of Savoy to go to Thonon on important business, he had the grief of learning there that two young ecclesiastics had just embraced error. His first care was to run after these strayed sheep, whom he had the happiness of bringing back into the bosom of the Church; and after instructing them well and strengthening them in the Catholic faith, he received their abjuration. Happy at this conquest, the holy Prelate then attended to the business that had brought him to that town, delivered a possessed woman and took the road back to Annecy.

The Holy See having charged him with going to establish the reform in the celebrated monastery of Le Puits-d'Orbe, in the diocese of Langres, he went there in August of the year 1608. From there he went into Franche-Comté to discuss a proposed exchange between Prince Albert, archduke of Austria, and the clergy of Burgundy, concerning the salt springs of the town of Salins, and to give a final decision in the name of the

Holy See. All along his way he was received with the veneration that eminent holiness inspires. Having completed his mission to the satisfaction of both parties, he left France and returned promptly to Savoy, where he resumed the visitation of his diocese with the same zeal and the same success as before. It was about this time that he put the finishing touch to his *Introduction to the Devout Life*. The work is divided into five parts: in the first he defines true devotion thus: "It is a spiritual agility and liveliness by which charity makes us do promptly, diligently and affectionately what God asks of us. Inasmuch as love makes us pleasing to God, it is called grace; inasmuch as it gives us the strength to do good, it is called charity; but when it has reached that degree of perfection in which it makes us not only do good but do it carefully, frequently and promptly, it is called devotion."

In the second part, this is how he teaches the soul to unite itself to God: "Recall your mind as often as you can to the presence of God; look at what God is doing and what you are doing; you will see His eyes turned towards you and perpetually fixed on you with an incomparable love: O God, you will say, why do I not always look at You, as You always look at me? Why do You think of me so often, and why do I think so little of You? O my soul, our true place is God; as the birds have nests to withdraw to, and the stags coverts to take shelter in, so our hearts must choose a place each day, either on Mount Calvary, or in the wounds of Our Lord, or in some other place close to Him, to retire there on every sort of occasion and be there as in a fortress against temptations. Happy the soul that can say to Our Lord: You are my house of refuge, my rampart, my roof against the rain and my shade against the heat! Remember, Philothea, to retire often into the solitude of your heart during conversations and business: this solitude cannot be hindered by the crowd of those around you; for they are not around your heart but around your body. So let your heart remain all alone in the presence of God alone… Aspire often to God by short but ardent upward darts of the heart; admire His beauty, invoke His help, adore His goodness, give Him your soul a thousand times a day, fix your inward eyes on His dwelling, stretch out your hand to Him like a little child to its father, so that He may lead you." In the third part he treats of the practice of the virtues; in the fourth, of human respect, anxiety, sadness, aridity and spiritual distaste; and in the fifth, of the yearly renewal of good resolutions by serious examinations of conscience, and of searching considerations on the excellence of the soul, the worth of virtue, the examples of the Saints, and the love of God and of Jesus Christ for us. This book made a prodigious sensation and was soon translated into every language.

In 1609 Francis de Sales was charged by the sovereign pontiff Paul V with carrying out the reform of the abbey of Talloires; he went at once to that monastery, and thanks to his wise advice regular discipline soon flourished again in that house. Scarcely back at Annecy, he received from Henry IV the order to go to Gex to confer with the baron de Lux, the king's lieutenant-general in Burgundy, on the measures suitable for re-establishing the Catholic religion in that country. He left at once for that town, had eight parish churches of which the heretics had taken possession restored to the Catholics, and had the consolation of bringing back a good number of heretics by his preaching and conferences. His business once finished, he went to the castle of Monthelon to bless the marriage of his brother, the baron de Thorens, with the eldest daughter of Madame de Chantal, and returned promptly to Annecy. Some time later he had the grief of losing his venerable mother, whose last breath he received. "It has pleased God," he wrote to Madame de Chantal, "to withdraw from this wretched world our very good and very dear mother, to place her near Him in His paradise, as I hope, the more so as she was one of the finest and most innocent souls it would be possible to find… God is good and His mercy is eternal; all His wills are just and His decrees equitable; I submit to them despite the pain of this separation — a very sharp pain, no doubt, but always tranquil; for I say with David: 'I am dumb, Lord, and I open not my mouth to complain, because it is You who have done it': without that I should have been inconsolable; but I dare neither cry out nor show discontent under the blows of this fatherly hand, which I learned to love tenderly from my youth."

The Order of the Visitation, of which we have spoken sufficiently in the life of St. Chantal on 13 December, was one of the finest works of St. Francis de Sales. From the beginning he gave the sisters provisional rules by way of trial: “We will begin,” he says, “with poverty, because our Congregation will seek to enrich itself only with good works. Here, to begin with, is what the enclosure will be: No man shall enter the house except in the cases where this is permitted for monasteries. Women themselves shall enter it only with the superior’s permission. The sisters shall go out only to serve the sick, after the year of novitiate. They shall sing the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin, so as to have in this a holy and divine recreation; and for the rest they shall give themselves to all sorts of good exercises, especially that of holy and heartfelt prayer. I hope the thing will succeed: since we cannot do better for the moment, it is good to do this.” The holy Bishop, redoubling his care for his holy daughters, often recommended to them a constant evenness of soul, prayer and holy communion. To become true spouses of Jesus Christ, “all here,” he said, “must let themselves be handled, corrected and polished, and establish themselves solidly in humility, in the perfect renunciation of their own will, in detachment from all things. From there one will rise to the practice of the virtues; and in choosing, one will prefer not the most brilliant but the humblest, the smallest practices of gentleness, patience, forbearance with one’s neighbour, care to please all in all things save sin; and finally modesty in the eyes, in speech and in bearing.”

To encourage them in the practice of these virtues, Francis de Sales told them: “All things turn to good for those who love God: our miseries serve to make us humble; our afflictions, our crosses and our persecutions, well borne, merit for us an increase of endless happiness. All is vanity except eternity. Each day brings us nearer to that eternity, and already we have almost one foot in it: provided it be happy for us, what does it matter if the passage, which lasts only a moment, be a little stormy?… Is it possible that, knowing that our sufferings of three or four days produce eternal consolations, we should not bear them with a good grace? Since God is our father, so tender a father that He watches continually over us and not a hair falls from our head without Him, how is it that we are not always taken up with the care of loving and serving Him?” — “Before enjoying God,” he said again, “one must suffer much for God.”

These conversations of the holy bishop with his nuns were piously collected by them, and they have handed them down to us in a book entitled *Spiritual Conferences* (*Entretiens spirituels*). In it Francis de Sales sets out three laws of the spiritual life, which are of “a matchless usefulness and apt to give great peace and interior sweetness, because they are all of love.” The first is to do everything for God and nothing for oneself; the second, never to abate anything of one’s exactness in all one’s duties amid the ills of this life; the third, to bless God in adversity as in prosperity. The holy bishop then recommends his daughters to abandon themselves entirely to God: “The Saints in heaven,” he tells them, “have such union with the will of God that, if there were a little more of God’s good pleasure in their going to hell, they would leave paradise at once to go there. We must likewise on every occasion let ourselves be led by the will of God, without troubling about the harmful or favourable consequences that will follow from it, assured as we are that nothing can be sent to us from that fatherly heart from which He will not make us draw profit, if we have confidence in Him.” Nor does he forget outward and inward modesty, and above all humility. “The daughters of the Visitation,” he tells them, “will always speak very humbly of their little Congregation, and will prefer all others to it as to honour and esteem; nevertheless they will also prefer it to any other as to love, gladly showing, when occasion arises, how happily they live in this state. So everyone prefers his own country in love, not in esteem; so every pilot cherishes the vessel he sails in more than the others, though they be richer.”

To these fine instructions Francis de Sales joined some counsels apt to guard his holy daughters against inconstancy: “God,” he tells them, “has given man reason to guide him; and yet few men let themselves be guided by it; people follow their passions, their whims, their changing humour; what pleases one day displeases the next; they love and hate the same person according to the humour of the moment; they are

joyful or melancholy, often without knowing why… That is not the Christian spirit: the unevenness of events must never bring unevenness of humour into our souls; amid the variety of accidents one must always remain unchanging, content to serve God constantly, courageously and boldly, without any interruption. It is in the peace of an ever-even heart that God shows Himself, just as, when the lake is quite calm and the wind does not stir its waters, the sky on a clear night is so well reflected in it with the stars that one sees as much of its beauty looking down as looking up." The nuns, thus formed, made rapid progress in virtue and holiness; so people everywhere spoke of nothing but the new Order. Drawn by the fragrance of so many virtues, new aspirants came to swell the fervent community, which in a short time founded a house at Lyons and at Moulins.

As the Order of the Visitation was thus beginning to spread, Francis de Sales gave it a definitive constitution. The bishops were made the immediate superiors of all the houses of the Order. After settling the conditions for the admission of aspirants and the number of members each house was to have, he divided the sisters into three categories: choir sisters, associates and domestic sisters; then he prescribes the enclosure, obedience to the superior, the order of the day, the fast days, and so on. What enhances the merit of these rules in the highest degree is the spirit of charity and humility in which the pious legislator wishes them to be observed. Having thus drawn up his Constitutions, St. Francis de Sales submitted them to the approval of the Holy See and asked for the erection of his Congregation into a religious Order. The sovereign Pontiff Paul V, by a bull of 23 April 1618, authorized him to erect his institute into a religious Order under the Rule of St. Augustine.

(The life continues in the next part.)

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, BISHOP AND PRINCE OF GENEVA (continued, 4)

While St. Francis de Sales was giving all his care to the Order of the Visitation, he did not lose sight of the government of his diocese. Having been unable to succeed in establishing a major seminary there, he encouraged study among his clergy by attending the public theses in philosophy and theology. On the other hand, to nourish the piety of the faithful, he chose the best preachers to give missions and to preach the Advent and Lenten stations. As the heretics still occupied churches and benefices in the Pays de Gex, he wrote to Queen Marie de' Medici to obtain their restitution as well as the re-establishment of the monasteries.

In the year 1613 the holy Prelate went to Turin to the duke of Savoy, to recommend to him his Institute, and also the college of Annecy, which had fallen into decay. From there he went to Milan to honour the relics of St. Charles Borromeo. He visited the Barnabites of that city, with whom he stayed some days, and, in accordance with the mission he had received from the duke of Savoy, offered them the direction of the college of Annecy, which they accepted. Called back to Turin by the feast of the Holy Shroud, which was near and at which he was to preach, he set out again and visited at Novara the tomb of St. Bernard of Menthon. A few days later he was returning to Annecy by way of Mont Cenis. The feasts of Pentecost over, he went to the Pays de Gex, where the heretics obstinately refused to give back to the Church the property they had taken from her. By dint of zeal and resourcefulness he finally re-established divine service in eight parishes, obliged the parish priests to reside there, and provided these churches with all they needed; but because of the obstinacy of the heretical ministers in keeping the ecclesiastical property, the priests and the churches were always in the most extreme poverty. One thing, however, grieved the holy bishop's heart still more: the deprivation of religious liberty, for which France had substituted a humiliating servitude. To remedy such great evils he commended the interests of that part of his diocese to M. de Belley, who had been named deputy to the States General of the kingdom.

In the year 1614 he had the consolation of establishing the Barnabites at Annecy and Carthusians at Ripaille, from where their influence was soon felt in all the surrounding country, to the great profit of religion and

souls. About the same time the town of Annecy was in great anxiety, seeing itself on the eve of a great famine. Francis de Sales gathered all his people in the church and told them in an inspired tone: “My children, hope, trust in God, and what is necessary will be given you, provided you keep His commandments; do not be afraid; I promise you on His behalf that not only will you not perish of famine, but you will not even suffer from poverty.” The event answered to his prediction.

The Emperor of Germany having summoned him, as a prince of the Holy Empire, to the Diet of Ratisbon for 1 February of the year 1615, he answered that he would be honoured to be able to accept his invitation, but that the heretics had reduced him to such a state that he had no other means than prayer of coming to His Majesty’s aid. Meanwhile the holy Prelate went to Lyons, and then to Sion, capital of the Valais, to attend the consecration of the new bishop appointed by the Holy See. The clergy and inhabitants of the town having expressed their wish to hear the divine word from his lips, he gave them several connected discourses on the marks of the true Church, especially on the necessity of an unbroken succession of pastors and of a teaching authority. “By these marks,” he said, “the dullest mind can discern the true Church without any doctrinal or theological discussion. The Roman Church is the only one of the Christian societies that has a short and easy method of instructing peoples in the truths of the Gospel, the method of discussion and reasoning being unsuited to the people and to almost anyone, since it most often throws the learned and the clever into aberrations and excesses worthy of pity. The Church, whose doctrine is made for every kind of mind and is an object of faith and submission rather than of science and disputes, has no other method than that of authority, teaching all what must be believed; and nothing is more in accordance with reason than to believe God, to believe the Church, to believe the greatest authority, the most worthy of respect as well as the most respected in all times by the greatest geniuses and the most learned men.” These instructions, while confirming Catholics in the faith, shook several heretics, who ended by abandoning the schism.

Francis de Sales neglected nothing that could favour the growth of religion and improve the position of his people. In 1615, during a shortage of grain, he was seen buying considerable quantities of wheat for the shamefaced poor and having abundant alms distributed two days a week to all the needy who came to his door. With the aim of uniting at Thonon, capital of the Chablais, all the means fit to make religion flourish there, he added to the two bodies of gospel labourers established in the Holy House a society of priests devoted to the education of youth. This charge was entrusted to the Barnabites, whose wonderful successes aroused the jealousy of some persons, who slandered them to the sovereign Pontiff; but the innocence of the religious having been recognized, the Pope, to shelter them from the shafts of envy, took them under his protection. Back at Annecy on 20 September, he received there some time afterwards Cardinal de Marquemont with all the honours due to his merit and dignity: it was a happiness for the two prelates, both alike animated by the spirit of God, to confer together on ecclesiastical matters. The cardinal, a witness of the eminent virtues of the holy bishop of Geneva, expressed his admiration in these words: “O the great servant of God! O the holy and perfect man! a prelate sent from heaven, whom I have seen perform heroic acts of charity and justice! Ah, would to God all bishops had some small portion of the grace he possesses in fullness; he is truly an accomplished pastor, and we must all aspire to reproduce his virtues in ourselves.”

In the year 1616 Francis de Sales was keenly afflicted by the public calamities that fell upon his flock as a result of the wars between the duke of Savoy and the duke of Mantua. To appease the wrath of heaven he ordered public prayers throughout his diocese, and after three days the enemy, who were investing the town of Annecy, were obliged to raise the siege. Free from then on, the holy bishop put the finishing touch to his *Treatise on the Love of God*, which appeared in the course of that same year. This book, a true masterpiece, made a profound sensation everywhere. Meanwhile all that fame published about Francis de Sales made the parlement of Dauphiné conceive the desire to hear his eloquent word, and he was invited to come and preach the Advent of 1616 at Grenoble. He accepted the invitation: living as a true apostle, he soon won all hearts by his gentleness, his courtesy and his example. To profit by the happy dispositions of the people, he spared

neither his rest nor his strength and devoted himself wholly to regenerating the town: preaching, confession, private conferences and the visiting of religious communities occupied all his moments. Encouraged by the successes he obtained throughout this station, he came back to preach the Lent of 1617 there. The striking conversions he brought about spread dismay among the heretical ministers, who tried in vain to halt their progress by preventing their own people from attending his sermons.

Having laboured in this way for the sanctification of others, Francis de Sales returned to Annecy, where he soon had the grief of learning of the death of his brother, the baron de Thorens, carried off in a few days by a pestilential fever, and shortly after of the baroness's death. Having paid the last duties to her, he went at once to Belley to pour out his saddened soul into the heart of his friend. The consolations he found in the bosom of friendship calmed his grief, and he came back to Annecy. Meanwhile he accepted a new invitation from the town of Grenoble to go and preach the Advent and Lent there, and obtained the same successes as the year before. During his stay in that town he went to visit the Grande Chartreuse; and after a few days spent in that refuge of religious perfection he returned to Annecy, embalmed with the fragrance of piety one breathes in that holy place.

The duke of Savoy, having planned to marry his son to Christine of France, sent to Paris to negotiate this affair the cardinal of Savoy, accompanied by the most honourable personages of his States, among whom the bishop of Geneva held the first rank. On his arrival in the capital everyone wished to hear so renowned a preacher; but on the appointed day the holy prelate, who listened to the inspirations of humility rather than those of self-love, did not come up to the expectation of his audience, which found fault with his discourse. St. Vincent de Paul, judging the thing otherwise than the world, was edified by it: "That," he said to his brethren, "is how the Saints repress nature, which loves brilliance and reputation; that is how we must do ourselves, preferring lowly employments to showy ones, abjection to what could do us honour." Yet the shining virtues of the holy bishop soon drew all hearts to him. Throughout the Advent station at Saint-André-des-Arts the crowd was so great that it was hard to find room in the church, and the more he preached, the more eagerness people showed to hear him. When this station was over his preaching did not stop: invited to preach on all sides, he always gave a kindly answer, and it sometimes happened that he had promised as many as three and four sermons for the same day. "God will give us the grace to multiply our bread," he answered his friends who reproached him for not sparing his health. "What would you? I have a heart that cannot refuse anything. I can more quickly preach a sermon than say no. If I fell in with your views, I should have to appoint a vicar to do the refusing, for I should never have the courage to do it myself. The word I preach teaches me that we must give to all who ask of us, and that true charity, without regard to its own interests, looks only to those of God and of the neighbour." When Lent came he resumed his sermons at Saint-André-des-Arts amid ever greater crowds. So full a life edified the whole capital and was the cause of numerous conversions.

During his stay in Paris he formed a holy friendship with eminent men, such as André Duval, dean of the faculty of theology of Paris and superior general of the Carmelites of France; Father Suffren, of the Society of Jesus; M. Bourdoise, founder of the community of Saint-Nicolas-du-Chardonnet; and above all St. Vincent de Paul, to whom he entrusted the direction of the nuns of the Visitation of Paris. St. Francis de Sales's chief occupations were to visit religious communities to stir them to perfection, to relieve the poor with alms, to console the afflicted, to settle lawsuits in families, to attend all the meetings concerned with the interests of religion or the charity of the neighbour, to exhort the sick in the hospitals and to hear the confessions of the dying. He also consecrated in the church of Saint-Germain-des-Prés an altar dedicated to St. Symphorian.

While devoting himself to these labours for the good of souls, Francis de Sales did not neglect the mission he had to fulfil at court. Thanks to his prudence and his prayers the negotiation, for a moment compromised, had every desirable success, and shortly afterwards the marriage ceremony took place. To reward him, Princess

Christine named him her grand almoner; but the holy bishop, who had no other ambition than to be able to spend the rest of his days in the service of Our Lord, accepted this charge only on condition that it should in no way prejudice his duties as bishop or his residence at Annecy, and that he should receive no salary as almoner. Meanwhile he gave proof of great detachment by refusing the rich benefice, then vacant, of the abbey of Sainte-Geneviève; he likewise refused the office of coadjutor to the bishop of Paris, with the future succession to that great see, which Cardinal de Retz offered him. “The diocese of Geneva,” he said, “is the portion of the vineyard God has called me to cultivate; I cannot give it up without endangering my salvation. One does not give oneself to the Church to make a great fortune, but to clear the field assigned by the father of the family.” Amid the applause and honours of the court, glory dazzled him no more than riches: he kept himself always in humility. “O God,” he wrote to St. Chantal, “how much better it is to be poor in the house of God than to dwell in the palace of kings! I am making my novitiate of the court here, but I shall never make profession… The court is the meeting-place of all the delights of the world, the echo of all its maxims — a double reason for me to abhor it. Thanks be to God, I have learned at court to be simpler and less worldly. Could it be that, after considering the goodness and eternity of God, we could love this wretched vanity of the world?… The sight of the world’s grandeurs heightens in my mind the greatness of the Christian virtues and makes me esteem contempt the more. What a difference between this gathering of intriguers — for the court is nothing else — and the gathering of religious souls who have no other aim than to go to heaven! Oh, if we knew in what the true good consists!”

As the prince of Piedmont was about to return to his country, Francis de Sales said goodbye to his friends and took the road back to Savoy, passing through Bourges, Moulins, Lyons and Grenoble, where the first stone of the monastery of the Visitation was blessed in his presence. On his arrival at Annecy, finding the country desolated by famine, he at once had grain and alms distributed in proportion to the needs: his pastoral charity always found something to give to those in need. Meanwhile he gladly agreed to the request of the princess of Piedmont, who asked for his brother, Canon Jean-François, to replace him with the title of first almoner: our Saint, indeed, thought him better suited than himself to life at court.

Not content with working for the salvation of his flock by his preaching and his example, he applied himself to the direction of souls by his letters and writings: it was then that he gave the hermits of Mont Voiron admirable constitutions, which made him as it were the founder of a new Congregation. As the holiness of Francis de Sales grew more resplendent from day to day, following several miraculous cures due to his prayers, the people’s veneration for him kept growing, and the king of France, Louis XIII, following the example of Henry IV, sought to draw him into his kingdom. But the holy bishop, worn out by the fatigues of a long and laborious apostolate, was thinking of leaving his bishopric to live in retirement, when he learned that his brother, Jean-François de Sales, had been appointed his coadjutor with right of succession, under the title of bishop of Chalcedon. Immediately after his consecration the latter went to Annecy to spend a few days with his holy brother, whose many occupations took nothing away from his union with God and the perfection of his recollection, as he wrote to St. Chantal: “How glad I was this morning (24 August) to find my God so great that I could not even imagine His greatness enough! But since I can neither exalt nor enlarge Him, I wish at least to proclaim His greatness and immensity everywhere. Let us gently hide our littleness in this greatness; and as a little chick, all covered by its mother’s wings, stays safe and warm, let us rest our hearts in the sweet and loving providence of Our Lord, and shelter ourselves warmly under His holy protection.”

The abbey of Sainte-Catherine, half a league from Annecy and occupied by nuns of the Order of St. Bernard, drew the solicitude of the holy bishop, who, finding that they did not serve God as he would wish, undertook to reform them; but the thing was not easy, in the face of the opposition of the abbess and several nuns: better times had to be awaited. However, five nuns, wishing to lead a more perfect life, asked his permission to go and settle at Rumilly to begin their reform there; and this was granted. Francis de Sales went to visit them

some time later, presided over the election of the superior and gave them constitutions, which were approved by Pope Gregory XV in 1622. This reform was fully successful, and the Church was soon enriched with several houses of reformed Bernardine nuns. After this visit Francis de Sales returned to Annecy, where, shortly after his arrival, he received a visit from his two brothers, who found him absorbed in deep meditation. “My brothers,” he told them, “leave me a little alone with my God; His divine Majesty has warned me to think seriously about a matter of the utmost importance. I will tell you of it in a little while.” At these words they left him, persuaded that he had meant to speak to them of his approaching death. And indeed, from that moment the whole tenor of his life confirmed them in this belief. Regarding himself now only as a traveller here below, he set his temporal affairs in order. Yet the interest of his diocese occupied him more than anything else: from then on he applied himself wholly to teaching his brother the duties of the episcopate and preparing him to take over the government of his flock. The two bishops went to the abbey of Talloires towards the end of November of the year 1621 and carried out the translation of the relics of St. Germanus.

On his return to Annecy the holy bishop, learning that a certain Bernard Paris was in his agony, went at once to his bedside and, making the sign of the cross over him, cured him miraculously. While he was restoring health to others in this way, for himself he thought only of preparing for death, which he felt to be near; and one day when his brother, seeing him very pensive, asked him the cause of his sadness, he answered: “I am not at all sad, but I am listening to hear when the hour of departure strikes… There is nothing more in this world able to gladden and content me. I think now only of heaven and of the blessed eternity that awaits us. The further I go in this mortal life, the more wretched I find it, and I am astonished that men cling so hard to the things of earth.” His legs, swollen and covered with sores, and violent internal pains warned him moreover that he had not long to live; yet he changed nothing in his habits and labours. He even went to Thonon, then to Pinerolo, where the chapter of the Feuillants was to be held, over which he was to preside in the name of Pope Gregory XV. Thanks to his consummate prudence he triumphed over all the difficulties, restored the most perfect order in the community and had a superior elected. From there he went to Turin, where all the wishes of the court called him. Lodged in the convent of the Feuillant Fathers, he fell gravely ill there; but what made him suffer most cruelly was to learn that a great scarcity reigned in Savoy and that his people were suffering without his being able to relieve them. “Ah!” he said, “when I am back at Annecy I will sell my mitre, my crozier, my clothes, my plate and all I possess, to help my poor.” As soon as he was cured he left the court and set out for Annecy, where the people welcomed him with joy.

His first occupation was to relieve the poor who were in the greatest destitution: he distributed to them all he possessed, and when his purse was exhausted he had recourse to that of several charitable persons, who hastened to help him in his good works. Meanwhile the duke of Savoy invited him to go with him to Avignon, and the holy bishop, despite the bad state of his health, which inspired just fears in his friends, accepted his prince’s invitation. “We must go,” he said, “where God calls us; we will go as long as we can, and we will stop when illness no longer lets us go on.” As he clearly foresaw that this journey would be his last, he set his affairs in order, and after devoting part of the day of 7 November to an exact review of his conscience, he exclaimed: “Truly, it seems to me, by the grace of God, that I hold to the earth now only by the tip of one foot, for the other is already raised in the air to depart.” After saying goodbye to his relatives and friends, to his canons and to his dear daughters of the Visitation, he left on 9 November, leaving them all in mourning and tears. On his way he visited the monasteries of the Visitation at Belley, at Bellecour and at Valence, and at last arrived at Avignon, where he was received like an angel from heaven.

During his stay in that city he occupied himself only with holy things, having dealings with the great of the court only for the interests of religion. After a few days spent in that city he set out for Lyons with the king of France and the duke of Savoy. While the city was celebrating the arrival of the two sovereigns, the holy bishop, fleeing the noise and tumult, had withdrawn to the monastery of the Visitation, to talk with the nuns

there of God and of eternal goods. One day when these holy daughters asked him to write on paper what he most desired of them, he wrote only this one word: “Humility.” St. Chantal, who was then making the visitation of her monasteries, arrived at Lyons, where she had the happiness of conferring with her holy director. The holy bishop was overwhelmed by the many visitors who came from all sides to consult him, and yet these visits did not make him neglect his other duties: he went to visit the poor, to whom he brought help, and he preached wherever he was asked. On the feast of St. John, feeling his sight grow weak, he said to those around him: “That means it is time to go, and I bless God for it; the body that sinks weighs down the soul.” Shortly afterwards he had a fainting fit, followed by an apoplexy: people hurried round him to relieve him. As the illness kept getting worse, he asked for Extreme Unction and answered all the prayers with the deepest feelings of piety: at his request, the ecclesiastics watching at his side often suggested to him acts of faith, hope, charity, conformity to the will of God, contrition and humility. The holy patient, whenever he came out of the drowsiness into which he kept falling back, conversed with his God, imploring His mercy and trusting himself to Him. He loved to repeat these words of holy Scripture: “O my beloved, show me the place where You feed Your lambs, where You rest in an unending noonday”; and he breathed out in this way the ardent sighs that overflowed from his heart: “O my God, all my desire is before You, and my groaning is known to You: my God and my all! my desire and the desire of the everlasting hills!” At last, his final hour having come, he lost his speech after pronouncing the holy name of Jesus; and while those present were reciting the prayers for the commendation of the soul, at the moment when the invocation was being said, *Omnes sancti Innocentes, orate pro eo* [All you holy Innocents, pray for him], he gave back his pure and innocent soul to God, on the day of the feast of the Holy Innocents, with the same calm and the same tranquillity that had presided over his whole life.

(PB now turns from the narrative to the Saint’s virtues; continued in the next part.)

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, BISHOP AND PRINCE OF GENEVA (continued, 5)

Having followed the holy bishop from his cradle to the tomb, we shall now examine in particular the fine qualities, the eminent virtues that adorned and crowned so holy a life.

To raise himself to so high a degree of holiness, Francis de Sales applied himself from an early age to prayer, which unites the soul to God. “Prayer,” he says, “placing our understanding in the brightness and light of God, there is nothing that so purges our understanding of its ignorance and our will of its depraved affections. It is the water of blessing which, by its watering, makes the plants of our good desires grow green and flower again, washes our souls of their imperfections, and slakes the thirst of our hearts from their passions.” In prayer he conversed with Our Lord as a child with his father; and in these divine communications with his Beloved nothing could distract him, as he admitted one day to a canon of Annecy: “I do not know what I have done to Our Lord; his mercy towards me is incomprehensible; for no sooner have I set myself to prayer than I forget everything except him; it seems to me then that I am no longer anything but his.” The drynesses he experienced in this holy exercise made him say: “When Our Lord gives me good feelings, I receive them in simplicity, with a very deep reverence mixed with confidence, keeping myself very humble, very little and very lowly before him, like a child of love. When he does not give me any, I do not think about it, and take no notice whether I am in consolation or in desolation.”

To the exercise of prayer he joined that of the presence of God. “Oh, how happy,” he exclaimed, “is the soul that, in the tranquillity of its heart, lovingly preserves the sacred sense of the presence of God! For its union with the divine goodness will steep its whole spirit in infinite sweetness. … And why should the soul recollected in God be disquieted? Has it not every reason to remain at rest? For what should it seek, since it has found him whom it sought? Nothing remains to it but to cry out: I have found him whom my heart loves, and I will not let him go.” To perfect himself in this holy exercise, which he called the guardian of purity and

innocence, he had recourse to several holy devices. “We must have God before our eyes,” he said, “always and in every place, alone as well as in company, at all times, yes, even in sleeping, lying down modestly in the presence of God, as one would do whom Our Lord, while still living on earth, commanded to sleep and lie down in his presence.” “Do,” he said again, “like little children who with one hand hold on to their father and with the other pick strawberries or blackberries along the hedges. So, handling the goods of this world with one of your hands, always hold with the other the hand of the heavenly Father, turning to him from time to time to see whether your occupations are pleasing to him. Amid affairs that do not require so close an attention, look more at God than at the affairs; and when the affairs require all your attention, at least from time to time look to God, like sailors who, to reach the land they desire, look up at the sky.” Besides prayer and recollection, he devoted a few days each year to a spiritual retreat.

The liveliness and greatness of the holy bishop’s faith are revealed in these words: “O God! my soul finds nothing hard to believe among the works of divine love: the beauty of our holy faith seems to me so ravishing that I die of love for it, and I think I must lock up the precious gift God has made me of it in a heart all perfumed with devotion. When our mind, raised above natural light, begins to see the sublime truths of faith, O Lord, what gladness! The soul melts with delight at hearing the word of its heavenly Spouse, which it finds sweeter than the honey of all human sciences, or at seeing his face, not indeed in the full day of glory, but in the faint light of the break of day. Oh, what delights the holy light of faith gives the soul, showing it with an incomparable certainty not only the origin and the destiny of creatures, but the birth of the divine Word, who, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, is one only God, most adorable and blessed for ever and ever! The learned Plato never knew this; the eloquent Demosthenes was ignorant of it. The happy pilgrims of Emmaus said, on hearing the words of faith: Was not our heart burning within us while he spoke to us on the way? Now, if divine truths give such great sweetness while they are still proposed only in the dim light of faith, O God, what will it be when we contemplate them in the noonday brightness of glory? The queen of Sheba exclaimed, after hearing the words of wisdom that came from Solomon’s mouth, that what she had been told of that wisdom was not the half of what experience made known to her; but when, having arrived in the heavenly Jerusalem, the King of glory shows us with an incomprehensible clarity the wonders of the sovereign truth, and we see unveiled what we believed here below, oh, then what raptures, what ecstasies, what admiration, what love, what sweetness! Never, we shall say in the excess of our transports, never would we have thought to see truths so delightful.”

One of his maxims was that we must walk before God according to the spirit of faith and not according to human sense. “A person,” he said, “is very gentle, very agreeable; he loves me and does me service; to cherish him only for that is to love according to the flesh and the senses; for the animals, which have no guide but the flesh and the senses, love their benefactors and those who treat them with gentleness and affection. But a person is rough, harsh, uncivil; I approach him, I show him affection, I do him service, not because I take pleasure in it, but because it is according to God’s good pleasure: that is acting in the spirit of faith. I am sad, and because of it I will not speak: parrots do that. I am sad, but since charity wishes me to speak, I will do so: that is living by faith. I am despised, and I am angry at it: peacocks and monkeys do that. I am despised, and I rejoice at it: that is imitating the Apostles. To live by faith, then, is to do the actions, say the words, and have the thoughts that the spirit of faith requires of us. The soul, leaning on the spirit of faith, takes courage amid difficulties, because it knows that God loves, bears with and succours the wretched who hope in him; it clings to God and often says that all that is not God is nothing, that what is not for eternity is only vanity.” All the Saint’s actions were done solely with God in view. “We must no longer,” he said, “use our heart, our eyes, our words to satisfy our humour and our inclinations, but only for the service of the heavenly Spouse.”

The hope of one day possessing the goods of the life to come made him sigh for the hour of departure. “Oh,” he said, “how long the time of my exile is drawn out! My soul languishes far from its homeland. … When

will all our hopes be solely for paradise? … When will divine love consume us, to make us die entirely to ourselves and live entirely to God? … O my God, what consolation I find in the assurance I have that my heart will be eternally engulfed in the love of the heart of Jesus! Let Providence lead us where it pleases: what does it matter? We shall arrive at that harbour."

His confidence in God is no less admirable. "Our Lord," he said, "taught me this lesson from my youth, and if I were to be born again, I would wish to let myself be governed, even in the least things, by this divine Providence, with the simplicity of a child and a deep contempt for all human prudence. It is a great joy to me to walk with my eyes closed under the guidance of Providence. Its designs are impenetrable, but always sweet and gentle to those who trust in it. Let us then leave it to steer our soul, which is its boat: it will bring us safe to harbour. Happy are those who trust in him who can, as God, and will, as Father, give us all that is good for us; unhappy, on the contrary, those who put their trust in the creature: the creature promises everything, gives little, and makes us pay very dear for the little it gives." In temptations he cried out: "The weaker I feel, the more I put my trust in God." Did the Lord delay to hear his prayer, he said: "Providence defers its help only to provoke our confidence. If our heavenly Father does not always grant us what we ask, it is to keep us near him and give us cause to press him with a loving violence, as he showed clearly with those two pilgrims of Emmaus, with whom he stayed only towards the end of the day and when they constrained him." To souls under trial he inspired confidence thus: "Let storm and tempest come, you will not perish: you are with Jesus. If fear seizes you, cry out loud: O Saviour, save me. He will stretch out his hand to you; hold it fast and go on joyfully, without philosophizing about your trouble. As long as St. Peter has confidence, the storm cannot make him sink; as soon as he fears, he sinks. Fear is a greater evil than the evil itself. You must not wish that no leaf of your tree be stirred; it must suffice you that it remain deeply rooted. If you fall, prostrate yourself before God and say to him in a spirit of confidence and humility: Mercy, Lord, for I am weak. Then rise again in peace and go forward, banishing all distrust by the thought that God is more merciful than we are miserable. Suffer without disquiet the privation of sensible consolations, one act done in dryness being worth more than several done with great tenderness, provided it be done with a stronger, though less pleasant, love. Finally, make a peaceful abandonment of your whole self to Providence amid the accidents of life and even in the presence of death. God has kept you until now; hold on to the hand of his providence, and he will help you; and where you cannot walk, he will carry you. Do not think about what will happen to you tomorrow: for the eternal Father, who has taken care of you today, will take care of you tomorrow and always. Either he will send you no evil, or, if he sends you any, he will give you an invincible courage to bear it. If you are exposed to the assaults of temptations, do not wish to be freed from them. It is good that we experience them, so as to have the occasion to fight them and win victories. That serves for the practice of the most excellent virtues and to establish them firmly in the soul."

In all his actions Francis de Sales acted from the pure love of God. One of his maxims was that the true sign of divine love is to love God in all things. "If we loved only God," he said, "poverty and riches, health and sickness, life and death, all the vicissitudes of this world would be indifferent to us, because we should see them all in God, who orders or permits them with infinite wisdom." To know well the love with which he burned for God, one need only read his *Treatise on the Love of God*, which is nothing but the faithful history of his heart and his life.

The highest degree of perfection a soul can attain is the perfect union of its will with God's: such was the life of St. Francis de Sales. "Do not look at all at the substance of the things you do," he said, "but at the honour they have, however paltry they may be, of being willed by God, of being in the order of his providence and arranged by his wisdom. Purity of heart consists in weighing all things in the scales of the sanctuary, which is nothing other than the will of God; love nothing too ardently, then, not even the virtues, which one sometimes loses by passing the bounds of moderation." Abandoning himself in all and for all to the divine good pleasure, he said: "Whatever may happen to me, nothing will make me depart from the firm resolution I

have of acquiescing fully in all that God may wish to do with me and with all that belongs to me. I wish to merge my will in God's, or rather I wish to let Our Lord will in me and for me all his good pleasure, and I lay down all care of myself in his hands." In his *Treatise on the Love of God*, book IX, this is the description he gives of a soul perfectly united to this divine good pleasure: "O God, may your will be done, not only in the carrying out of your commandments, counsels and inspirations, which we must obey, but also in the suffering of the afflictions that befall us; may your will do, by us, for us, in us and with us, all that it pleases. … The truly loving heart loves the divine good pleasure not only in consolations but also in afflictions; it loves it even more in crosses, pains and labours, because the chief virtue of love is to make the lover suffer for the beloved. … And how should one not bear adversities lovingly, since they proceed from the same hand of the Lord, equally lovable when it distributes afflictions as when it gives consolation? … Let us then open the arms of our will; let us embrace the cross most lovingly, acquiescing in the most holy will of God and singing to him the hymn of eternal acquiescence: Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. … No doubt pains in themselves cannot be loved; but, seen in the divine will that ordains them, they are infinitely lovable; they are all of gold, and more precious than words can say. … Let our will then be indifferent to all that God wills, and place itself in his hands like a ball of wax ready to take every impression of his good pleasure, without choice, without preference for anything whatever, without any love but that of the divine will, loving not the things God wills but the will of God that wills them, letting itself be led by that divine will as by a most lovable bond, to go happily wherever the divine good pleasure wishes, even to the point of preferring, were it possible, hell with the will of God to paradise without that divine will. … An indifference that must extend to everything: to natural things, such as health or sickness, beauty or ugliness, strength or weakness; to the things of civil life, such as honours, ranks, riches; to the things of the spiritual life, such as drynesses or consolations, relish or aridity; in short, to all events, and to action as to suffering. Oh, how blessed are such souls, bold and strong to pursue the undertakings God inspires in them, no less prompt to leave them when God so wills, and always as gentle in reverses as in successes!"

Penetrated with a lively sense of the divine greatness, St. Francis de Sales never pronounced the name of God or of Our Lord except with profound veneration. To stir the faithful to make the sign of the cross with deep respect, he devised the most graceful comparisons. "Regard your heart," he told them, "as a garden in which you will plant the sacred tree of the cross; or, if you prefer, consider it as a fortress where you raise the standard of the great King, which you must surrender only to him whose standard it is; or as a closet that you lock with the key of the cross, and that you must open only to him to whom the key belongs."

The love of the Saviour of men had so taken possession of his heart that he often expressed it, on every occasion, by these words: "Live Jesus, whom I love!" Speaking of the holy name of Jesus, he said: "How happy we should be to have in our understanding nothing but Jesus, in our memory nothing but Jesus, in our will nothing but Jesus, in our imagination nothing but Jesus! May it please this divine Child to steep our hearts in his blood and perfume them with his holy name, so that the good desires we have conceived may be all crimsoned and all fragrant with it! Let us kiss the feet of this Saviour a thousand times and say to him: My heart, O my God, calls you; my gaze longs for you; I sigh after your face." The passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ roused in his soul such violent transports of love that he exclaimed: "O God! if this divine Saviour has done everything for us, what shall we not do for him? If he gave his life for us, why should we not spend ours in his service and for his love? Oh, may the day of his most holy Passion be for ever the cherished day of our heart! O love, how sorrowful you are! O sorrow, how loving you are!" The cross was, in his view, the Christian's true book; and so he recommended that one always carry it on one's person and kiss it with love, saying to it: "O Jesus, beloved of my soul, allow me to clasp you to my breast like a bundle of myrrh. I promise you that my mouth, which is happy to kiss your holy cross, will henceforth abstain from slander, from murmuring, from every word that could displease you; that my eyes, which see your blood and your tears flow for my sins, will no longer look at the vanities of the world nor at anything that exposes me to offending you; that my ears, which listen with such consolation to the seven words you spoke on the cross,

will no longer take pleasure in vain praise, in useless conversations, in words that wound my neighbour; that my mind, after studying with such relish the mystery of the cross, will no longer open itself to vain or evil thoughts and imaginings; that my will, submitted to the laws of the cross and to the love of Jesus crucified, will have nothing but charity for my brethren; and finally that nothing will enter my heart or leave it except with the permission of the holy cross, whose sacred sign I will trace on myself with veneration at my lying down and my rising, and amid all the anguish of life."

The holy prelate had a tender devotion to the adorable sacrament of the Eucharist, and he constantly recommended frequent communion to the faithful. "Communicate boldly, in peace and in humility," he said, "to answer the desires of the divine Spouse, who, to unite himself with us, emptied and lowered himself even to becoming our food, the food of us who are the food of worms. Do not give up communion for your distractions and coldness, for all that passes in the senses without your consent; and nothing will so calm your spirit as its King, nothing will so warm it as its sun, nothing will soften it so sweetly as its balm. … God! what happiness for us that our soul, while awaiting the union we shall have with Our Lord in heaven, should unite itself to him by this divine sacrament, so that we eat by real communion him whom the cherubim and seraphim adore and eat by real contemplation. Then Jesus Christ is in every part of our being; there he straightens and purifies everything, he mortifies, quickens, sanctifies everything; he loves in the heart, he understands in the brain, he animates in the breast, he sees in the eyes, he speaks in the tongue, he does everything in us; and then we no longer live in ourselves, but Jesus Christ lives in us."

Love of the Mother being inseparable from love of the Son, he had a very special devotion to Mary, which he sought to communicate to others, both by recommending the recitation of the rosary and by establishing confraternities in her honour. It was to Mary that he dedicated his *Treatise on the Love of God*, and in his dedicatory epistle he shows us the holy ardours of his heart towards her: "Most holy Mother of God, the most lovable, the most loving and the most loved of all creatures, prostrate on my face before your feet, I dedicate and consecrate this little work of love to the immense greatness of your love. O Jesus, to whom can I better dedicate the words of your love than to the most lovable heart of the beloved of your soul?" St. Francis de Sales also had a great devotion to St. Joseph, to the guardian angels and to all the Saints.

His charity towards his neighbour was so perfect that pains, labours, inconveniences and the greatest dangers were nothing to him, provided he could be useful and helpful to his brethren in Jesus Christ. "One must do everything for one's neighbour except damn oneself," he said. "I have given him my whole person, my means, my affections, so that he may use them according to his needs. … I do not know how my heart is made; but I have such pleasure, I feel a sweetness so delicious and so particular in loving even my enemies, that if God had forbidden me to love them I should find it very hard to obey him. There is indeed some little struggle, but in the end one must come to this word of David: Be angry, and sin not." Had his neighbour faults? "Men must have patience with one another," he said, "and the bravest are those who best bear with the faults of others. … It is a great part of our perfection to bear with one another in our imperfections, and love of neighbour cannot be better exercised than in this forbearance. It is easy to love those who are of an agreeable and obliging character; but to love those who are perverse, of a vexatious and peevish humour, is the true touchstone of charity. … One must have a good and gentle heart towards one's neighbour, particularly when he is a burden and a disgust to us; for then we have nothing in him to make us love him except respect for the Saviour, which in such a case makes the love more excellent and more worthy, because it is purer and freer of perishable conditions." When he heard mockery or slander, he used to say: "To busy oneself searching out the faults of others is a sign that one gives little thought to one's own"; and again: "If slander were taken out of the world, the greater part of sins would be cut off."

The holy bishop's charity reached even beyond the tomb. "Alas," he said, "we do not remember our dear departed enough; their memory seems to perish with the sound of the bells, and we forget that friendship that can end, even by death, was never true, Scripture itself teaching us that true love is stronger than death. To

speak ill of the dead is an inhumanity comparable to that of the wild beasts that dig up bodies to devour them; to speak well of them so as to stir ourselves to imitate them is praiseworthy; but to relieve them is better still, for that is to visit the sick, to give drink to those who thirst for the vision of God; it is to feed the hungry, to ransom the captives, to clothe the naked, and to procure hospitality in the heavenly Jerusalem; it is to console the afflicted, to enlighten the ignorant, in short to do all the works of mercy in one."

Gentleness was the distinctive character of St. Francis de Sales: it was by gentleness that he converted so many sinners and brought back so many heretics. "One must act upon souls," he said, "as the angels do, by gracious movements and without violence; one must draw them, but in the manner of perfumes, which have no other power to draw after them than their sweetness; and sweetness, how could it draw except sweetly? In short, one must imitate the example of Jesus Christ, who, standing at the door of hearts, urges it to open without ever forcing it." He welcomed sinners with a mother's tenderness, saying to them: "Come, my dear children, come, let me embrace you and put you in my heart. God and I will help you; have confidence." When he was reproached for his too great compassion for his neighbour, he answered: "Ah, it is better to have to give account for too much gentleness than for too much severity. Is not God all love? God the Father is the Father of mercies; God the Son is called a lamb; God the Holy Spirit shows himself in the form of a dove, which is gentleness itself. If there were anything better than kindliness, Jesus Christ would have told us; and yet he gives us only two lessons to learn from him: meekness and humility of heart. Would you then prevent me from learning the lesson God has given me, and are you wiser than God?" And so he constantly recommended this virtue in these words: "The human mind is so made that it rears up against rigour: everything by gentleness, nothing by force. Harshness spoils everything, embitters hearts, breeds hatred; and the good it does, it does with so bad a grace that no one is grateful for it. Gentleness, on the contrary, handles the heart of man at will and fashions it according to its designs. … One makes penitents by gentleness, and hypocrites by severity."

In the course of the Saint's life we have spoken sufficiently of his zeal for the salvation of souls, which made him endure everything and undertake everything to convert some or bring others back into the way of virtue; we shall therefore not dwell on it further.

The prudence of St. Francis de Sales made all his works converge towards the greater glory of God and the salvation of souls, towards the exaltation of the faith and the good government of his diocese. This virtue shone brightly in the direction of souls, where he adapted his counsels and his language to every situation and every character. His simplicity shines in the following words, in which he seems to have painted himself: "See a very little child who as yet knows only its mother: it has but one love, which is for its mother; one sole aim, which is its mother's breast; lying on that beloved breast, it wants nothing else. So the soul that has perfect simplicity has but one love, which is for God; one sole aim, which is to rest on the breast of the heavenly Father and there, like a child of love, to make its dwelling, leaving all care of itself entirely to its good Father, without troubling about anything except to keep itself in this holy confidence. Even the desires of virtues and graces do not disquiet it; not that it neglects what it meets on its way, but it applies itself to it without hurrying to seek other means of perfection than those it has at hand. It turns neither to right nor to left to see what is said, thought or done; it simply follows its road, does what it judges it should do, and thinks no more of it; it keeps itself tranquil in the confidence it has that God knows its desire, which is to please him, and that suffices it." "Let us go on in simplicity," he said again, "without stopping to consider our actions in detail. As soon as our conscience bears us witness that we wish to do nothing except for holy love, let us walk with confidence, humility and simplicity. For my part, I think that we keep ourselves in the presence of God even in sleeping, when we fall asleep in his sight, at his pleasure and by his will, and he lays us on the bed like statues in their niche; and when we wake, we find that he is there beside us, that he has not stirred, and that we have kept ourselves in his presence, though with our eyes shut and closed."

St. Francis de Sales always attached great importance to modesty, which was the delight of his heart and seemed to shine forth in his whole person: indeed, everything in him breathed that lovable virtue. Humility, which consists in not esteeming oneself but in having the lowest opinion of oneself; in not seeking esteem and praise but in loving obscurity, humiliations and contempt, sums up in a way the whole life of the Saint. "All my life," he said one day, "I have desired the lowest place; and I so dreaded being a bishop, because people would make much of me, that it was a pain to my heart to find myself in a company where there was no prelate to whom I could submit myself. And so, but for the consideration of God's will, I should much rather have carried the holy water, a simple cleric, the better to attend to the salvation of the poor people, than carry the crozier in my hand and the mitre on my head." Here are the terms in which he speaks of this virtue, which he regards as absolutely necessary for salvation: "He who lays up virtue without humility is like one who carries dust in his hands in the wind. … Moral humility stops at the knowledge of one's misery and poverty; Christian humility goes as far as loving that poor and paltry condition, as far as being content to be nothing and to be counted for nothing, out of respect for the truth and for the humiliations of the incarnate Word. External acts of humility are not humility; but they are nevertheless very useful to it: they are the bark of the virtue, they preserve its fruit." When the holy bishop was the target of unjust blame, he used to say: "An ounce of virtue practised amid contradictions, censures and reprimands is worth more than ten pounds of virtue practised in calm."

Francis de Sales expected and desired no other greatness or prosperity in this world than that which the Son of God had in the crib of Bethlehem, because, he said, "whoever has his heart in heaven does not trouble himself about the things of earth." This elevation of soul above the goods of this world made him say: "When one has little, one has less to give, less care in spending, less worry in keeping or distributing, fewer accounts to render to God. To be content with this little, one need only consider those who are poorer than we: for we are poor only by comparison. If we want only what is necessary, we shall almost never be poor; if we want all that passion demands, we shall never be rich. The secret of growing rich in a short time and at little cost, then, is to moderate our desires; it is to imitate the sculptors, who make their work by taking away, and not the painters, who make theirs by adding. For my part, I hardly know poverty: God has been so good to me that he has given me what the Wise Man desired, a middle state between the needs of indigence and the abundance of riches; and, content with my lot, I count myself rich." It was this spirit of evangelical poverty that inspired his immense alms, his indifference to temporal goods, and his resistance to the offers of rich benefices that were made to him.

"We must live in this world," said St. Francis de Sales, "as if we had our spirit in heaven and our body in the tomb. Prayer without mortification is a soul without a body, just as mortification without prayer is a body without a soul." In keeping with this maxim, the Saint applied himself to practising every kind of mortification, taking the discipline to the point of blood; immolating the whole man in himself to God, that is to say mortifying his mind, his judgement, his will and his self-love; giving himself to rigorous fasting, from which, however, he abstained when he saw that his health might suffer from it. "For," he said, "it is in God's order that we treat our bodies according to their infirmities, that we spare them like poor invalids, with charity and patience; and this exercise is not the least meritorious, because it mortifies the heart and the courage. If the fulfilment of our duties brings us some illness or shortens our days, we must bless God for it and bear it with good grace; but, that apart, respect for Providence and charity towards ourselves oblige us to abstain from penances that ruin health, because, as it is a softness that smacks of the woman to be too tender of one's health, so it would also be a pride smacking of barbarism to despise it altogether. … As the spirit cannot carry the body when it is too fat, so the body cannot carry the spirit when it is too lean: one must treat the body like one's child, correct it without felling it."

In food he avoided everything that smacked of sensuality and refinement. One day, when he had been served a dish of poached eggs swimming in water, he went on, after eating the eggs, dipping his bread in the dish,

where there was nothing left but water; and when this was pointed out to him, he replied: “You were very wrong to reveal my mistake to me: for, thanks to my appetite, I have hardly ever eaten a sauce with more relish than this one; so true is the proverb: Hunger is the best sauce.” Another day he was served by mistake an egg quite rotten, which he ate without saying anything; and when they showed him the distress they felt at the mistake, he answered gently: “We have so often eaten good ones; why should we not eat bad ones, if God permits them to be set before us? Not to take what is served to you, and to pick and choose among the dishes, is to show a mind attentive to dishes and sauces; to eat what is good without taking pleasure in it, what is bad without showing aversion, and to show oneself as indifferent to the one as to the other: that is true mortification.” It was thus that he practised this word of Our Lord, “Eat such things as are set before you,” and recommended it to others. M. de Belley tells on this subject a charming instance of the Saint’s mortification: “One day,” he says, “when I had served him a very delicate morsel at my table, I noticed that he deftly put it in a corner of his plate in order to eat a coarser one. ‘I catch you in the act,’ I said to him. ‘And where is the precept: Eat what shall be set before you?’ ‘Do you not know, then,’ he answered me, ‘that I have a peasant’s stomach, which needs solid meats? Your delicate dishes would not sustain it.’ ‘Father,’ I replied, ‘those are your evasions; it is by such ruses that you hide your mortification.’ ‘Truly,’ he exclaimed, ‘I mean no subtlety, and I speak to you in all sincerity. I grant that my appetite finds more relish in delicate dishes; but, since one is at table to nourish oneself and not to satisfy gluttony, since one should eat only to live, I take what I know nourishes me better. It would be living to eat to choose one’s food by the taste of the dishes and sauces. Nevertheless, to do honour to your good cheer, if you have patience, I will give you satisfaction; and after laying the foundations of the meal with these more substantial foods, I will cover them with the delicacies you have to serve me.’”

Another virtue of the holy prelate was a patience mingled with so much love and gentleness that he was never heard to form the least desire that was not in conformity with the will of God. “Condescension to the humours of others, the gentle but just bearing with one’s neighbour: these,” he said, “are my cherished virtues. Oh, how much sooner it is done to accommodate oneself to others than to wish to bend others to our humours and our opinions!” He regarded persecution as the sovereign happiness of the present life, because, he said, “those who are unjustly persecuted bear better the likeness of the Saviour, and lead a life hidden with Jesus Christ in God: they seem wicked and they are good, dead and they are living, poor and they are rich, foolish and they are wise, detested before men but in blessing before God.”

To this virtue Francis de Sales joined a perfect evenness of soul, which had its source in humility and mortification. “Were the universe turned upside down,” he said, “we should not be troubled, because the universe is not worth the peace of the soul.” And this is what made him say to St. Chantal: “Does some pain befall us? We must receive it with calm submission to God’s good pleasure. Does some cause of joy befall us? We must receive it peacefully and moderately, without leaping up for it. Must we flee evil? It must be peacefully and without being troubled; otherwise, in fleeing, we might fall and give the enemy leisure to kill us. Must we do good? We must do it peacefully; otherwise we should commit many faults in our haste. Is one struck by the number of one’s imperfections? One must not be troubled at it; for there is nothing that preserves them more than disquiet and eagerness to remove them. Finally, is one the target of temptations? One must not on that account be disquieted nor change one’s posture: it is the devil going all round our mind, ferreting to see whether he can find some open door.” Holding invariably to the practice of this virtue, he was seen everywhere and always with the same modesty and the same gentleness, the same affability, the same evenness of soul and of bearing, the same care to please God and to make virtue lovable to others.

St. Francis de Sales is represented: 1° holding in one hand a scroll on which are read the words *Vive Jésus* (“Live Jesus”; it was the heading of almost all his letters), and in the other a flaming heart, in allusion to his great charity, to his *Treatise on the Love of God*, and to the arms he chose for his dear daughters of the Visitation; 2° appearing to St. Vincent de Paul in the form of a luminous globe, which is joined by another,

smaller globe (St. Chantal), the two going to lose themselves in an immense sphere of fire (God himself) that draws them from on high.

He is the patron of Annecy, of Chambéry and of the Visitandines.

CULT AND RELICS

As soon as the news of the holy bishop's death had spread through the city of Lyons, a unanimous and spontaneous cry proclaimed his holiness: the faithful came in crowds to honour his body and to touch it with their rosaries and other objects of devotion. The intendant of justice having ordered it to be opened and embalmed, all the blood that this operation caused to flow was gathered up in linen cloths and handkerchiefs by the piety of the faithful as precious relics. They even went so far as to scrape the table and the floor where a few drops had fallen, and religiously to collect everything that had served the holy sick man. The funeral rites were performed for him in the church of the Visitation on 30 December. The holy remains left Lyons on 18 January 1623, and on their arrival at Annecy a magnificent funeral was held, after which the body was laid in the church of the Visitation, in a modest mausoleum that had been raised to his memory. This place soon became a goal of pilgrimage, where the crowd hastened from all sides to venerate the holy bishop's remains. His letters, his books, his clothes, everything that had been in his use, were piously gathered as so many relics. Amid this universal veneration France did not lag behind: the piety of her faithful invoked him as a Saint, and her bishops, in the assembly of the clergy of 1625, addressed a collective letter to Pope Urban VIII to ask for the beatification of the servant of God. The clergy of France did not stop at this first request, but renewed its solicitations on 11 August 1630, 12 January 1656, 2 September 1660 and 15 June 1661, so much did it have at heart the glorification of the holy bishop.

Madame de Chantal, witness of the countless miracles that were worked every day at the servant of God's tomb, caused juridical inquiries to be set on foot into his life and miracles. An official inquiry, ordered by the Holy See, began at Annecy in 1627, and on 4 August 1632 the tomb was opened: the body was found without injury or alteration. The documents of the process, having been taken to Rome in 1634, were deposited in the Vatican archives. Owing to the intrigues of the Jansenists to obstruct the beatification, the cause rested there until 1655. Under the pontificate of Alexander VII, in 1656, the prosecution of the process was resumed, and the decree of beatification was issued on 28 December 1661. At length, after new inquiries and new discussions, Blessed Francis de Sales was solemnly canonized on 19 April 1665. The Saint's name was thenceforth on every lip as in every heart, and numerous miracles and striking conversions were the reward of so fervent a religious cult.

At the time of the Revolution the Saint's body was placed in a secret spot, to remove it from the sacrilegious hands of the revolutionaries. After the reign of the Terror, when it was permitted to reopen the churches, the daughters of the Visitation of Annecy built themselves a new monastery and a new church: the holy bishop's body was laid in a magnificent shrine and carried in great pomp to the church of the Visitation. The shrine is placed above the altar, against the back wall of the sanctuary, and numerous pilgrims come every day to venerate the precious relics enclosed in it.

The heart of St. Francis de Sales was deposited in the church of the Visitation of Bellecour at Lyons; but before it was shut in the leaden box that was to contain it, it was placed in the hands of St. Jane Frances de Chantal, who was then in that city; and when they went to place it in the box, a particle of that precious heart came away and remained in the Saint's hands. The monastery of the Visitation of Nevers possesses this venerated particle. As for the heart deposited in the church of the Visitation of Bellecour, it was later placed in a silver reliquary, then in a magnificent gold reliquary, a gift of Louis XIII. When the nuns of Bellecour abandoned their monastery as a result of the revolutionaries' persecutions, they took refuge in Venice and carried this precious deposit with them. Besides the particle of the heart of the holy bishop of Geneva of which we have spoken, and several particles of his flesh, the Visitandines of Nevers also possess: 1° his

mitre, woven and made by St. Chantal; it was the one he most usually wore; it was sent by M. Jean-François de Sales, the Saint's brother, to Madame de Montmorency; 2° the chasuble the Saint used to say holy Mass when he came to Moulins; 3° the little collection of the Constitutions that he habitually carried on him; 4° several of his autograph letters; 5° his portrait in miniature, which St. Chantal possessed and gave up in favour of Madame de Montmorency.

For this biography we have analysed the *Life of St. Francis de Sales* by M. Hamon, curé of Saint-Sulpice, and have completed it with the *Hagiologie nivernaise* of Mgr Crosnier and the *Caractéristiques des Saints* of Fr. Cahier, S.J. See the Supplement for his writings.

ST. ANTONY, MONK OF LÉRINS (ABOUT 525)

St. Antony, born in Pannonia, was the son of Secundinus, whose birth made him a man of note in the eyes of the world. He was only eight years old when he lost his father. St. Severinus, the apostle of Austria and Bavaria, had occasion to know him; he was so struck by the blessings with which heaven had prevented him that he foretold that he would one day be a great servant of God. About the year 482 Antony withdrew to the bishop of Constance, his paternal uncle, and afterwards passed into Italy. Having heard of a holy priest named Marius, who lived in the Valtellina, he placed himself under his direction and made great progress in virtue. But as they wished to raise him to holy orders, he fled into the Alps on the side of the Milanese and stopped near the tomb of St. Fidelis, on a deserted mountain. There he found two hermits, who admitted him into their company, but whom death carried off one after the other. He resolved to remain alone in that place. His prayer was continual and his fasts rigorous. He took rest only when exhausted nature forced him to it. A man dressed as a hermit came one day to ask him for hospitality; he thought it was a solitary leading the same kind of life as himself; but God made known to him that it was a criminal who, under cover of this disguise, wished to escape the pursuit of justice, and he obliged him to leave. The visits his reputation was beginning to draw to him soon became unbearable to him. He plunged into the wilderness and lived for several years unknown under a rock. At length he was discovered there, and people hastened from every side to his cave. He left it and came to shut himself up in the monastery of Lérins. The monks who lived there found in him a model of perfection such as they had never seen among them. But they did not possess him long: he had been at Lérins only two years when he died. His death is placed about the year 525. His name, made famous by various miracles, is read on this day in the Roman Martyrology.

Godescard. — See his life written by St. Ennodius, bishop of Pavia, a contemporary author. It is found among the works of that holy bishop, of which Fr. Sirmond produced a good edition, as well as in the collection of Surius and in the Chronicle of Lérins by Barralis.

[1] This abbey, founded in 1125 by Rainard, lord of Montbard, and confirmed in 1129 by Joceran, bishop of Langres, was reformed by St. Francis de Sales in 1608, then under Louis XIV in 1643, and finally made subject to the Rule of the Val-de-Grâce of Paris. The abbesses were appointed by the king. St. Francis de Sales often went there: his pulpit, his confessional and several things that had served for his use were preserved there.

29 December

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY

At Canterbury, in England, the heavenly birthday of St. Thomas, bishop and martyr, who was slain with swords in his cathedral by wicked men for the defence of justice and of ecclesiastical immunities, and so entered into a share of the glory of Jesus Christ. 1170. — At Jerusalem, St. David, king and prophet. Year of the world 2950. — At Arles, the precious death of St. Trophimus, whom St. Paul mentions in one of his Epistles to Timothy. Consecrated bishop by the same Apostle, he was sent first to that city to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and it was from the living spring of his preaching, as Pope St. Zosimus writes, that all

the Churches of Gaul received the streams of the faith.[1] 1st c. — At Rome, the holy martyrs Callistus, Felix and Boniface. — In Africa, the martyrdom of Saints Dominic, Victor, Primian, Lybosus, Saturninus, Crescens, Secundus and Honoratus. — At Vienne, in Dauphiné, St. Crescens, disciple of the Apostle St. Paul and first bishop of that city.[2] 1st c. — At Constantinople, St. Marcellus, abbot. 485 or 486. — In the Hiémois, St. Evroult, abbot and confessor, who lived in the time of King Childebert. 707.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED

In the dioceses of Saint-Flour, Sens and Viviers, St. Thomas of Canterbury, bishop and martyr, named in the Roman Martyrology of this day. 1170. — At Bourges, the death of St. Ursinus, first bishop of that see.[3] — In the former Benedictine abbey of Saint-Wandrille (*Fanum Vandregisili*), in Normandy, the martyrdom of St. Gerard, reformer of Saint-Arnoul and of Fontenelle. 1031. — At Bourges, St. Florentius, bishop of that see and confessor. He succeeded in 644 St. Sulpicius the Debonair (17 January), who had himself designated him and had for some time already chosen him as his coadjutor. It was under this great bishop that he learned to govern a diocese; and he fully justified his predecessor's choice, sanctifying himself while working for the salvation of his flock. A pious lady named Eustadiola, having consulted him on the use she should make of her goods, he advised her to found a monastery of women; she entered it herself and ended her life there in holiness. As for St. Florentius, he died after an episcopate of twenty years.[4] 664. — Formerly, in the Benedictine abbey of Nyoiseau or Nid-Oiseau (*Nidavicelli*, founded in 1068, a league from Segré), in the diocese of Angers, St. Albert, abbot of Gambron.[5] 7th c. — At Dickelvenne or Diclevenne (Belgium), in the diocese of Ghent, St. Hilduard (Hilduart, Heldouard), missionary in Flanders, already named in the Martyrology of France of 7 September. About 750.

MARTYROLOGIES OF THE RELIGIOUS ORDERS

Martyrology of the Order of St. Basil. — At Constantinople, St. Marcellus, abbot, of the Order of St. Basil. 488.

Martyrology of the Canons Regular. — At Canterbury, in England, St. Thomas, bishop and martyr, who, to serve God with greater freedom and security, entered the institute of the Canons Regular. Struck with the sword in his basilica for the defence of justice and of ecclesiastical immunities by a faction of wicked men, he passed to Jesus Christ. 1170.

Martyrology of the Cistercian Order. — The same as with the Canons Regular.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS

Among the Friars Preachers, Blessed Paul of St. Mary, confessor, of the Order of St. Dominic. This admirable servant of God took the habit of a lay brother at the convent of Seville (Andalusia). His tender devotion delighted all the brethren; but, as his delicate constitution gave way under the fervour of his spirit, it obliged the Fathers of the council to dismiss him. While the Father Master was preparing to make him leave the habit, his guardian angel, in the form of a young man, went and hid his secular clothes, and came to tell the Father Master of novices, on behalf of the prior, not to send Brother Paul away. This wonder having been carefully examined, the Brother was admitted to profession. His austerities were excessive, his prayer continual, and his interior and exterior perfection so great from the first days of his religious life that his astonished brethren said to one another: "What then will be the end of this life whose beginning is so beautiful!" God had granted him the gift of miracles in a high degree. All the sick who touched his hands were healed; and when, out of humility, he hid them, quite confused at hearing it said that they worked miracles, his scapular worked the same wonders; if he kept away from the sick, his shadow had the same power. Often his guardian angel took his form and appeared to those who invoked his name, on land and sea, and delivered them from the dangers in which they found themselves. When he filled the office of porter, the more he gave to the poor, the more he had to give: everything multiplied under his hand. The second porter

often found full of white bread the baskets our Blessed had emptied in the morning. The process of the Blessed Brother's canonization, which has been begun, is not yet finished. 1597.

DAVID, KING OF ISRAEL AND PROPHET

Quanto in peccando fuit ad malum promptior mentis intentio, tanto devotior debet esse in poenitendo.

The more ardour the soul has put into sinning, the more eagerness it must have in doing penance.

St. Isidore of Spain.

The rejection of Saul had just been pronounced. The prophet Samuel received from on high the order to go to the little village of Bethlehem, in the tribe of Judah, and there to anoint as king one of the sons of Isai, also called Jesse. The prophet took oil in a horn, led a victim with him to offer a sacrifice to God, and came to Bethlehem. After the religious ceremony he told his secret to Isai and asked that the old man's sons be called, for he did not know which of them was destined for the throne. The eldest seemed well made and of pleasing appearance. But an inward voice taught Samuel that neither a brilliant exterior nor an air of grandeur determined the choice of Providence, and that this man was not according to God's heart. The Prophet's eyes passed one after another over all the children of Jesse without the voice pointing out any of them. Then he said to the father: "Are these all thy sons?" The father answered: "There remains yet the youngest, who keeps the sheep." — "Send for him," said Samuel, "for we will take no food until he has come." The young shepherd was sent for; he appeared. His name was David, his age about twenty. His face was full of charm, his eye and complexion full of brightness, his hair of that warm colour which the Jews, like the ancient peoples of Germany, preferred to every other. At his arrival the voice said to Samuel: "It is he; arise, give him the holy anointing." Samuel poured the oil on David's head as a sign of his future royalty. As yet it was only an election, carrying a radical right to govern Israel, but one presently impeded. The act remained for some time the secret of the family. Nevertheless David began from then on to show in his conduct those superior qualities which the exercise of power demands; and on the other hand circumstances, ordered and guided by an invisible hand, ranged themselves beneath him, as though to raise him above the crowd and give him that pedestal which is not merit, but which makes merit seen.

Some time afterwards, in one of those unquenchable wars which came, like salutary crises, to assail the constitution of the Jewish nation and to strengthen it by exercise, a Philistine soldier proposed to the brave men of Israel to end the quarrel that was tearing the two nations by single combat. The two camps were posted on heights overlooking the valley of the Terebinth. It is a narrow, deep valley that runs, beyond the village of Jeremiah, on the right of the road from Jaffa to Jerusalem. The Philistine warrior was of immense stature, more than twice the ordinary height. His head, his limbs, his whole body were clad in iron and brass. Of prodigious strength, he wore a breastplate of enormous weight; a broad and mighty shield and a formidable spear served him for attack and defence. This giant was named Goliath. In his pride he was seen for several days running to come forward between the two armies and fling at all Israel a challenge full of boasting: "Why set the battle in array?" he said. "Am I not a Philistine, and are you not the servants of Saul? Choose a man from among you, and let him accept a fight with me. If he dare attack me and kill me, we will be your slaves; but if I prevail against him and kill him, you shall be our tributaries and our slaves." Saul and his whole army stood dumb with stupor at the sight of this colossus: fear had frozen their courage. Goliath for his part drew from the faint-heartedness of his enemies an increase of insolence, after the manner of barbarians, who are inclined to set off the superiority of their bodily strength with childish bragging.

The Israelites were preparing to answer the terrible Philistine's provocations with a general battle when David arrived at the camp. His three elder brothers were in the expedition. His father had said to him: "Take an ephah of barley and these ten loaves, and go to thy brothers. Carry also these ten cheeses to their captain." There was then no standing army. In dangers to the country it was proclaimed among the twelve tribes that every man ready to fight should go to an appointed place. The citizens came there with their arms and their

provisions, for war was waged at their own cost; there were no resources regularly set aside for the upkeep of troops. David, rising very early, entrusted his flock to a hired man and set out to carry out his father's orders. On reaching the valley of the Terebinth he left his burden among the army's baggage and ran to the scene of the struggle, for an immense clamour seemed to announce that the action was soon to begin. At that moment Goliath, come out of the Philistine ranks, was giving himself up one last time to his bravado, and terror entered the hearts of the Israelites. "Do you see this man who challenges us?" one of them said. "He comes to insult Israel. Whoever kills him the king will load with riches; he will give him his daughter in marriage and make him and his father's house free of tribute." These promises, the instinct for great things, and above all the desire to avenge God — whose cause, closely bound up with that of the Jews, suffered from every insult offered them — so many motives filled the young hero with the fire of a religious courage. He made sure of the truth of the reports that struck his ear. "What shall be given to the brave man who kills this Philistine," he said, "and takes away the reproach of Israel? For who is this profane man who defies the army of the living God?" The rewards reserved for the victor were repeated to him. Then David offered himself to fight the giant, and in spite of the jealous rebukes of his eldest brother and the advice even of the king, who at first sought to turn him from too unequal a contest, he persisted in his generous purpose. "When a bear or a lion," he said to Saul, "came and took a ram out of my flock, I would pursue them, fight them, and tear the prey from between their teeth; and when they rose against me, I would take them by the throat, strangle them and kill them. Thus I have slain a lion and a bear, and I will do the same to this profane man. I will go, then, and take away the reproach of the people. … The Lord, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the mouth of the bear, will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine," added the young herdsman with a calm and religious confidence; for he knew that there is in heaven a supreme council where victory is decided, and where sincere faith speaks louder than the best-wielded sword. It was from such a source, indeed, that David drew his daring and his hope. He had first been clad in Saul's armour, but he soon put it off as an equipment more hindering than useful. He took only his shepherd's staff; he chose five smooth stones from the bed of the brook and put them in his scrip, and with his sling in his hand he went out against the enemy. Goliath advanced on his side; but, seeing only a fair and handsome youth, he despised him utterly. "Am I a dog," he said, "that thou comest to me with a staff?" And he swore by his gods to give him as a prey to the birds and the beasts. David answered: "Thou comest to me with sword, spear and shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts, whom thou hast defied this day. He will deliver thee into my hands; I will slay thee and cut off thy head, and I will give the carcasses of the Philistines to the birds and the beasts, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, and that all this multitude may know that the Lord saves not by sword nor by spear; for the battle is his, and he will deliver you into our hands." The two armies awaited the issue of this memorable duel. The Philistine moved to come forward; the shepherd ran, took a pebble from his scrip, and with his sling threw it so true and so hard that it struck the giant's forehead and sank into his head. Goliath fell on his face to the earth; David rushed upon his adversary, took his sword from him and beheaded him.

No one can tell what terror and disorder this unlooked-for downfall spread among the Philistines: seeing that the most formidable of them was dead, they fled in panic. The Israelites, raising shouts of victory, gave chase; they killed a great number and came and plundered their abandoned camp. Saul wished to see the young hero, who did indeed appear before him, holding in his hand the head of Goliath. The king inquired about the birth and family of his future son-in-law and kept him at the palace. David behaved with extreme prudence; his fine qualities and the memory of his first feat of arms won him universal esteem and admiration. Above all he won the affection of Jonathan, Saul's eldest son: equally generous, closely bound together, these two souls became one. Jonathan gave the newcomer his tunic, his bow, his sword and his belt, and they swore an everlasting friendship. To this token, already so sweet to David, the nation added its gratitude and its applause. In a kind of triumphal march that followed the rout of the Philistines, the women came out of the cities to meet the procession, expressing their joy with songs and dances. They repeated in

chorus the words: “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands,” not reflecting that to throw flowers on the heads of subordinates is to deliver them over to the vindictive jealousy of their chiefs. The king took a dislike to the glorious young man, far from granting him the reward due to his courage. True, he said to him: “Here is Merob, my elder daughter; I will give her thee to wife; only be valiant and fight the battles of the Lord”; but at the same time he thought in his heart: I will not kill him with my own hand; I will have him perish by the sword of the enemy. Then he added insult to his designs: his elder daughter, whom he had promised to the conqueror of Goliath, he basely gave to another.

David no doubt felt this bitter ingratitude keenly; nevertheless it does not appear that complaints came from his mouth, or that he ceased calmly to leave the care of his fortune to heaven. What is certain is that Saul saw the difficulties he raised turn at once against himself. His second daughter, named Michal, was charmed by David’s fine qualities; perhaps too her gentle and generous soul, seeing the injustices the young courtier suffered, was touched by a pity which soon changed into a livelier and more intimate feeling. At first Saul’s policy accommodated itself very well to this incident; he did not doubt that David, to win Michal, would consent to brave every peril and would end by finding death in them. “I will promise him my daughter,” he thought, “that she may be a snare to him, and that he may fall into the hands of the Philistines.” Following this tragic calculation, he said openly to David: “I will give thee Michal, but not without a condition.” And he said in secret to his confidants: “Speak to David as of yourselves, in these terms: Thou knowest that thou hast the prince’s favour and that his officers love thee; think then of becoming his son-in-law.” The world, as we see, has long known and practised this strategy of words, which takes the place of courage and virtue in the lives of certain statesmen.

David’s soul was without suspicion because it was without malice. He answered the palace officers’ message ingenuously: “Is it not too great an honour to be the king’s son-in-law? I am poor and have no means.” Among the Israelites the wife brought into the marriage only her ornaments and the things needed for her personal use; the dowry was provided by the husband. This arrangement embarrassed the shepherd of Bethlehem at that moment far more than the daughter of Saul; that is why he had given only an answer marked by diffidence and discouragement. The officers hastened to report it to their master. It was in keeping with the prince’s expectations and, above all, with his wishes. Saul sent word to David that he asked as his daughter’s dowry, not gold and silver, but the death of a hundred Philistines. For since the battle of the Terebinth the two nations had remained in expectation of fresh hostilities. By stipulating his daughter’s marriage under such a condition Saul had the advantage of exposing David to almost certain death and of hiding his murderous game under the mask of patriotism and national glory.

But if God lets us trace our road, he reserves to himself where it shall end. Saul was deceiving both his confidants and David; above all he was deceiving himself: his fraud reassured him, but could not save him. Ever full of uprightness and fearlessness, David readily accepted the king’s proposal. A delay of some days was allowed him; but he set out at once at the head of his faithful band, attacked the Philistines and killed two hundred of their men. This swift and victorious expedition grieved Saul; his jealousy grew; but at last he felt that the hand of God was against him and that he must yield to the times. So he gave his daughter in marriage to the young and brilliant conqueror of Goliath.

Michal’s affection was measured by the dangers David had undergone and by the courageous fidelity he had shown. He himself rejoiced in the beauty of so sweet an alliance, with that keen and deep feeling which accompanies the triumph of honourable and hard-tried affections. Everything embittered Saul’s ulcerated soul; the good understanding of the newly married pair was an extreme bitterness to him. Two things above all fed his aversion: he was forced to esteem his son-in-law, and he saw him illustrious and happy. Perhaps he had counted on Michal to sadden and compromise David’s destiny; but he was disappointed in his hope. Then, understanding that he could not overcome him by secret measures, he feared him; and his hatred, together with his fear, grew stronger day by day. On the other hand, further military operations directed

against the Philistines increased David's fame; he acquired a great name for prudence and valour, and the people grew used to hearing the young captain spoken of with glory. This last blow overthrew Saul's shaken virtue and threw him into the party of violence. Sometimes he seemed disarmed by the gentleness of his victim; then he resumed the persecution more harshly. At length, beset by jealousy, he resolved to have David killed; he spoke to this effect to his officers and to Jonathan. But the heart of this young prince could not open to so base a counsel; and the voice of sworn friendship added itself to the cry of honour. He went secretly to his friend. "Saul my father seeks to kill thee," he said. "I pray thee, be on thy guard; tomorrow morning flee into the country and keep hidden in some retreat. For my part, I will bring my father to that place; I will speak to him of thee, and what I learn I will tell thee at once." Jonathan hoped to appease Saul, to spare him a crime and to save his friend. And in fact he drew the king out into the country and spoke to him of David in most generous terms: "Prince, be not cruel to David, for he has done you no harm; on the contrary he renders you the most important services. He put his life in peril, he slew Goliath, and by his hands the Lord wonderfully wrought the salvation of Israel. You saw it and rejoiced. Why then shed such pure blood and kill David, who is innocent?" There is in the accents of devoted friendship a secret warmth which is true eloquence. Saul's soul softened under the persuasive sincerity of Jonathan's words; he swore to spare his son-in-law's life. Jonathan sent for David and then presented him to Saul. One might have believed in a lasting reconciliation.

But the king's envy was appeased, not extinguished. It was like, if we may judge by later events, a sleeping fire which a breath can rekindle, a living seed which strengthens underground when one tries to keep it down above. David had resumed his rank and his functions among the officers of the palace. He made more than one successful raid into the lands of the Philistines, ever restless and untamed. This fresh success quickly wearied the prince's feeble heart and revived ill-smothered angers. A prey to his dark feelings, Saul fell into a kind of raging mania that made him dangerous. One day his son-in-law, unsuspecting, was playing the harp before him to calm him; Saul tried to pierce him with his spear. David saw the danger in time to avoid the weapon, which struck violently against the wall. He fled in haste. The king, pushing his bloody design to the end, ordered his guards to surround David's house during the night and to kill him the next morning. Happily Michal was informed of these murderous measures in time; she ran to David: "Flee this very night," she said, "for tomorrow thou art a dead man." There was only one difficulty: the guards were at the door of the house, and their vigilance had to be deceived. The darkness of night was used. Michal let David down through a window, and so he was able to escape. Then, to give him time to withdraw to a safe place, she used a stratagem. Foreseeing that a search would be made, she put a kind of statue in the fugitive's bed, threw a goatskin over its head, and spread the coverlet over this likeness of a human body.

Meanwhile Saul, astonished that the news of his orders' execution was so long delayed, sent archers to seize David's person. They were told that he was ill. Furious at the delay and unable to bear it any longer, the prince demanded that the sick man be brought, even carried in his bed, so that he might see him slaughtered in his presence. Michal had thought her artifice provided for everything. The men from the palace, on their arrival, insisted on going in to David; but they found only a statue hidden under a goatskin. Saul's indignation is easy to imagine. He summoned his daughter: "Why hast thou deceived me thus, and why hast thou let my enemy escape?" Michal feared that her tenderness for David would not be enough to excuse her before a father blinded by hatred, and, having recourse to dissimulation, she answered that David had frightened her with this threat: "Let me go, or I will kill thee." Whether persuaded, or from a return of affection for his daughter, Saul carried his inquiries no further. Thus God permits that violence does not succeed in breaking everything it attacks; and not the least of its punishments is the solemn impotence in which it sometimes ends in its most obstinate efforts.

(The life continues in the next part.)

DAVID, KING OF ISRAEL AND PROPHET (continued, 2)

David had taken the road to Ramatha, where old Samuel had withdrawn on leaving public life; his last years were passing among a college of prophets, whom he taught the knowledge of the Eternal. He received with interest this fugitive, whose future greatness he had hailed beforehand. But soon, pursued by Saul, David was forced to seek a surer refuge. He wished to see Jonathan once more. The two friends had a secret meeting, in which their souls poured themselves out in mutual and tender protestations of attachment. David would no longer trust Saul's words, and that was prudence. Jonathan nevertheless hoped to bring about a new reconciliation; he did not succeed, and he even nearly perished in his fruitless attempt, so violently did the king's anger turn upon him. He left the palace in indignation; he was grieved at David's sad lot and at his coming departure, for he loved him as his own life. The next morning he went to join him in the country, in the retreat where he knew him to be hidden. They embraced with deep feeling and began to weep, David above all shedding abundant tears: before an implacable hatred he had to leave what he held dearest in the world, both Michal and Jonathan. At last they parted, swearing once more a fidelity proof against everything. Jonathan went back to the city, and David began that wandering and ever-threatened life which was to end in so great a reign — an illustrious symbol of those painful combats which free man from the tyranny of the senses, show him superior to difficulties, and raise him to virtue and to glory.

Finding no safety in the places where his persecutor's power reached, David first fled into the land of the Philistines; but he soon had to leave this refuge, where his former exploits made him especially hateful and roused deadly suspicions against him. He came back to live in a cave near Odollam, a little town of his tribe. He could defend himself only by making himself feared, and so he took the attitude of a party chief. His whole family, involved in his disgrace, shared his dangers and helped him in his resistance. Besides, he gathered under his command a crowd of the discontented, of vagrants, of men burdened with debt. He disciplined this band, which, growing every day, numbered no fewer than six hundred men of resolute character, hardened by rapid marches and adventurous raids. The men of the tribe of Gad above all were strong and valiant, skilled in battle, handling shield and spear, bold as lions and swift as the roes of the mountains. With these resources David could move at will to the various frontiers of the kingdom and live there at the expense of his nation's enemies. But, being far too weak to fight a whole army in the open field, he fled from retreat to retreat before Saul. For some time he had settled in the wilderness of Ziph, in the south of the tribe of Judah, on the road that would lead from Jerusalem to Sinai. This desert was ringed with posts made very strong by their position; David quartered his men there. He himself kept to the centre of this stronghold, on a height covered with trees and bushes and protected on the west by a forest. It was there that Jonathan's anxious friendship at last found him. They went off together into the forest and had a conversation full of sweetness and sadness. Jonathan, with a wholly manly affection, strengthened David's courage and told him of his desire and hope to see him one day on the throne. "Fear nothing," he said; "the hand of Saul shall not reach thee; one day thou shalt reign over Israel, and I will stand in the second place. My father himself knows thy destiny." It was their last farewell; they never met again on earth.

Saul, informed in his turn of David's retreat, thought it would be easy to hem him in closely in his mountains and force him to surrender. He came himself at the head of his troops to besiege him, and he would in fact have taken him but for the sudden news of a Philistine invasion, which called him back to the centre of his kingdom. This unhoped-for diversion saved David, who fled towards the Dead Sea and hid among rocks hard of access, near Engaddi. But he was no less harassed there by the implacable Saul, and he fell back as far as Arabia Petraea, into the wilderness of Pharan. Twice, amid the ups and downs of this troubled life, he had an easy chance of killing Saul with his own hand; he preferred to spare that head which the interpreter of Jehovah had marked with the royal anointing, and to wait until heaven itself should choose its hour. At the same time he surrounded his enemy with tokens of his submission and respect, and contented himself with reproaching him with the greatest mildness. Saul was moved by such lofty generosity, and, sighing and in

tears, he said: “Thou art more just than I; for thou hast done me nothing but good, and I have returned thee nothing but evil.”

It was again amid the bitterness of his exile that David learned what had become of Michal. He had given neither consent nor bill of divorce that she could claim. Nevertheless Saul married her to Phaltiel, a man of his tribe, whether to avenge himself on his enemy by grieving him, or to rescue his daughter from the kind of widowhood into which David’s absence plunged her. This was an outrage against the institutions of the country and against natural right, under which the man only, and not the woman, could find a certain tolerance in the matter of polygamy. And so David, who in his flight had for his part taken to wife Abigail, the widow of Nabal, did not think himself obliged to hold Michal’s new engagement as lawful and binding; and as soon as the change in his fortunes let him dictate conditions, his first word was for the daughter of Saul, the dear object of a tenderness so cruelly tried.

Saul had just perished, with Jonathan and two other young princes, in a battle fought against the Philistines near Gelboe. There still remained a son of Saul, who undertook to reign under the guardianship and protection of Abner, his kinsman, an experienced but ambitious general. And indeed almost the whole nation submitted to the young king’s authority. At first David was recognized only by the men of Judah. He made his residence at Hebron, which this stay has made famous. It was there that the warriors of his tribe came to him. They gave him the royal anointing again, no doubt to mark their consent to the choice made by Samuel and to proclaim solemnly a right until then disputed. The party of Saul’s son lasted more than seven full years. Nothing suggested that the feeble kingship of Hebron would soon extend over the whole country when Abner, stung by a rebuke from his master — or rather his ward — threatened him to his face to abandon his cause and make the people desert it. And in fact he at once sent confidants, who said on his behalf to the king of Judah: “Is not the whole land thine? Let us make an alliance; my service is thine, and I will bring all Israel back to thee.” David had rights: finding a means of defending them without bloodshed, he seized it willingly and welcomed the advances of the vindictive soldier. “Yes,” he answered through the envoys, “I will make an alliance with thee; but above all I demand one thing: I will not receive thee unless thou give me back Michal, the daughter of Saul. On that condition we will treat together.” Well assured that from now on a wish backed by Abner would meet no refusal, David asked for Michal back from the young prince, his rival. The latter, intimidated, ordered Phaltiel to send the princess back to him.

Meanwhile the imperious Abner was disposing the minds of all the people in favour of the king of Hebron, and in particular the tribe of Benjamin, to which Saul’s family belonged. “You have long wished,” he said, “to have David for king. The hour has come; Jehovah himself designated him when he said: It is by the hand of my servant David that I will snatch my people from the power of the Philistines and of all their enemies.” Thus, under the promptings of revenge, Abner acknowledged rights that ambition alone had made him oppose. Having shaken and destroyed the cause of his first master, he went to join the new one with twenty devoted friends. He brought Michal with him too, the sad and innocent victim of the political rivalries of her father and her husband. But Phaltiel could not bring himself to leave her; he followed her a long way, weeping. The rough old Abner had to send him back before they reached Hebron.

Michal seemed to be David’s good fortune. With her, in former days, a gleam of serenity had lit up his life; far from her, anxieties and dangers had besieged him without ceasing; on finding her again, he saw his long-vanished happiness return. Events seemed to bend beneath his destiny to obey him. Abner died, murdered out of revenge; the king of Israel fell under the blows of two traitors. The people knew beyond doubt that David’s hands were clean of this criminally shed blood. All the tribes, represented by their elders and their chief warriors, therefore came to greet him at Hebron and proclaim him king. A feast of three days united them in feelings of concord, and the nation, restored to peace, leapt for joy.

Hardly was he on the throne when David turned his arms against the Jebusites, a remnant of the native population which had held its ground for four hundred years in the midst of the Israelites and occupied one of

the three hills enclosed within the circuit of Jerusalem. The fortress of Sion, where this remnant of a people was entrenched, was thought impregnable. David made himself master of it; he rebuilt it and gave it his name. He joined to it a considerable stretch of land and, enlarging the city, pushed its walls back as far as a ravine that served as a moat. Hiram, king of Tyre, admiring David's great qualities and informed of his plans, sent him ambassadors to congratulate him on his final accession to the throne of Israel, to offer him, with his friendship, considerable presents, and to put at his disposal the fine cedars of Lebanon and a crowd of workmen skilled in working wood and stone. With these resources David completed his magnificent palace — a dwelling full of charm, from which the view to the east plunges into the valley of Judgment and stretches as far as the Jordan across the jagged crests of the hills; a dwelling of holy inspiration, which looks down on the course of Siloe with its poetic waters, and which so often heard harmonies so sweet and sublime that no echo on earth ever thrilled to the sound of greater things! Under David's hand Jerusalem soon became the finest and largest city of the land, the centre of government and the rallying point for the chief ceremonies of religious worship. The prince had the holy Ark brought there; it had remained nearly fifty years in the keeping of the Levites, in a village of the tribe of Judah.

The feast of this translation was magnificent. An immense crowd had gathered; all the tribes had sent their deputies. Harps, trumpets and many instruments of music resounded far and wide. The Levites carried the Ark. The procession halted often to sacrifice victims, and then resumed its triumphal march to the singing of canticles. "Praise Jehovah and call upon his name; make known his works among the peoples. The Lord is great and worthy of infinite praise; he is more to be feared than the strange gods; for the gods of the nations are nothing, but the Lord made the heavens. … Say among the nations that Jehovah has founded his reign. … Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth exult, let the sea be moved in its immensity, let the fields be glad far and wide, let the trees of the forests leap for joy at the presence of Jehovah, who comes to govern the earth; he will govern the earth with justice and the peoples in all truth." It was to the singing of this hymn, composed by himself and repeated by thousands of voices, that David, carried away by the vehemence of his devout feelings, danced before the Ark. Michal, who was watching the procession from a window, saw with vexation the artless transports to which the king gave himself up, and despised in her heart what she regarded as a forgetting and a lowering of the royal majesty. And so, when the ceremony was over and David came back into his palace, Michal, going to meet him, expressed her displeasure in terms full of sharpness and irony: "How fine it was," she said, "to see the king of Israel today frolicking before the women of Jerusalem and stripping himself of his dignity like a buffoon!" David had that sincerity of religion which gives believers something simple and yet proud, and which, covering them with all the inviolability of a convinced conscience, makes them look down from on high on every insult and every disdain. He answered: "Certainly, before Jehovah, who preferred me to thy father and to all his house and set me as chief over all his people in Israel, I will dance, and I will make myself yet lower; I will become contemptible in thy eyes, but greater in the eyes of those women of Jerusalem of whom thou speakest." Indeed, far from suppressing or weakening the public expression of his religious feelings, the king conceived the plan of raising a temple worthy of the Eternal; and if he left this task to his successor, it was only after receiving the order to do so from the mouth of a Prophet.

David had been reigning for six years over all the tribes of Israel. Wise measures had already marked his government and, together with his former feats of arms, shed lustre on his name. It was he who organized the public force among the Hebrews: he divided all the fighting men into twelve corps of twenty-four thousand men each, which were under arms in turn for a whole month, to do the ordinary service of Jerusalem and, if need be, to march against the enemy until the whole people could assemble. At peace at home, where religion, order and finances were perfectly regulated, he knew how to impose fear and respect for his arms abroad by the swiftness and severity of the punishments he judged necessary. The Ammonites having outraged his ambassadors, he defeated them in a first campaign, in spite of the support the kings of Syria lent them. Then the following year he sent Joab, the best of his generals, to besiege their capital, then called

Rabbath and later Philadelphia, on the torrent of Jaboc, east of the Jordan. During this second expedition David remained at Jerusalem. One day, as he was walking on the terrace of his palace, he saw a woman of rare beauty bathing in a neighbouring house. He felt struck by a wound that reached his heart, and he did not defend himself against his evil. He wished to know who this woman was. He learned that she was Bethsabee, the wife of Uriah, surnamed the Hethite, and the daughter of Eliam — the same brave man, it is said, whose father was Achitophel, one of the most celebrated officers of the palace. Bethsabee, then, was not free; her family, moreover, held a considerable rank; Uriah, at that moment at the siege of Rabbath, was exposing himself to death in the prince's service. These were for David many grave reasons to quench a guilty desire. But passion reasons little, especially when it knows it is backed by force: it then acts as though power made right. David, blinded, sent for Bethsabee. The weak woman was no doubt dazzled by language that came from higher than herself; her virtue gave way.

From then on the king thought of hiding his fault and of forestalling the legal consequences it must have for Bethsabee, for the rules protecting the purity of families were very severe among the Jews. He therefore had Uriah the Hethite recalled from the army — in appearance, to inquire about the state of the troops and the siege of Rabbath. After hearing the soldier's report, David dismissed him, inviting him to rest in the peace and comfort of his home. He even sent him, as a sign of friendship, dishes from his own table. But the faithful Uriah stayed at the palace gate with the king's other officers and did not go to his house. David, who soon knew of it, kindly asked him the reason. The brave man answered that he would blush to give himself up to pleasure, to seek ease and feasting, when Joab his general and the whole army of Israel were sleeping on the ground after the toils of battle, when the holy Ark itself, which had been carried on the expedition, rested only under tents. "I swear by the life of the king," he said, "I will never do such a thing." — "Then," David went on, "stay here today also; tomorrow I will send thee back." To gain a day was perhaps to save everything; David at least believed so. He had Uriah to his table and pressed him urgently to drink a great deal, hoping to bring the rough soldier under the sway of the senses and tear him from the discipline he had imposed on himself. But although he suspected no mystery and acted without design, Uriah in fact defeated every ruse devised about him: he was inflexible in his resolve, in spite of the royal meal, and spent the second night like the first among the prince's guards, without going to his house.

The pull of passion had made David fall; so far he was only the victim of a shameful weakness. Now he will yield to pride and stoop to tragic calculations to save his name from a disgrace that justly threatens it; he will lay homicide like a discreet veil over his first crime, and extinguish an innocent life because it might cast an accusing light on him. David therefore resolved on an extreme course. He wrote to Joab a letter in these terms: "At the first attack, put Uriah in the most dangerous post, and then let him be abandoned there, so that he may fall." Who could recognize in this odious stroke David, the heroic conqueror of Goliath, the noble and valiant brother-in-arms of Jonathan, the outlaw of Hebron generously sparing Saul his persecutor? But such is the genius of the passions. Like furies dancing an infernal round about a man, as soon as he has entered their whirl by attaching himself to one of them, they carry him off with dizzying speed and hurl him into devouring abysses, which toss him from one to another like an idle plaything.

Thus, first unjust, then cruel, at last basely treacherous, the king entrusted his letter to the very man whom it so sadly delivered to death. Uriah for his part, charmed no doubt by his master's false kindness, set out with the fatal message and faithfully handed it to Joab. Unhappily Joab, at times so harsh and haughty towards David, was too ambitious a courtier to shrink from the sacrifice of a human life. His age, his proven bravery, his military talents, the services he had rendered, the ties of close kinship — everything gave him an ascendancy over the prince which he would not have wished to compromise by sparing himself a crime. Engaged in the siege of Rabbath for some months, he knew the points where the resistance was boldest. He drew the enemy out of the walls, exposed the valiant Uriah to the most dangerous blows, and conducted the action so as to leave him to perish with a few soldiers. At once he sent the king a courier with these

instructions: “Thou shalt tell the prince all that has happened in the battle. If thou seest that he grows angry, and if he says: Why go so near the ramparts to make an attack? thou shalt answer him: Uriah the Hethite, thy servant, is also among the dead.” The messenger came to David and said: “The besieged have won a victory: they came out to charge us in the plain; we met them with great vigour and drove them back to the gates of the city. But their archers shot arrows at us from the top of the ramparts; the king has lost several of his men there, and even Uriah, his servant, is among the dead.” David kept up the part he had made for himself and had words of apparent consolation carried back to his general: “Thou shalt say to Joab: Let not this setback cast thee down, for war has its turns; the sword devours now one, now another. Rally thy soldiers and stir up their ardour, so that the city may be taken.” On learning of Uriah’s death Bethsabee gave herself up to the customary practices of mourning, and, whether required or sincere, her tears flowed in public. David’s passion knew no restraint: hardly were the thirty days usually given to grief over when he sent for Bethsabee to the palace and gave her rank among his wives. Some time afterwards she bore a son, the lamentable fruit of the crime that had occasioned the murder of Uriah.

It was there that Providence was waiting for David: to tear the thick cloud of the senses that he had put between himself and virtue, to strike his soul with the sword of sorrow, and through the wound to let in the rays of defied truth and disregarded justice. God therefore put on the lips of the prophet Nathan words of reproach and of mercy, such as rise from the depths of a guilty conscience when the outraged law and the betrayed duty stand up in it like restless ghosts and utter that avenging groan which is called remorse. Nathan went to David and said to him: “There were two men in a city, one rich and the other poor. The rich man had a great number of oxen and sheep. The poor man had nothing at all but one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and fed, which had grown up with him and his children, eating of his bread, drinking from his cup and sleeping in his bosom; he loved it like a daughter. Now a traveller came to the rich man, and he would not touch his own oxen or sheep for his guest’s feast, but seized the poor man’s lamb and served it to the stranger.” At these words David, seized with a movement of anger, said: “As God lives, the man who has done this deserves death. He shall restore four sheep for one, because he did a shameful thing and did not spare the poor man.” — “Thou art that man,” replied Nathan, with crushing brevity and aptness. “Thus says Jehovah, the God of Israel: I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hands of Saul; I gave thee thy former master’s palace and wives, and I subjected to thee the house of Israel and of Judah. If that is too little, I will add much more. Why then hast thou despised my word and done evil in my sight? Thou hast struck down Uriah the Hethite with the sword; thou hast taken his wife to make her thine, and thou hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Therefore the sword shall never depart from thy house, because thou hast despised me in taking for thyself the wife of Uriah the Hethite.” “This, then, is what the Lord adds: I will raise up afflictions against thee in thine own house; I will take thy wives before thine eyes and give them to one of thy kin, who shall dishonour them in the sight of the sun. Thou didst the evil in secret; I will let it be done in the sight of all Israel and under the open sky.” So spoke the Prophet, by the double title of his conscience and his mission, and with that moral authority which naturally arms the defender of right and law, covering him with all the majesty of a principle.

The king felt himself moved and broken by this piercing and firm word. The barbarous pride that had for a moment clad his heart left him all at once, and his heart, expanding without hindrance, melted into repentance, as we see the hardest metals soften and flow under the action of strongly concentrated heat. Then his soul was torn, and he uttered that saving cry which suffices to repair the ruins of a world and sets frail humanity once more in balance with heaven: “I have sinned against the Lord.” It is this mighty cry which breaks over the guilty man’s head the urn of the divine mercies and makes floods of pardon, grace and innocence pour from it. And so the Prophet added: “The Lord has taken away thy sin; thou shalt not die. But because by thy crime thou hast given the enemies of the Lord occasion to blaspheme, the child that is born to thee shall die.” The prophet’s threats were not vain. Bethsabee’s child fell dangerously ill, and soon left no hope. David poured out his sadness and his prayers before God; he refused all food and shut himself up in his

palace, giving such signs of grief that his officers, moved, tried to console him. At the end of seven days the child died. There began for David hard anguish and a long penance. Some flashes of glory, it is true, came to shine in the night that was gathering about his life. The fortune of his arms held: Joab had brought Rabbath to the last extremity, and, as a clever courtier, he reserved for his master the honour of striking the last blow and deciding the victory. David therefore went to order the assault and take the city. He put on his head, as a sign of dominion, the crown of its king, which was very rich and all adorned with magnificent precious stones. The slaughter and the booty were immense, after the manner of ancient wars, in which the ardour of the combatants was quenched only in the blood of men and the destruction of things. On the other hand, in place of the son whose birth and death had wrung so many tears from him, David had by Bethsabee another son, on whom he poured all the tenderness of his saddened affections. He heard with joy the prophet Nathan pronounce words of glory over this blessed child and proclaim that he was the happy object of heaven's predilection. It was indeed this prince who later raised the land of the Hebrews to its highest point of greatness and prosperity, who for forty years kept the whole East attentive to the splendour of his peaceful reign, and who so won the admiration of his contemporaries that he could be led into deplorable errors without his reputation for wisdom vanishing in his faults: the whole world still calls him Solomon the Wise.

(The life continues in the next part.)

DAVID, KING OF ISRAEL AND PROPHET (continued, 3)

But David's joys were troubled by bitter sorrows. A source of misfortunes opened in his own household, as the Prophet had foretold; everything there seemed to turn against him. Ammon, the eldest of his sons, madly led astray by passion, outraged his father's blood in his sister Thamar. The nature of this crime deeply moved David and, bringing him back to the thought of his own crime, made him feel the equity of the divine punishments, which strike and wound our soul in the very places we chose to flatter and corrupt it. Something more painful still awaited him. Absalom, Thamar's full brother, seeing her inconsolable and in mortal anguish, planned to avenge her in striking fashion. Bold and violent, but secretive, he nursed a hidden anger for two years, uttering no complaint that might betray the wound of his heart and give away his designs. One day he invited all his brothers to a great feast at a country house some distance from Jerusalem. He had even wished the king to go there with them, no doubt to make him atone, by saddening him with a tragic scene, for the impunity granted to Ammon's incest. David did not go in person to share in the proposed rejoicings. Moreover he showed at first some reluctance to allow this gathering of all his sons, as though he dreaded some deadly event; but at last he consented, overcome by repeated entreaties. Now Absalom had given orders to his men: "Watch for the moment when Ammon is overcome with wine and I say to you: Strike, and kill him. Fear nothing; it is I who command you. Be resolute and act like men of courage." The feast was splendid. When the merriment grew lively and loud, at the agreed signal men rushed upon the unhappy Ammon, who fell pierced with blows. His brothers, terrified, hurried from that fatal place and came back to Jerusalem. David's sorrow was immense: he shed bitter tears over this new disaster and filled the palace with the sound of his mourning. Absalom, not thinking himself safe, fled to his maternal grandfather, who reigned over a part of Syria.

The shame of Thamar, the death of Ammon, the lamentable consequences that might soon follow from such preludes — everything filled David's soul with bitterness. Yet at the end of three years his indignation was appeased, and he felt fatherly tenderness rise like a voice on behalf of the exile. Joab, always clever at reading his master's heart, understood that the time had come to serve Absalom, who might one day hold the sceptre. To gain his end he made use of a shrewd woman and traced out her part for her. This woman, in mourning clothes and with every outward sign of a desperate mother and widow, came and threw herself at David's feet, crying: "Prince, save me!" — "What is the matter?" asked the prince. "Alas!" answered the widow, "I have lost my husband. Two sons were left me; they quarrelled in the fields, and, there being no

one to part them, one fell dead under the other's blows. And now the whole family, banded against your handmaid, says to me: Give us up the slayer, that we may avenge by his death his brother's spilt blood, and may destroy the heir. So they wish to quench the spark that remains to me, so that my husband's name will vanish without trace on the earth." — "Go back to thy house," said the king; "I will see that thou hast satisfaction." The widow pressed him several times, showing that she feared the extreme anger of her kinsmen. David as often promised his protection, and even confirmed his word with an oath. "Then," the woman went on, "why refuse to the whole people the grace you grant to me, and how does the king hold to the fatal resolve not to recall his banished son? We all die, and we flow away on the earth like waters that do not come back. God himself does not wish a soul to perish; he revokes his sentences, lest the condemned man be wholly lost." David suspected, and then became convinced, that Joab had a hand in this innocent fraud; but as his father's heart relished the moral of the fable, he let himself be willingly caught in the snare laid for him. He said to Joab: "I pardon, and I hear thee; go, then, and bring back my son Absalom." Joab went to find Absalom in his retreat and soon brought him back to Jerusalem. The exile was to keep away from the palace, where his father would not receive him. But he was one of those characters full of restless independence who suffer more from what is refused them than they enjoy what is granted. Besides, he was perhaps already ruled by the ambitious designs he afterwards followed with so criminal and so unhappy a rashness. However that may be, he was angered by his long disgrace and undertook to end it. He sent for Joab, meaning to have him intercede with the king. Joab did not come, fearing no doubt that the step would be misinterpreted and compromise his own favour; to two pressing invitations he returned two evasive answers. Then the hot-headed Absalom had Joab's harvest set on fire, to drag him out of his calculated silence. Joab, indeed, surprised at this capricious violence, came to reproach the culprit; but having resisted entreaties, he found himself forced to bend before outbursts. He gave the king an account of all that had happened and arranged the final reconciliation of his strange friend. Absalom was therefore presented to David; he bowed with his face to the ground in token of respect. The father's heart was moved, and he embraced his son tenderly; for no voice speaks louder or is more eloquent than that of blood: through a son's faults fathers see some sweet and mysterious image that awes them and drives wrath from their lips, to bring pardon there instead.

Hardly had a generous clemency covered his fault when Absalom used all the facilities restored to him to clear his way swiftly to the throne. He had seductive qualities at the service of his ambition: speech full of charm, open and affectionate manners, and above all an incomparable beauty. No man was better made, and he carefully tended his magnificent hair. With such an exterior his twenty-five years spread around him a glamour that no one tried to resist; for there comes from all that is young and beautiful a kind of magic power that commands respect and disposes to an affectionate obedience. All these advantages could only become powerful instruments of disorder if Absalom let himself be led astray by the passionate impetuosity of his character. And that is what happened. No doubt, thinking of his stormy past, he feared he would not obtain the crown, which seemed to fall to him naturally by the death of his elder brothers; perhaps, too, his burning impatience could not wait to seize and wield command. So he plotted his father's downfall. He made himself partisans; he made a show of being surrounded by horsemen and guards; he complained of the government's neglect and the people's sufferings; he promised to correct abuses if he should one day reign. Every morning he was seen at the gate of the city where the court of justice sat; there he inquired with studied solicitude about the business that brought each citizen to the king. "Of what city art thou?" — "Thy servant is of such a tribe of Israel." — "Thy cause is right and good, but there is no one with the king's authority to hear it. Ah! who will make me judge of the land, so that all who have any business may come to me and I may give them true justice?" Then he held out his hand to the man he was speaking with and embraced him familiarly. All hearts turned away from David and flew to meet Absalom. For the people, often the enemy of those who govern it, is always the friend of those who flatter it: of the present it will see only the sufferings undergone; of the future, only the happiness promised.

Under pretext of fulfilling a religious duty, Absalom went to that city of Hebron where David had begun his so troubled reign and had held out for several years against Saul. The rebel took with him only two hundred men, who were not even in the plot; but he sent into all the tribes agents who prepared the way for his accession and who were, on the appointed day, to have him acknowledged as king everywhere. He at once sent for Achitophel, Bethsabee's grandfather, who is said never to have forgiven David the outrage done to his granddaughter; he was a resolute man, worth by himself a whole assembly of wise men. Suddenly, in the midst of the religious festival that had drawn an immense crowd, the conspirators proclaimed Absalom king; the people welcomed the change with swift favour. From every side couriers arrived announcing to David the defection of Israel. David, whom the consciousness of his faults and the sincerity of his repentance kept humbly under the hand of God, remembered Nathan's threats and understood that it was the vengeance of heaven passing at that moment. Besides, knowing Absalom's violent and headlong nature, he refused to plunge the country into the horrors of civil war and to provoke the savage anger of a parricide by a resistance whose consequences were hard to reckon. He left Jerusalem on foot, followed by his faithful servants and by six hundred brave men who had been his companions in arms for twenty years. He crossed the brook Cedron and climbed the Mount of Olives with eyes full of tears, barefoot, his head covered in sign of mourning; and all who fled with him likewise walked with veiled heads, weeping. It was this same road that another prince, son of David according to the flesh, later took again when, about to give his life for the salvation of the world, he went to undergo at Gethsemani that bitter agony in which, seeing the crimes and miseries of all ages pass before his gaze, he was seized with anguish so piercing that a sweat of blood covered all his limbs. So too this road opens everywhere beneath the feet of man, that other monarch of sorrow, who from the cradle to the grave crosses the broad river of tribulations seeking peace, and draws from his great torn soul those cries of distress and those lamentable sobs that make history weep.

Absalom advanced swiftly on Jerusalem and entered it without resistance. A council was held. Achitophel belonged to that school of politics which holds that success is its own justification, and which is especially skilful and fertile in resources because it does not shrink from crimes. He maintained that two things must be done to secure the revolution: first, to compromise Absalom gravely in his father's eyes, so that the king's partisans should be left no hope of reconciliation; next, to march at once against the disconcerted king, scatter his ill-rallied band and strike him down himself. This advice prevailed as to the first point. By a calculation of hideous policy Absalom publicly abused David's wives, because he could stoop to no more unpardonable outrage — just as in civil strife one sees the ringleaders throw some crime between the two parties like a wall of separation. It was, moreover, the punishment in kind announced to David by the prophet Nathan: "Thou didst sin in secret; I will let thee be insulted in the face of heaven."

Had the second measure proposed by Achitophel been adopted, David and his party would have fallen beyond recovery. But Chusai, an intimate friend of the king who, to serve him, had pretended to embrace the rebels' cause, advised gathering imposing forces before creating the supreme necessity of conquering or perishing, either for David, so fortunate in battle, or for the brave men who had attached themselves to his fortune; in his view, a reverse would have ruined Absalom's still feeble cause. This opinion carried the day. David, secretly warned that time was being left him, crossed the Jordan to escape a surprise by the enemy. Old Achitophel, furious at his defeat in council and no doubt foreseeing imminent ruin, put an end to his days in a horrible manner. Absalom, having gathered numerous troops, pursued his father beyond the Jordan. The two armies were face to face; a battle was inevitable. David reviewed his men and wished to share their dangers, but they would not have it. "Do not come with us," they said to him. "If we are beaten, the enemy will count it only a small gain; even to kill half of us would be little to him; but thou art worth ten thousand men. Stay then in the town, to bring us help." — "I will do what seems good to you," answered the king. So he stood between the two gates of the city, and while the troops marched past under his eyes to take up their battle order, he said to the captains: "Spare my son Absalom!" And the whole army heard him repeat his son's name with emotion.

Absalom was defeated: his troops were cut to pieces or scattered. He himself, carried along by the fugitives, was crossing the nearby forest mounted on a mule when, in the speed of his flight, his head was caught in the thick branches of an oak. While he struggled in vain to free himself, his mount went on and left him hanging. A soldier of the victorious army who saw him in this hopeless plight told Joab. “If thou sawest him,” said the general, “why didst thou not run him through? I would have given thee ten sicles of silver and a belt.” The soldier recalled David’s urgent orders and charges: “We all heard him say: Keep my son Absalom safe for me.” — “I will not do as thou,” replied Joab; “I will strike him before thine eyes.” He took three darts and ran to pierce Absalom’s heart with them. Meanwhile the king was sitting between the two gates of the city, awaiting with all the anxieties of a father’s love the outcome of that fatal day. The watchman posted above the gate announced a courier. “If there is only one man,” the king replied, “it is good news.” A second courier was seen, also coming alone. “The news is good,” added the king. As far off as he could, the messenger cried victory. “And is my son Absalom safe?” — “Prince, there was a great tumult when Joab your servant sent me to you; I know nothing more.” The second messenger arrived. “God has judged in your favour and struck down those who had raised their hand against you.” — “And has my son survived?” The answer was ominous. The unhappy father uttered heart-rending cries. He shut himself up in the room above the city gates, and there, pacing to and fro, he shed tears with sobs and laments: “My son Absalom! Absalom! would that I could give my life for thine! Absalom my son! O my son!” And he repeated these words to feed his grief, as one turns the iron in a wound to inflame it. The unfortunate Absalom, pierced with three darts, was still breathing when Joab’s armour-bearers came to give him the last blows. The body was thrown into a deep pit in the middle of the forest and covered with a great heap of stones, as though to stone the parricide.

The death of Absalom did not stifle every seed of discord, either in the people or in the reigning family. On the one hand, the split that had arisen in Saul’s time between the tribe of Judah and the rest of the tribes, and which had just given such openings to an attempt at revolt, had left seeds of mutual enmity in every heart. A slight accident could set off a new conflagration, and an alarming example was soon seen. All Judah and only a part of Israel were gathered round David after the victory, and they wished to bring him back to Jerusalem. But the other fighting men of Israel came to meet them and complained bitterly that they had not been waited for. “Why have our brothers the men of Judah been in such haste to bring the king and his followers over the Jordan?” The men of Judah answered: “Because the king is nearer kin to us. Why are you angry? Have we eaten the king’s goods or received any presents from him?” — “We are ten to one,” cried the other party, “and David belongs to us more than to you. Why have you insulted us?” The quarrel was heated and fierce. A Hebrew named Seba blew the trumpet and persuaded all Israel to go back to their homes to prepare for vengeance. Joab, however, quickly put out this beginning of a fire.

On the other hand, a new revolt and ambitious intrigues further disturbed the king’s last years. The heredity of the throne was accepted, either as a rational principle or as a positive precept of God, who had fixed the sovereign power in the house of David; but the order of succession was settled neither by precedent nor by formal law. In this state of affairs Adonias, to whom the rights of the eldest seemed to belong after Absalom’s death, tried to put the crown on his head at once, whether because he was tired of waiting for this part of his father’s inheritance or because he feared to see it pass to another. Joab, always ready for undertakings that might increase his credit, and the high priest Abiathar, a restless character, had a hand in this intrigue. The conspirators met outside the city as for a feast; the officers of the palace whose dispositions gave cause for disquiet were not invited. The prophet Nathan, who was among those excluded, resolved to check the nascent disorder. He therefore urged Bethsabee to assert the rights of Solomon her son by reminding David of his most solemn promises. “I will come in during your audience,” he added, “and support your words to the king.” Bethsabee accordingly approached the king and recalled to him his words and his oaths: “Formerly you said: Solomon thy son shall reign after me, and he shall sit upon my throne. And now, O prince, behold Adonias is taking the kingship without your knowledge. … Yet all Israel has its

eyes fixed on you and waits for you to show it who is to succeed you on the throne. And if you do not, my son and I shall be treated as criminals when the king my lord goes to sleep with his fathers." Nathan came in at that very hour and added to Bethsabee's gentle prayers the grave authority of his word: "Have you not made known to me, your servant, who was to sit on the throne after the king my lord?"

Then David renewed his oaths in favour of Solomon. He said to Bethsabee: "As Jehovah lives, who has saved my life from so many dangers, I will carry out this very day what I promised thee in these words, in the name of the Lord, the God of Israel: Thy son Solomon shall succeed me; he shall go up on the throne after me." And at once he had his word and Solomon's titles invested with a solemn and sacred character. To prevent the struggles that threatened to stain with blood the passage from one reign to the other, he ordered that the royal anointing be conferred on his successor and that his accession be proclaimed without delay and with the greatest publicity. This order was obeyed with extreme promptness. The city filled with movement, and the noise of this extraordinary stir rang in the ears of the conspirators, who were still deliberating as they finished their feast. When they learned in detail what had just been done, they broke up in terror, each trembling for his life. Adonias in particular understood that his only safety lay in the new monarch's clemency. He fled to the foot of the altar, to call down on his head those guarantees of inviolability which most ancient peoples attached to the things of religion — not to protect crime, but to give blind anger time for reflection, and even to soften the necessary severities of the law by throwing the thought of heaven between angered justice and its trembling victim. "Let King Solomon swear today," he said, "that he will not put me to the sword." — "If he behaves as a good man," replied Solomon, "not a hair of his head shall fall; but if he does evil, he shall die." So this second rising was quelled before it could disturb the whole face of the country and cause bloodshed. It ended David's effective reign, adding one more link to that hard chain of afflictions which he dragged all through his laborious life.

(The life continues in the next part.)

DAVID, KING OF ISRAEL AND PROPHET (continued, 4)

Meanwhile, amid these trials that cut the private man to the quick, David knew how to give public affairs the intelligent care that has immortalized his reign. The army, the finances, the general administration and divine worship received his wisdom's powerful stamp and long kept it. If the genius of a prince is to be measured not by the extent of the lands under his rule but by the use he knows how to make of circumstances, David was not inferior to most famous potentates, and the Hebrews could rightly surround his memory as warrior and statesman with that admiring respect which falls to superiority. He changed the system of attack and defence adopted under the Judges and even in the time of Saul: instead of acting by tribes, he acted in masses, gathering the forces of the country into one compact body so as always to strike decisive blows. And so victory was constantly faithful to him. Since Joshua the nation had struggled ceaselessly to spread out to the limits foreseen by its lawgiver and to settle there in the peace of undisputed possession. David swiftly completed this work. He enlarged the home of the nation and carried out the plan of conquest, pressing the Philistines back against the Mediterranean and carrying his arms into the heart of Syria and as far as the banks of the Euphrates. Among the enemy peoples, he broke the power of those that could threaten him and made alliance with those that could be useful to him; towards all he took a position that commanded respect. In a word, he raised the fortune of Israel and secured for it a brilliant ascendancy over the neighbouring States, whose jealousies had until then kept it humbled and fearful. The dangers he had faced, his people triumphant and prosperous, heaven's protection assured to his undertakings — all these things filled David with unspeakable feelings of gratitude, which overflowed from his soul in floods of poetry. What human mouth has ever opened to speak a more sublime language than this lyric song of the old king?

"Jehovah is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; God is my helper, and in him will I hope; my shield and the pledge of my salvation, my refuge, and I shall be safe; my defender, and he will protect me from

injustice. I will call upon the Lord with praise, and he will save me from my enemies.

“The terrors of death beset me; the torrents of iniquity struck me with dread. Death threw its nets about me; it held me in its bonds. In my tribulation I called upon the Lord, I cried to my God, and from his tabernacle he heard my voice; my cry came to his ears.

“The earth was moved and trembled; the foundations of the mountains were shaken and tottered under the wrath of Jehovah. Smoke went up from his nostrils, his mouth poured out a devouring flame, he left glowing coals behind him. He bowed the heavens and came down, a dark cloud under his feet. Borne upon the cherubim he took his flight; he walked upon the wings of the winds. He set darkness round about him like a tent, veiling himself in the waters that fell from the clouds. At the brightness of his presence a burning fire was kindled.

“From heaven Jehovah made his thunder speak; the voice of the Most High resounded. He shot his arrows and scattered the enemy; his lightning, and devoured him. And the depths of the sea appeared, and the foundations of the earth were laid bare at thy threatening, O Jehovah, at the stormy blast of thy wrath. He stooped from on high and took me, and drew me out of the overflowing waters. He snatched me from mighty enemies and from those who hated me when their strength was prevailing over mine. …

“The ways of the Lord are right and pure; his word is tried in the fire; he is the shield of all who hope in him. Who is God but Jehovah? Who is mighty but our God? He has girded my loins with strength and made my road smooth and straight. He has given my feet the swiftness of harts and set me upon inaccessible heights. He has trained my hands for battle and made my arms a bow of brass. …

“I will praise thee among the peoples, Lord, and sing a hymn to thy name, thou who hast so gloriously saved the prince of thy choice and shown mercy to David thy anointed and to his seed for ever.”

By giving the Hebrews strength and security, David prepared the splendours of the following reign. He himself had already amassed great riches with the design of building at Jerusalem a temple worthy of his piety and, as far as might be, worthy of the Eternal. One can scarcely imagine what he possessed of gold and silver, iron and brass, precious woods and rare marbles. The social arrangements of ancient peoples, especially in the East, brought all treasures, as well as all powers, into the hands of the heads of State: history has praised their unheard-of opulence, and the fame of their magnificence has passed into every language as a proverb. Besides, the laws of ancient war stripped the vanquished of all his rights and all his goods; his liberty, even his life, were at the conqueror’s mercy. David therefore found prodigious booty in the lands through which he carried his glorious arms: Idumaea, Phoenicia, Syria, the country of the Ammonites and Moabites. Moreover, even if one reduces the enormous figure of the riches attributed to David, on the plea of possible errors in comparing French and Hebrew money, it is still certain that the famous monument whose building swallowed up all his treasures had no equal in magnificence. But David did not have the glory of raising it himself; he had to bequeath that peaceful task to a less warlike prince. “My son,” he said to Solomon, “I had it in mind to build a temple in honour of Jehovah my God; but he sent me this word: Thou hast shed much blood and fought many battles; because of all the blood shed before me, thou shalt not build me a temple.”

What he had conquered by the sword, David set about maintaining by wisdom, carrying the spirit of the national institutions into regulations applied to every branch of the public service. Having secured as effectively as he could the administration of justice, he thought above all of increasing the solemnity of the religious feasts. Poet and musician, he had himself composed the hymns that resounded in the solemn ceremonies, and invented some of the musical instruments whose playing mingled with the voices of the choirs.

Such is the origin of most of the poems gathered and known in the Church under the name of the psalms of David. Sorrow, supplication, joy, victory and thanksgiving resound in them in accents intimate, moving, lofty and stirring. By turns it is the desolation of the elegy, the enthusiasm of the ode, the grave and penetrating sweetness of the hymn and the canticle. What poet better than David has known how to ravish the mind and go down to the depths of the heart to make its immortal fibres vibrate? Who has reached higher? Who has struck truer? What secret emotions, what mysteries of feeling do not find in his harmonies all their notes and all their voices! Rome and Greece were stirred by harmonious songs that told of battles, or merely of games and pleasures; but the Prophet of Sion passed beyond the circle of gross and perishable realities and made a voice speak that calls the soul and carries it into infinite horizons. He cast his gaze over the ages gone by and turned it towards the ages to come; he questioned that deep book called the heart of man, and that glittering book which, under the name of nature, proclaims such great things. Charged with the secrets of heaven and earth, he repeated them with the power of a language that holds the attention of peoples. Universal pontiff, he laid on his harp the homage of all creatures, from the drop of dew that blesses God without knowing it to the angels that fly beneath the feet of the Eternal like the wheels of a hurtling chariot. He described the sun clothed in glory, the sea rocking under its master's finger, the heavens spread out like an azure pavilion, the stars sown afar like a splendid sand. National bard, he sang the labours of his forefathers, the birth of Israel's greatness, Sinai lit up by the face of Jehovah, the Jordan fleeing in terror back to its astonished source, Judaea smiling at its sky, decked with its green and its flowers and thrilling with the signs of its fruitfulness. Poet of all mankind, he unfolded the hidden places into which the heart withdraws in its days of anguish; he showed the deep spring from which all tears and all hopes flow. His laments awaken, in souls touched by the sense of eternity, that grave sadness seen on the faces of exiles when from the bosom of a foreign land they cast, over the forbidden frontier, an unutterable look towards the distant horizons where their native soil lies hidden. There is so much regret and love in the accents of the exiled singer when he speaks of the Jerusalem on high, and the name of the heavenly fatherland is so sweet as it falls from his lips, that even the trifling and distracted man stops and bends his ear to hear and savour the melody of this wonderful canticle.

David's last days were approaching. He turned his thoughts back to the ups and downs of his long life and the benefits heaven had poured into it; then, seized with lively gratitude, he uttered this hymn, the testament of his piety:

"Thus says David the son of Isai, the man raised up by Jehovah, the anointed of the God of Jacob, the sweet singer of Israel: The Spirit of God speaks by me, and his word is on my lips. The God of Israel has spoken to me; he has spoken to me, the Strong One of Israel. The just ruler of men, he who reigns in the fear of God, is like the light of the dawn when, at the break of day, the sun appears in a cloudless sky; like the grass that springs from the earth wet with dew. Not such was my house before God that he should make with me a firm, unshakable, everlasting covenant. For he has always been my salvation, he has fulfilled all my desires, all has flourished for me. But the wicked shall be like thorns that are plucked up: they are not touched with the hand, they are attacked from afar and with iron; then the fire devours them and nothing remains."

Then David made known to Solomon his last wishes. After exhorting him to follow faithfully the law of God as Moses left it written, he charged him to put Joab and Semei to death. Joab had killed Absalom in defiance of a father's charges, and had slain with his own hand, outside battle and treacherously, two captains in whom his ambition feared rivals. Semei had hurled insolent insults at David on the day he fled before his rebel son. The old king no doubt resolved to prescribe these late, but not undeserved, punishments out of the consideration called reason of State, and to secure for his successor, still young and inexperienced, a peaceful reign free of intrigues. However that may be, he died shortly afterwards, at the age of seventy.

Assuredly one can name warriors more illustrious than David, princes more versed in the science of government, philosophers treating moral questions with more method, and lastly poets of purer taste; but

there is not a single monarch who has shown himself so great in all his aspects together, and whose judgement, imagination, heart and arm have at once displayed such power. Above all, no man has effaced his faults by a more eloquent and more fruitful repentance: who could count all the hearts, for a moment led astray like him, but by him won to penance? How his accents resound in the soul, stirring fear, sorrow, hope and love! The stream of his tears, swollen by those he has gently drawn from the eyes of sinners, has become a great river that flows unceasingly in the valley through which our earthly life passes, to make repentance spring up there and innocence bloom again.

As psalmist, and because of the musical talent that first attached him to Saul's court to calm that king's furies with his playing, David has been painted a thousand times holding his musical instrument or with it beside him. As king and prophet he wears the Byzantine ornaments attributed to sovereign dignity. A jewelled diadem adorns his head, and his royal mantle bears on the front a small square piece marked with the cross. He seems to wear earrings. His scroll bears, as words addressed to the Church, these words of Psalm 44: "Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear; forget thy people, and the king shall love thee." Elsewhere he is seen announcing the eternal generation or the exaltation of his descendant, after some of the verses of Psalm 109.

In one of the compartments of a fine vault painting in the cemetery of Callistus another representation of David is to be seen. The young hero wears only a short, girded tunic, from which he frees his right arm, which holds the sling in which gleams the stone destined to kill Goliath. In his left hand one can make out the four other smooth stones he had chosen from the bed of the brook.

CULTE ET RELIQUES. — MONUMENTS.

This is how the historian Josephus speaks of the honours paid by Solomon to his father's memory: "Solomon, the son of David, buried his father in Jerusalem — that is, near that city — with extraordinary pomp; and besides all the honours usually paid to kings at their funerals, he buried great riches with him. How enormous these riches were may be guessed from what I am about to relate. After a lapse of thirteen hundred years the high priest Hyrcanus, besieged by Antiochus surnamed Euergetes, son of Demetrius, wished to give him money to raise the siege; but, not knowing how to make up the sum he needed, he had one of the chambers of David's tomb opened, took out three thousand talents, gave part of them to Antiochus, and so rid himself of the besiegers. Later Herod, who spent enormous sums inside and outside his kingdom, having heard that Hyrcanus his predecessor had opened David's tomb and taken three thousand talents of silver from it, and that great riches still remained in the monument with which he could meet his largesses, had long formed the plan of following this example. So, having had the sepulchre opened by night, he went in with his most trusted friends, taking great care that the thing should not be known in the city. He did not find coined money there, as Hyrcanus had, but ornaments of gold and a great quantity of precious objects, which he carried off, leaving nothing. Searching carefully, he wished to go further in and search even the sarcophagi of the kings, where the bodies of David and Solomon were laid; but he lost two of his doryphori (soldiers of the royal guard), who, it is said, perished by flames that struck them as they went in. Herod, terrified, came out to appease God. He had a monument of white stone raised at the door of the sepulchre, whose building cost very large sums."

Forty-two years later the apostle St. Peter told the Jews, in the first sermon he preached after the descent of the Holy Ghost, that the sepulchre of David was still to be seen among them. This monument outlasted the Temple and the city of Jerusalem, and, whether from respect or from indifference, it was spared when everything was burned or razed under Vespasian (69–79). It survived entire until the time of the emperor Hadrian (117–138). But shortly before the war which under that prince completed the ruin of the Jewish nation in Palestine, David's tomb was shaken by an unexpected tremor that threw down a great part of the white stone monument and of the other buildings of which it was made up.

Whether Hadrian himself, out of curiosity, had the monument restored when he built the new city of Aelia near old Jerusalem, or whether its ruin had not been total, as is easy to believe, it was still to be seen in the century of St. Jerome (331–420), who calls it the "Mausoleum of David" and relates that the Christians of his time went there to pray. The monument covering the grotto of the sepulchre may already then have been turned into a chapel. In that way it may have been preserved through the following centuries by the piety of the Christians, who took care to maintain a church there, and later a convent of religious of St. Francis. The Turks had this church turned into a mosque. The Mahometans have continued to honour there the memory of David, for whom they have a particular veneration and whose psalms they sing in their prayers. It was in 1559 that the sultan took the convent from the religious, on the pretext that it was to be feared the Christians might fortify themselves there to harm the city and make themselves its masters; for it is only a few miles from it. He put Turkish priests there, who call themselves the guardians of the sepulchre of David; they show it, together with those of Solomon and Josaphat, in a vaulted cellar adjoining the wall of the mosque.

The Greeks commemorate David on 19 December, the day on which they keep the feast of all the ancestors of Jesus Christ together. The Latins have adopted 29 December.

The substance of this biography is taken from the Femmes de la Bible by the late Mgr Darboy; we have completed his account with La Bible sans la Bible by M. l'abbé Gainet, the Caractéristiques des Saints by Fr. Cahier, S.J., the Dictionnaire des Antiquités chrétiennes by M. l'abbé Martigny, Les Saints Lieux by Mgr Mislin, and Les Saints de l'Ancien Testament by Baillet.

ST. EVROULT OF BAYEUX, ABBOT OF THE MONASTERY OF OUCHE, IN NORMANDY (707)

Let him that is holy be sanctified still more, and let him that is perfect be perfected more and more.

Maxim of the Saint.

St. Evroult was born in the town of Bayeux in 627. His parents, who belonged to the highest nobility, knowing that a good education is the most precious treasure that can be left to a child, had him brought up with great care in the principles of the Catholic faith, without neglecting the study of letters. Thanks to the light of the Holy Spirit, who destined him to become one day the ornament of His Church, the holy child made such progress in divine and human learning that all who saw him were filled with admiration. It is even related that before he had reached adolescence he already surpassed most of his masters by the extent of his knowledge. What charmed people still more in this holy young man was that all these brilliant qualities were in no way tarnished by pride. Gentle and affable towards everyone, he was irreproachable in his conduct, and the beauty of his face was a faithful image of the beauty of his soul. A man so remarkable for his nobility and his virtues could not fail to attract the attention of Clovis II, who then governed Neustria. Informed of his rare merit, the king summoned him to court in order to employ him in the government of his kingdom. After the death of that prince, which took place in 656, Clotaire III, his successor on the throne of Neustria, conceived such esteem for St. Evroult that he conferred on him the first office of his palace. The man of God justified the monarch's choice by his prudence and by the skill he showed in the conduct of affairs. Yet, while applying himself with great zeal to the duties of his office, he never lost sight of the fact that he must before all else serve and love the King of kings. His parents and friends having pressed him to marry, so as not to let the name of his family die out, the Saint married a woman worthy of him by her virtues and her birth. But although he was bound in the married state, he never ceased to meditate on and to practise that fine maxim of the apostle St. Paul: "The time of life is very short; it remaineth therefore that they who have wives be as though they had none." Nor did he forget those other words of the Apostle: "Let them that use this world be as if they used it not; for the fashion of this world passeth away swiftly."

Far from displeasing his Creator in the use of His gifts, he worked and breathed only for His glory. By a sentiment of charity very rare among the great ones of the earth, he found more pleasure in giving than in receiving. Continually applying himself to reproduce in his conduct the examples of the Saints, he had no greater happiness than to relieve the poor, who are the suffering members of Jesus Christ, and to watch and pray according to our Saviour's precept. He urged his wife to practise the same works of piety, so that this virtuous lady, already drawn to good by the impulses of her own heart, was further spurred on by the lessons and the example of her husband. Thus, while still a layman and with no other Rule than his fervour, St. Evroult led in the married state a life as perfect as that of many religious who live far from the dangers of the world, in the silence of retreat.

Meanwhile our Lord, who never lets Himself be outdone in generosity, was preparing to pour new blessings on His humble servant. One day, when he was assisting at the divine office, he heard read those sweet words which Jesus Christ addresses to His disciples in the holy Gospel: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." These words of the divine Master touched him to the bottom of his heart. He engraved them in his memory, together with the magnificent promises which Jesus Christ makes to those who despise the world for love of Him: "Amen, I say to you, you who leave all for Me shall receive a hundredfold, and shall possess life everlasting." Feeling himself then set on fire with a holy ardour, he was no longer content to give the poor alms proportioned to the extent of his revenues: he began to distribute to them his goods themselves, and resolved to break as quickly as possible all the ties that still bound him to the world. He communicated his design without fear to his pious wife and strove, by setting before her eyes the magnificent promises of Jesus Christ, to inspire her with the same sentiments. As she loved God with all her heart, she willingly consented to make for His glory the sacrifices most painful to nature. She even left the world first, and, having said farewell for ever to her holy husband, went to take the veil in a religious house. Having given this well-beloved wife to the Lord, St. Evroult remained at the court of Clotaire III only as long as he needed to distribute all his goods to the poor. Then, regarding himself as escaped from the reefs of a stormy sea where countless souls are shipwrecked, he hastened to withdraw to the monastery of Les Jumeaux,[1] in the diocese of Bayeux, as into a harbour where he could labour more perfectly at his sanctification. He was received with transports of joy by the abbot and his religious, who all regarded him as their benefactor, for he had long supported the monastery with his alms. There is no need to say how holy his life was among these fervent religious. Having taken the monastic habit, he faithfully fulfilled this counsel of the Holy Spirit: "Let him that is holy be sanctified still more, and let him that is perfect be perfected more and more." Of all the religious he was the most humble, the most obedient, the gentlest, the most charitable, the most assiduous in prayer and the most diligent in work; his fervour was the edification and the astonishment of all his brethren. They could not refrain from giving him on several occasions public marks of their veneration. But this great Saint, fearing to conceive vanity from it, resolved to avoid this new reef by withdrawing into solitude to lead the contemplative life there. Moved by the Spirit of God, who was founding great designs of mercy upon him, he told his plan to three good religious, who, not content with approving it, resolved to accompany our Saint in his retreat. All four left the monastery, and, crossing the country of Exmes, came to a place in the diocese of Séez called Montfort.[2] This place was covered with tall forests and watered by clear streams. St. Evroult and his companions believed they could find no spot more favourable to the fulfilment of their designs. So they stopped there, blessing the Lord. For some time they were able, as they wished, to lead the solitary life there and to taste the sweetness of contemplation. But as there were two important towns in the neighbourhood, Exmes and Gacé, which drew a great crowd of people on business, the servants of God soon had to complain of the multitude of visitors who came to disturb the peace of their solitude. Indeed, many people who had known the Saint in the world and experienced his inexhaustible kindness, having learned where he had retired, often came to consult him about their temporal interests just when he was most given up to the contemplation of heavenly things. Wearied by these distractions, St. Evroult and his three companions resolved to leave this place, which they had

sanctified by their virtues.

Before them lay the vast forest of Ouche, whose trees were so thick that the sun with all the brightness of its rays could scarcely pierce its darkness. But, frightening as this forest already was by its density, it was far more so because of the robbers who infested it and the wild beasts that made their lairs there. Nevertheless they plunged into this dreadful solitude and went through it in every direction to discover a place suitable for the settlement they had in mind. As they found no spot fit for carrying out their pious design, St. Evroult, filled with the Spirit of God, knelt down and, raising his hands to heaven, addressed this prayer to our Lord from the bottom of his heart: "O sweet Jesus, who once deigned Yourself to lead Your people in the desert by a pillar of cloud and of fire and to show them the road to the promised land, deign, I beseech You, to lead once more Yourself Your servants, who are fleeing from this wretched land of Egypt, from this world of sin subject to the tyranny of the devil. Deign to show them the place where at last they may serve You in all freedom and save their souls, redeemed by Your precious blood."

Scarcely had he made this prayer when an angel appeared and made him a sign to follow. Led by this heavenly guide, St. Evroult and his companions came into a pleasant little valley,[3] watered by several streams whose clear waters emptied into a large pond. At the sight of this happy solitude, for which they had sighed, St. Evroult and his companions threw themselves on their knees to thank the goodness of God, who never disappoints the hopes of His servants. In this place they built a hut of tree branches to shelter themselves from the weather, and put up a small fence around it to keep out the beasts of the forest.

There, trampling underfoot all the pleasures, all the glory and all the vanities of a sinful world, they thought only of heaven, lived only for heaven, and sighed only for the possession of God. And so they sang with mouth and heart with the royal Prophet: "Thou art my only portion, O Lord; Thy holy law, O my God, is the only treasure I will keep." They did indeed keep this lovable law of God with great fidelity, and by their burning charity strove to deserve to be acknowledged by Him as His children at the hour of death.

While our pious solitaries were thus striving to grow each day in the love of God, it happened that one of the robbers who lived in the forest came to visit them. Seeing well enough from their dress that they had no money to be taken, he wished, out of charity towards them, to persuade them to leave a dwelling where their lives were so little safe. "Poor solitaries," he said to them, "what change of fortune has forced you to come and hide in this wilderness? How could you settle in so horrible a solitude? Truly you have not chosen your place well. Do you not know that this place is the refuge of brigands and not of hermits? The inhabitants of this forest live only by plunder and cannot bear those who live by their labour. I warn you in charity: you are not safe here. Besides, you will find nothing here but untilled and even barren land; in cultivating it you will give yourselves a great deal of trouble to harvest nothing."

The venerable servant of God answered him with the gentle eloquence with which he was endowed: "My dear brother, it is not a change of fortune but the holy will of God that has led us here to weep for our sins. And as this good Master is always with us to protect and defend us, we fear nothing on the part of men. Did He not Himself say in the holy Gospel: 'Fear not them that kill the body and cannot touch the soul'? We have only one fear, that of offending God. As for the difficulty of cultivating this land, know that our God is powerful enough to feed His servants even in a desert. You yourself may, if you wish, taste with us the sweetness of His infinite mercy, by renouncing for love of Him the criminal profession you follow and by promising to serve henceforth with fidelity this infinitely good God. For, according to the word of the Prophet, God our Father is so full of mercy that He is willing to forget all the sinner's faults from the first day of his conversion. Your faults are very great, my dear brother, but do not despair of the goodness of our God. Rather follow the advice which the royal Prophet gives you here by my mouth: 'O my son, turn away from evil and now do good, holding it for certain that the eyes of the Lord rest with favour upon the just and that His ears are attentive to their least prayers.' I will not leave you ignorant of the terrible words which the holy king David adds immediately: 'The eyes of the Lord,' he says, 'are also fixed upon them that do evil, but it is

to destroy even their memory from the earth one day.' Indeed, by the very fact that God is just, He owes it to Himself to reward the good and to punish the wicked according to the multitude of their iniquities. Tremble, then, my dear brother, before this great God, or rather come, believe me, and throw yourself into the arms of His infinite mercy."

These words made an impression on the heart of this poor sinner, who went back home deep in thought. The next morning, leaving all he possessed in this world except three loaves baked under the ashes and a honeycomb which he took with him, he came back promptly to the monastery, threw himself at St. Evroult's feet and offered him the little presents he had brought. Then he begged the favour of being admitted to profess the religious life in order to expiate his sins. Having become a model of fervour, he was the first to receive the monastic habit in that house. Following his example, a great number of other robbers who lived in the forest followed the counsels of our Saint, gave up their brigandage, and became gentle and humble religious or honest farmers. Many inhabitants of the neighbouring villages, drawn by St. Evroult's fame, also came to him to hear the words of life that came from his mouth and to contemplate the angelic gentleness reflected in his face. After giving him a small alms to help him live in this wilderness, they joyfully went home again, firmly resolved to put into practice the charitable warnings the Saint had given them. Several of them were even so touched by his exhortations that they begged him to admit them to his company.

As the number of his brethren increased, St. Evroult made himself all things to all, and showed himself more and more worthy of their veneration by his virtues. He continually gave his brethren the example of the most perfect patience and mortification. Assiduous in prayer, he drew from it that tenderness and burning charity for his brethren which could be noticed in all his words. His heart never let itself be cast down by adversity nor lifted up by prosperity. All the alms brought to him were by his orders distributed at once to the poor, who came in crowds to commend themselves to him as to their foster-father. He used to say that it is unworthy of a religious to be anxious about the morrow, as though God our heavenly Father were not continually watching over us; and in whatever pressing need he found himself, he wanted the poor to be treated as his children. And so more than once God, who even in this world rewards a hundredfold the charity of His faithful servants, was pleased to bless St. Evroult visibly and to help him when he was in need.

One day among others, when the supply of bread was exhausted, a poor man came to the monastery door and asked for alms for the love of God. As he was loudly imploring the pity of the Father cellarer, who had sent word that he had nothing left at his disposal, St. Evroult heard the poor man's complaints from his cell. He was touched to the bottom of his heart. "Ah, my brother," he said to the Father cellarer, "do you not hear the cries of this unfortunate man? For pity's sake, give alms to this suffering member of Jesus Christ." "But, Father," replied the good religious, "I have only half a loaf left, which I am keeping for the children being taught in the monastery. I have already given away all the others to obey you, although we are on the brink of dying of hunger." "My dear brother," the Saint said to him, "you must not hesitate to give this poor man the half-loaf you have left as well, for the love of our Lord. Have you not heard the royal Prophet say: 'Blessed is he that hears the prayer of the poor and needy; in the day of evil the Lord will have pity on him in his turn'? Indeed, will our Saviour refuse us a morsel of bread after He has given us all His blood on the tree of the cross?" The good religious obeyed and gave the poor man all the bread he had left. But Providence generously rewarded St. Evroult's admirable faith. For before sunset there was a knock at the monastery door, and a man leading a horse laden with an enormous quantity of bread and wine asked to see the Father cellarer. After greeting him, he said he had come to return to the Saint what he had kindly lent him. Then, setting all these provisions on the ground, he added: "Go, I pray you, and take this to your good abbot." The Father went at once to fetch St. Evroult. But the stranger mounted his horse and suddenly disappeared. St. Evroult and his religious came a few moments later to thank this generous benefactor, but the Brother porter told them how he had vanished. Search for him as they might on every side, they could not even find the traces of his passage. The Saint then understood that it was our Lord who had sent him these provisions,

and, his soul flooded with joy, he gave thanks to the infinite Goodness that showed itself so generous towards him. From that day they lacked none of the necessities of life; they even began little by little to find themselves in comfort.

Let us mention yet another occasion on which the divine Goodness was pleased to help them. Two robbers from a neighbouring province, learning that God was pouring His blessings on the monks' goods, thought fit to come and share in them after their own fashion. Having come upon the herd of swine that belonged to the religious, they resolved to drive it out of the forest and then divide the booty. So they set about driving the whole herd quickly before them. But, unluckily for them, they lost their way through being in too much haste to enjoy their capture. Having taken the paths that had crossed the forest in every direction since the arrival of the religious, they found themselves at last shut in as in a labyrinth whose way out they could not find. After many marches and countermarches which exhausted them, they were quite surprised to catch sight of the monastery, near which they had come back, and to hear the bell calling the religious to the divine office. Touched by the grace of God and filled with sincere repentance, they went and threw themselves at St. Evroult's feet, humbly confessed their faults to him and asked him for the monastic habit.

Everything smiled on the Saint in this lovely solitude. Yet he keenly desired to withdraw into a still deeper solitude and to flee entirely the company of men, so as to live with God alone. But, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, he resolved to go on serving by his presence the spiritual progress of the religious who had put themselves under his direction. "Fearing," says the author of his Life, "to overturn the whole building if he took away its foundation stone, he joyfully made the sacrifice of his own happiness to procure that of his brethren. So he remained among them like a good father among his dear children, and applied himself more than ever to edify them by his tender instructions and by his example." Meanwhile the fame of his holiness was spreading through all the neighbouring provinces and drawing to him a great number of people eager to work for their salvation. They offered the Saint their houses, their lands, their treasures, even their families, and implored him to build them monasteries and to give them whatever Rule of life he pleased. Yielding to their entreaties and to the wishes of St. Alnobert, bishop of Séez, who cherished the servant of God, he built as many as fifteen monasteries of men and of women, and placed at the head of each of these houses superiors of tried virtue. Among the monasteries founded by St. Evroult, according to tradition, are counted above all the celebrated monastery of Saint-Martin of Séez, which for eleven centuries was for that diocese a source of edification and of ecclesiastical learning; the monastery of virgins, founded a short distance from the Saint's monastery, near the church of Notre-Dame; the great and the little monastery of Almenêches,[4] governed later by St. Lanthildis and by St. Opportuna; the monastery of La Cochère,[5] where, according to tradition, St. Evroult stayed for some time before settling at Montfort; the monastery of If, situated in the parish of Saint-Christophe in the canton of Mortrée, a few steps from the château of Sacy; and lastly the monastery of Mortain in the former diocese of Avranches. St. Evroult sometimes visited these religious houses, whose chief ornament was holy poverty: he saw to it that the Rule was faithfully observed there, and returned as quickly as he could to his abbey, to give his religious the example of retirement and to keep himself recollected.

(The life continues in the next part.)

Meanwhile our Lord, who loves to try His elect in order to purify them like gold in the crucible of suffering, permitted St. Evroult's pious family to be decimated by a contagious sickness. In the twenty-second year after the founding of the monastery, plague broke out in that holy house and spread rapidly. In these sad circumstances St. Evroult did not act like the hireling who, at the sight of danger, takes to flight and leaves his sheep exposed to the fury of the wolves. After the example of the good Shepherd, he resolved to give his life for his flock, if such was the will of God. So he stayed among his religious to assist and defend them. Following the Apostle's counsel, he wept with those who wept, and, pointing them to heaven, where God awaited them to crown their patience, he would say to them with an inexpressible tone of charity: "My dear

children, look at heaven, from which your heavenly Father beholds you; now is the moment to show your confidence in His infinite goodness. Remain firm and patient amid the trials He sends you; hold yourselves ready for every sacrifice He may ask of you. Act all of you as worthy children of God, and remember that tribulation leads to patience, which is the Christian's treasure. Renew in yourselves, then, the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and fight generously against the old serpent. You are all living members of Jesus Christ; have then but one heart and one soul to love our Lord who is coming to you. For behold, the moment draws near for you to appear before God and to present to Him the works of your whole life. Watch and pray, my well-beloved brethren, for you know neither the day nor the hour of our Lord's visit. Ah, a thousand times blessed is the servant whom the Lord shall find watching when He comes!" It was with these words, borrowed from our Lord Himself, that St. Evroult prepared his brethren for death and strengthened them against the attacks of the devil. Meanwhile the religious were being swiftly carried off by the terrible scourge. God, who wished to make the holiness of His servant shine with a still brighter lustre, permitted a venerable religious named Ansbert to die without receiving the holy Viaticum. The Brother who had charge of him came at once to tell the holy abbot. "Ah, Father," he said to him, "one of your children has just left this world without receiving the holy Viaticum. Pray for him, that God, before whom he now appears, may have mercy on him." The Saint, reproaching himself for this mishap as though it had happened through his negligence, went to the dead man's bed. Bathed in tears, he prostrated himself with his forehead in the dust and invoked the infinite Mercy. Suddenly, feeling that he was heard, he rose and commanded the dead man to live again. At the Saint's voice the dead man raised his head and, opening his eyes, turned them lovingly towards his Saviour. "Oh, Father," he said to him, "how I thank you for coming to my help! Pursued before the tribunal of God by the enemy of men, who wanted to carry off my soul because I had had the misfortune to die without the holy Viaticum, I saw myself on the point of being separated for a time from my God, given over to a cruel hunger, and shut out for a time from the banquet of the Blessed. Suddenly you came to deliver me from the hands of my enemy. Oh, good Father, be blessed for ever! But, I beg you, go quickly and fetch me holy communion, to give me the bread of the elect, the pledge of eternal life and of a glorious resurrection." At once the Saint had the Body of our Lord brought, and no sooner had the religious received it than, by a quite special design of Providence, he gave back his soul to God once more.

Meanwhile the sickness continued its ravages, and as many as seventy-eight monks were counted who succumbed to the contagion, not to speak of a considerable number of lay Brothers. It would be unpardonable to pass over in silence the great miracle which the Saint worked in favour of one of these. On Christmas Day one of these good Brothers, who filled with the most praiseworthy zeal the office of procurator of the abbey, was struck by the scourge and breathed his last. In spite of the horror which the corpse of a plague victim was bound to inspire, the religious buried him with tender care, and, having carried him to the cemetery, laid him on the edge of the grave while waiting for the end of the Mass that was being celebrated for the repose of his soul. Meanwhile everyone in the church was weeping for the death of this dear Brother. St. Evroult, seeing the tears flowing from every eye, was touched to the bottom of his heart. Suddenly, trembling under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, he knelt down and besought the Lord to be pleased to give the dead man back his life. He remained a long time prostrate, his forehead in the dust, striking his breast to implore God's mercy. He did not cease praying until the dead man, restored to life, came out of his coffin, passed, still wrapped in his shroud, through the ranks of the religious, who were speechless with fright, and went and threw himself at St. Evroult's feet. At this sight a great cry of joy rose to heaven, and all the religious blessed the God of mercies, who deigned to grant His servant the power to call the dead back to life.

At last, thanks to the infinite mercy, St. Evroult saw the end of the scourge that had tried his pious family so cruelly. But he did not cease to pray for his departed children, for he knew that true charity is more concerned with the soul than with the body. For this reason, as he advanced in age, he redoubled his mortifications and prolonged his prayers far into the night. These words of the royal Prophet could truly be

applied to him: “He meditated day and night on the law of the Lord.” On fire with the sacred flame of the love of God, he exercised himself continually in the practice of all the virtues. He was particularly restrained in his words and merciful towards poor sinners. He took very little care of his person, and, convinced that it is unworthy of a servant of God to be concerned with his toilet like women of the world, he had his hair and beard cut only three times a year. His heart was closed to revenge, and his happiness was always to return good for evil. When word was brought to him that the religious had suffered some loss in their temporal goods, he saw in it only a fresh occasion to bless the Lord, who was pleased to leave him the rest. “The Lord had given us this thing,” he would say; “it has pleased Him to take it from us; blessed be His name for ever.” He was so skilful at reconciling enemies that all who came to him stirred up by discord were soon calmed. His words, sweeter than honey, rekindled charity in their hearts, and they went away filled with a delightful peace. He received with equal kindness all who came to him, nobles or commoners, rich or poor, neighbours of the monastery or strangers. He showed an angelic amiability towards all, and, poor though he was for the love of God, he let none of his guests leave without giving them a small present. Is it any wonder after this that this lovable Saint, who was the image of God on earth by his goodness, was so also by his power? Many sick people who had heard of his holiness and of the great miracles he worked in the name of Jesus Christ came to him with confidence, and, having recovered their health by the power of his prayers, went home blessing the Lord for having given the earth this heavenly physician. There were even many who, consumed by the heat of fever and unable to go to the Saint, sent their relatives or friends to ask the help of his prayers and to beg him to give them his girdle, which was only a simple piece of cord, or some piece of his clothing. Scarcely had they touched these garments with faith than they felt themselves cured. Among others is cited a poor mother of a family whom no physician could cure, and who, hearing of St. Evroult’s miracles, had him begged to send her a little piece of the hem of his habit. Scarcely had she received it when she was completely cured.

It was not only people from the neighbouring districts who came to implore our Saint’s charity. People hastened to him from all the surrounding dioceses, and even from more distant regions, to recover their health. Among these sick there came one day a poor man bent double under the weight of his infirmities. St. Evroult, seeing him come painfully forward, his strength exhausted by sickness and his head almost touching his knees, was filled with great compassion. “Ah, my dear brother,” he said to him, “how were you able to make this whole journey in so weak a state?” “Father,” the poor man answered, “I was sustained by a double hope: that of receiving from your charity a little food to appease my hunger, and above all that of recovering through your prayers the health of which my wretched body has long been deprived.” He was not disappointed in his hope, for the Saint cured him perfectly. In the ardour of his gratitude the poor man begged St. Evroult to keep him with him and give him the religious habit. The Saint joyfully consented and made him gardener of the monastery.

Another poor man, who was in very good health but pretended to be sick and crippled in order to receive a larger alms, was far from being so favoured. For scarcely had he received the alms from the Blessed man’s hand when he was seized with a burning fever and struck with the sickness he had pretended to have. He confessed before the religious of the monastery the wrong he had done in trying to deceive this man of God, who was so charitable to the poor, and, in spite of all the care given him, he soon expired.

The fame of St. Evroult’s virtues and miracles spread so far that it reached the court of Childebert III, who then governed Neustria. This prince, ardently desiring to see so holy a man, came to the monastery of Ouche with the queen and several members of the royal family. When he had arrived opposite the monastery, at the place where the church raised in honour of the Blessed Virgin now stands, he dismounted out of respect for the Saint and ordered his whole suite to prepare to receive the servant of God with all the veneration due to him. Then the clerics accompanying him put on their sacred vestments, and, laying their hands on the holy relics and the cross, which they had set down on a carpet, they tried to take them up again to set out in

procession; but they could not even move them. Seized with great affliction, all present knelt down and humbly invoked the mercy of God. The queen then made a vow to the Blessed Virgin and said before all the lords: “If Almighty God grants us the grace to be able to take up our holy relics and carry them in procession, I will have a fine church built here in honour of the Mother of God.” After hearing these words of the queen, the clerics again laid their hands on their holy relics to lift them, but they were no more successful than the first time. Then the queen, deeply grieved, said, shedding abundant tears: “I know well, O my God, that my sins make me unworthy to see the servant of God; yet if, by the merits of the Saint, You will cast a look of mercy upon us and allow us to carry our holy relics in procession, besides the church I have just promised, I will have a fine marble altar made, to be brought to the Saint.” Scarcely were these words spoken when all the relics began to move of themselves; the clerics took them up with transports of joy and went forward in procession to meet the servant of God. He was coming, accompanied by all his brethren and by a great multitude of people who were thronging after him to see the king. The prince, having been received in the monastery with all the honours due to royal majesty, spent three days there with the servant of God. On the point of leaving, he commended himself to St. Evroult’s prayers and gave him ninety-nine farms, listed in a charter which he handed to him. Then he returned full of joy to his palace. The queen did not forget her vow. On the hill that rises between the Charentonne and the forest she had a magnificent church built in honour of the Blessed Virgin. She also sent St. Evroult the marble altar she had promised for the church of his monastery. In making this gift she asked only that the servant of God would kindly pray for her and for the royal family at the holy sacrifice. The Sovereign Pontiff, informed of St. Evroult’s admirable virtues, also wished to give him a token of his particular esteem. He sent him various relics, among them a small relic of St. Peter, prince of the Apostles, to whom St. Evroult had dedicated his church. Labouring with this admirable zeal in the service of God, our Saint had reached the age of eighty. Laden with merits in the eyes of God and of men, he sighed ardently for the happy day when it would be given him to leave this place of exile and go to the heavenly fatherland. Very different from the unfaithful servants who would like, were it possible, to avoid for ever the presence of the sovereign Master, he called with all his desires for the coming of his Saviour. At length our Lord granted His servant’s prayers. He allowed him to be attacked by a continual fever which slowly consumed him and gave him occasion to exercise once more the most admirable mortification and charity. During the forty-seven days his illness lasted, he took no other food than the Body and Blood of the Saviour, and, as though he suffered nothing, he never ceased to preach the word of God to his brethren. Some religious from the neighbouring monasteries, having come to see this good Father, begged him with tears in their eyes to take at least something of what they had brought him. “I thank you, my dear children,” he said to them, “I need no food. Jesus alone is my life. Speak to me of nothing but Jesus Christ.” Indeed this great Saint had no need of earthly food, sustained as he was by the Holy Spirit, who gave him heavenly food and strengthened him with the hope of soon tasting the delights of the house of God.

Feeling the approach of the day for which he had so long sighed, he had his religious gathered round his deathbed, and, seeing them dissolve in tears, he strove to console them with ineffable tenderness, pointing them to heaven, where he would soon see them again. “My dear children,” he said to them, “hear the last recommendations of your dying father. I beg you, remain always united by the sweet bonds of charity, and keep a tender affection for one another. Take care not to let yourselves be deceived by the wiles of the tempter, and be faithful in keeping the promises you have made to God. Always cherish temperance, and guard preciously the treasure of chastity. Live in holy humility; shun pride more than death. Let each of you seek to surpass his brethren only in charity and good works. I also recommend to you one last time, my dear children: always receive strangers kindly for the love of our good Saviour, who said: ‘I was a stranger, and you took Me in.’ Live thus, my dear children, and soon we shall have the happiness of seeing one another again in heaven.”

Then, having given all his brethren the kiss of peace, this glorious Confessor gave up his soul into the hands of that God of infinite goodness whom he had loved so much, and who, as the reward of his fidelity, opened

to him the gates of the heavenly Jerusalem. His death took place on 29 December, in the twelfth year of the reign of Childebert III, which corresponds to the year 707. St. Evroult is represented: (1) leaving the palace and its dignities to vow himself to poverty, with an angel behind him; (2) delivering a man possessed; (3) converting a robber who had come to murder him in the forest of Ouche; (4) he is also given as attribute a piece of bread, the only one he had left, which he gives to a poor man, with near him a mule which God sends him laden with provisions, which he at once distributes to the poor; (5) sometimes with no other attribute than his abbot's crozier, or praying in his solitude.

(The life continues in the next part with Culte et reliques.)

ST. EVROULT OF BAYEUX, ABBOT OF OUCHE (concluded)

Culte et reliques

As soon as St. Evroult had breathed his last, his face shone with such brightness that no one had the least doubt that his soul, freed from all the bonds of sin, was reigning with Jesus Christ in heaven. His religious took up his body and carried it to the church with deep respect. For three days and three nights they sang hymns and canticles and kept watch around this holy body, which they buried on 2 January in the basilica of St. Peter. His body, later placed in a magnificent marble tomb, soon worked a great number of miracles. As these were clear proof of the glory the Saint enjoyed in heaven, one of the bishops of Séez who sat in the eighth century, after consulting the other prelates of the province, solemnly proposed him to the veneration of the faithful of his diocese. He also had a public office composed in his honour, whose lessons we still possess. This office was said on 29 December, the day of St. Evroult's death, as we see in the martyrology of Usuard. It was celebrated with great pomp, not only in the monasteries built by the holy Confessor but also in several churches raised in his honour in the dioceses of Séez, Chartres and Avranches. It was above all at the monastery of Ouche, afterwards called the monastery of Saint-Evroult, that great solemnity was displayed for this feast. The presence of our Saint's relics, which were exposed to the veneration of the faithful, powerfully stirred their devotion and drew them in crowds to his monastery. The ravages of the Northmen could not stop this pious movement of the peoples of Neustria towards the tomb of this great Saint. The monks of his abbey, protected by their noble poverty and hidden in the depths of their thick forest, could hear from afar the storm that raged over all Neustria without having their monastery overthrown, as almost all the others were. After the happy conversion of the Northmen to the Catholic faith, the faithful were again seen coming in crowds to the Saint's tomb. But soon a deplorable event came to grieve all hearts zealous for his glory: the removal of his relics, and of those of St. Evremond and St. Ansbert, which were taken by violence from their tomb and carried off to Orléans about the year 946.

In the ardour of their devotion to St. Evroult, the people of Orléans had a church built in his honour on the spot where his relics had first rested when they were brought into their city. The divine Mercy deigned to work in this church a very great number of miraculous cures in favour of the poor sick who came to claim the Saint's protection. Meanwhile Raoul de Dragy, seeing the great favours our Lord was pleased to grant His people through the Saint's merits, asked the chancellor Herluin for his share of the relics of this great servant of God. So the holy relics were brought forward by common agreement, in the presence of judges appointed by the bishop to make the division. Herluin, who was a priest, abbot of Saint-Pierre and grand chancellor of the duke of Orléans, received as his share the head and the greater part of the bones of St. Evroult. He kept besides his book of Hours, his little altar covered with silver, his abbatial crozier and his girdle, with the charters of the donations made to his abbey. The rest of the holy body was given to Raoul de Dragy. There was no more difficulty about dividing the other relics. The people of Orléans chose as their share the bones of St. Evremond, abbot; the relics of St. Ansbert, monk of Saint-Evroult, were given to Raoul de Dragy, who hastened to the monastery of Rebais[1] and offered the abbot his share of the glorious booty taken in Normandy. At the news of the rich present this knight was about to make them, the religious were filled with

great joy. They came out in procession to meet the relics, clothed in their richest vestments and holding lighted candles. The holy relics were led in triumph to the monastery church, where they remained exposed for several days to the veneration of the faithful. Not content with having these honours paid to our Saints, Raoul de Dragy also gave the religious large sums of gold and silver so that suitable shrines might be bought to hold the holy relics. Finally, wishing to put for ever beyond want the religious charged with keeping this precious treasure in their church, he gave them for their maintenance the lands of Bonceuil and Portulnon.

A little later there was a new translation of St. Evroult's relics, by order of King Hugh Capet, son of Duke Hugh, who ordered the abbot of Saint-Pierre of Orléans to give Geoffrey, son of the count of Anjou, part of the relics of St. Evroult kept in his abbey. Happy to carry off with him this sure pledge of God's blessing, the young prince went to Angers, where he was received with joy by all the people. He placed his precious treasure in the church of Saint-Maimbœuf. Later this church took the name of Saint-Evroult because of the miracles the Saint frequently worked there.

The religious of Saint-Evroult would have been overjoyed to recover the body of their illustrious founder. For several centuries they made many attempts to do so, but the monks of Orléans and those of Rebais held these precious relics too dear to agree to give them up, even to the children of St. Evroult. Nevertheless the religious of that abbey succeeded on several occasions in obtaining some parts of his relics, which they translated into their church with great solemnity. Thus Fulk, provost of the abbey of Saint-Evroult, obtained through a chaplain of the countess of Brie a tooth of St. Evroult. He hastened to bring this precious relic to his monastery, where it was received with transports of joy by all the religious.

Under the reign of Louis VI, called the Fat, the abbey recovered another relic of its founder. A canon of Paris named Fulbert had long had a whole bone of the spine of St. Evroult, which a chaplain of Henry I, king of France, had taken from his chapel and given to this canon as a sign of his affection. The canon, fearing that this theft might be discovered and bring him into trouble, handed the relic over to William de Montreuil. William, transported with joy at the sight of such a treasure, hastened to set out for Saint-Evroult. While on the way he experienced in his own person the effects of the protection of his blessed Father. Having eaten at an inn where he had put up some dishes that were poisoned, he soon felt cruel pains. In this extremity he had recourse to St. Evroult and besought him to restore his health. Scarcely had he made this prayer when he vomited the poison he had taken. He continued on his way giving thanks to God, and brought the holy relic full of joy to the abbey of Ouche. He placed it himself in a fine silver reliquary. In 1130 Guérin, seventh abbot of Saint-Evroult, undertook with God's help to obtain a larger portion of the Saint's relics. Knowing that half of the holy Confessor's relics were kept at the abbey of Rebais, he set out for that town with two fervent religious of his house, Odo de Montreuil and Garin of Séez, and had the joy of obtaining the Saint's right arm together with a box full of small fragments of bone. Provided with these precious relics, the abbot of Saint-Evroult took the road back to Normandy with his religious. They reached their monastery on 24 May. About four thousand people of both sexes had gathered there to attend the feast of the Translation of the relics and to receive the blessing of St. Evroult on his return to his abbey.

The Chronicle of the monastery of Ouche reports several other translations of our Saint's relics, less solemn than the preceding ones, but which nonetheless gave the religious a very lively and very legitimate joy.

Thus, towards the end of the eleventh century, when the troops of Robert, duke of Normandy, had taken the city of Orléans and sacked it, a valiant knight named Gaston de Montfort ran at once to the monastery of Saint-Pierre and carried off the holy abbot's head as his share of the booty. He placed it in the parish church of Saint-Evroult of Montfort as a noble trophy of his piety and his valour. Some years later, yielding to the urgent requests of the religious of Saint-Evroult, the parish priest of Montfort, with the consent of the bishop of Lisieux, gave them the front part of this glorious head, which was placed in a silver bust and exposed to the veneration of the faithful. On 13 July 1214 Reginald, abbot of Saint-Evroult, brought from Rebais part of the holy Confessor's jawbone with four teeth, a thighbone and the phalanx of a finger. He also brought relics

of St. Agilus, abbot of Rebais, and of St. Ansbert, monk of Saint-Evroult, which had been given him on condition that the feast of St. Agilus, first abbot of Rebais, be celebrated every year in his abbey.

Lastly, in 1358, Jean du Bois-Geslin, abbot of Saint-Evroult, brought new relics of our Saint to his monastery: a fragment of the humerus and a phalanx of the thumb. Throughout the Middle Ages the miracles of this great Saint continued to draw a considerable number of pilgrims to his monastery. These miracles and the people's devotion to St. Evroult persevered until 1792. At that unhappy time, when France, dominated by impiety, was cruelly persecuting the religion of its fathers, the abbey of Saint-Evroult, in spite of the many services it rendered the poor, in spite of the respect the name of this great Saint and the presence of his relics should have inspired, was pitilessly laid waste like all the other monasteries. After the last religious of this blessed house had been ignominiously driven out, the abbey was given over to pillage; the chalices, the crosses and the ancient vestments given to Saint-Evroult by princes and kings were carried off. Then a large part of the abbey buildings was pulled down for the pleasure of destroying. The fine church raised in honour of the Blessed Virgin, St. Peter and St. Evroult was profaned and demolished by impious wreckers. Later the stones of this venerable building were used to bed the roads or to make lime. Of this magnificent church there remain only a few stretches of wall, which alone would be enough to give us an idea of its size and beauty. One can still make out the place of the high altar and, probably, of our Saint's tomb. Where the altars of the holy Apostles, the Martyrs, the Confessors, the Virgins and All Saints stood, nothing can now be seen but heaps of rubble. At the end of the apse one still sees the lime kiln in which a great part of the stones of the venerable building was burnt.

This blessed ground is not the only place where the enemies of religion have heaped up ruins and tried to wipe out the cult of St. Evroult. At Rebais, where the holy abbot's relics had been kept religiously for eight centuries, the revolutionary storm likewise brought down the magnificent Gothic abbey church and the buildings around it. Nothing remains of that ancient house.

In the city of Angers the church of Saint-Maimbœuf, where St. Evroult's relics had been kept religiously for more than eight centuries, was also overthrown and destroyed from top to bottom. With this venerable sanctuary perished the precious relic of St. Evroult given by Hugh Capet to Geoffrey, count of Anjou.

At Orléans almost all our Saint's relics were burnt by the Protestants in the sixteenth century; yet some fragments were still venerated there in the seventeenth century, according to the testimony of La Saussaye, historian of the Church of Orléans. He states that every year these precious relics were carried solemnly in procession through the city. The Revolution unhappily completed the work of Protestantism, and today the city of Orléans no longer possesses anything of these holy relics which were once its glory. His church is destroyed, and a Protestant temple stands on its ruins.

Yet all the efforts of impiety have not been able to destroy entirely the cult of St. Evroult in the various dioceses where he was venerated before the Revolution. Thus in the diocese of Meaux the precious relics of St. Evroult which were brought to Rebais in the middle of the tenth century are still kept there with religious respect; they were saved, with the other relics of that church, during the revolutionary storm, and the five shrines that existed formerly are still there. One of these shrines contains a large bag holding ashes and bones of St. Evroult, of St. Lazarus and of other Saints. These relics were damaged by the fire that destroyed the church of the Benedictines in 1592. They were recognized by the bishop of Meaux in 1854. At Orléans the memory of St. Evroult is still held in benediction, and the remembrance of his benefits is carefully preserved. If the city of Angers has lost the holy abbot's relics, it has at least kept the memory of his miracles, and, to honour him, the street that led to the church of Saint-Maimbœuf has been given the name of Saint-Evroult. In the dioceses of Laval, Blois and Chartres, several churches dedicated under the invocation of St. Evroult bear witness to the veneration of the peoples of those regions for our Saint. These are the churches of Saint-Fort (S. Evurtius), near Château-Gontier, where pilgrims come on Trinity Sunday; of Lunay, near Montoire;[2] and of Pré-Saint-Evroult.[3] This last church, which possesses several relics of St. Evroult, is the centre of a

pilgrimage famous throughout the region. Tradition relates that the French army, carrying off St. Evroult's relics, camped in this parish, which in consequence took the Saint's name. It already bore this glorious name in the year 1080 (S. Ebrulfus). The cure was in the gift of the Chapter of Chartres. A hamlet of Villemeux, near Dreux, also bears the name of Saint-Evroult. In the middle of this village there was formerly a chapel dedicated to the holy abbot; it was in the gift of the abbey of Coulombs.

In the diocese of Coutances a church famous for its antiquity and the beauty of its forms, the church of Mortain, also acknowledges St. Evroult as its patron or titular. A great crowd of pilgrims came every year to visit this venerable sanctuary. The respect it inspired led several lords of the region to make rich alms to the Canons of Saint-Evroult. Kings themselves wished to give them marks of their piety. Not to speak of a great number of churches in France given to the Canons of Saint-Evroult, such as the churches of Gorron, Notre-Dame of Tinchebray, Saint-Pierre of Tinchebray and Condé-sur-Noireau, they held great estates in England, which they had received from the generosity of Count Robert of Mortain, brother of William the Conqueror. Philip of Valois, king of France, in 1330, and Henry V, king of England, in 1417, confirmed the franchises and privileges of the dean and Chapter of Saint-Evroult of Mortain.

This venerable Chapter perished at the time of the Revolution, like all religious establishments. But the people of Mortain kept the collegiate church, which was the most remarkable monument of the town. This church, which has become a parish church, has been enriched in the last few years with a fragment of the relics of its holy patron. Another fragment of his relics is kept at the hospice of the town, served by the Sisters of Providence of Séez. Every year at Mortain the feast of St. Evroult is celebrated with great pomp, and the beauty of the worship matches the piety of the clergy and people of the town.

The diocese of Bayeux also celebrates the holy abbot's feast every year with great devotion. In several parishes of the diocese of Évreux the faithful show great veneration for St. Evroult. At the château of Martainville, near Pacy-sur-Eure, there is a chapel in honour of the holy abbot. The diocese of Séez is the one where devotion to St. Evroult is most honoured. Several fragments of his relics, kept at the cathedral, at the major seminary and in some other communities of the town of Séez, are, especially on his feast day, the object of the veneration of clergy and faithful. In the parish of Champs there is still a church which was built in the Saint's honour towards the end of the tenth century. A precious relic of St. Evroult used to be kept in this church: part of his head, which François de Brissac, bishop of Orléans, had granted on 12 February 1492 to Thomas Laffilé, parish priest of Saint-Hilaire-lès-Mortagne and a native of Champs, to be placed in the church of his native parish. It was in fact brought there with great pomp amid a great concourse of the faithful. From the time of this translation pilgrims were seen hastening from every side to claim the holy abbot's intercession. Unhappily the reliquary was taken from the church in 1793 and its precious relic lost for ever. Since then the concourse of pilgrims has ceased. But the inhabitants of this parish keep a great respect for their holy patron, and his feast is celebrated with solemnity.

At Saint-Christophe-le-Jajolet St. Evroult has also been venerated from time immemorial. In 1088 William de Clérai gave the abbey of Saint-Martin the chapel of Saint-Evroult with its dependencies. This chapel was probably all that then remained of the ancient monastery. In 1248 Innocent IV confirmed the monks of Saint-Martin in the possession of this chapel, which was then united to the cure of Saint-Christophe. The holy Mysteries were celebrated there on solemn feasts and whenever the devotion of pilgrims led them to ask for a Mass. It was above all on the feast day of this chapel, 4 May, that the greatest concourse of people took place. There was a fairly large gathering that day, and many pilgrims drank the water of a spring near the chapel which, according to common belief, had the power of curing or preventing madness. This spring can still be seen at the foot of the terraces of the château. The cells of the solitaries were in the neighbourhood, towards the hamlet of L'If. The chapel of Saint-Evroult, which stood ten or twelve paces north of this spring, having fallen into ruin during the Revolution, the owner of the château of Sacy obtained from the inhabitants of Saint-Christophe permission to raze it entirely and to rebuild it within the grounds of the château, on

condition of leaving free access to all who wished to go there to claim St. Evroult's protection. In 1820 M. d'Ommoy, to whom the château belonged, asked Mgr Saussol for permission to celebrate, as before 1792, the feast of St. Evroult on 4 May. This permission was granted, and a great crowd of pilgrims was again seen at the chapel, mixed unhappily with a number of people drawn less by devotion than by the pleasures of the gathering held that day in the château woods. Learning of the disorders committed there, the parish priest of Saint-Christophe thought it his duty to stop going to say Mass on the feast day, and the gathering came to an end almost at once. Yet great veneration for St. Evroult is still kept in this parish. The chapel, which now belongs to the duc d'Audiffret-Pasquier, is brilliantly decorated, and every Sunday for a great part of the year holy Mass is celebrated there. The parish of Saint-Evroul-de-Montfort also glories in being under the patronage of St. Evroult and in bearing him a deep veneration from time immemorial. It still possesses the Saint's head, except for a fairly considerable part which was given to the abbey of Saint-Evroult. It is enclosed in a bust which Mgr Jolly, in 1840, allowed to be exposed to the veneration of the faithful on the patronal feast and to be carried in procession on the day of the translation of St. Evroult's relics, that is, the Sunday within the octave of the Ascension. On that day indeed, from time immemorial, a procession is made at Saint-Evroult-de-Montfort after Vespers to a little chapel, also called Saint-Evroult's, and the Saint's bust is carried there amid signs of general devotion. Every year on that day there is a gathering in the village of Montfort which has succeeded the old pilgrimage. During the rest of the year a few people come from time to time to implore St. Evroult's protection, especially against madness, from which the Saint has received from God the power to preserve or to cure. But the parish where most devotion to the holy abbot is kept is that of Saint-Evroult-Notre-Dame, in the canton of La Ferté-Fresnel. It was there, in fact, that the holy abbot spent the greater part of his life, there that he died, and there that his body lay for centuries. A host of religious monuments stir the pilgrim who visits this blessed land to devotion towards St. Evroult. Thus on arriving in the village one sees the ruins of the old monastery of Saint-Evroult, particularly of the cloister and the church, where he so often sang the praises of God and made his religious hear the word of life. Beside these venerable ruins, near the gate of the old monastery, there is still a small Gothic chapel dedicated to St. Evroult, which was probably used for strangers. About two hundred metres away is the spring of Saint-Evroult. A short distance from there one enters the thick forest which St. Evroult and his religious partly cleared and which he so often watered with his sweat. Half a league from the ruins of the monastery, towards the west, one comes upon a chapel formerly dedicated to St. Evroult and now under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin. Twenty paces below it flows a fine spring which bears the name of Saint-Evroult because the Saint came several times to quench his thirst at its clear waters. Before the Revolution a great number of pilgrims used to visit this chapel and drink the water of this spring to be cured of their infirmities. In our own day pilgrims still go to the spring. Some bathe the sick in it; others are content to make them drink the water. St. Evroult is invoked for mental derangement, epilepsy and all illnesses of that kind, for fever, and for the preservation of the herds. Often the prayers obtain their effect, and sometimes in a remarkable way. On returning to the village of Saint-Evroult the pilgrim sees on the hill beyond the Charentonne the church of the Blessed Virgin, which was built by St. Evroult in fulfilment of the vow of the queen of Neustria, wife of Childebert III. This church had fallen into ruin in the tenth century, through the ravages of time or of the barbarians. A noble knight named Gaston de Montfort undertook to rebuild it. In the fifteenth century the church was rebuilt as we see it today, and it is the only sanctuary raised by our Saint in this parish that has remained standing. This church possesses a magnificent ivory crucifix and several reliquaries taken from the abbey of Saint-Evroult at the time of the pillage of 1792.

Since the Revolution the relics of St. Evroult formerly kept at the abbey have been venerated in this church. Only the fine silver reliquaries that held them have disappeared. These relics are now enclosed in a humble wooden shrine. Many pilgrims still come to kneel before them and commend their life and their death to this powerful protector, who has seen so many generations prostrate before him. Some fragments of these relics have been given, with the approval of the bishop of Séez, to several priests of his diocese. They are kept at

Alençon, Mortagne, Argentan, La Carneille, Anceins and Durcet. The cult of St. Evroult was approved at Rome for the diocese of Séez in 1857.

Lives of the Saints of the diocese of Séez, by the Abbé Blin, parish priest of Durcet.

ST. THOMAS BECKET, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, IN ENGLAND, MARTYR (1170)

Scio opera tua et laborem et patientiam tuam; et quia sustinuisti propter nomen meum, et non defecisti.

I know your works, the labours you have undertaken and the heroic constancy that has secured their success; I know all that you have suffered for My name, without ever weakening before My enemies.

Apoc 2:2–3.

The love which bishops must have for the Churches whose spouses they have become by their consecration is so just and so sacred that no one hesitates to give the name of martyrs to those who have chosen to sacrifice their lives in defence of the rights and immunities of those Churches rather than consent to the unjust pretensions of greedy and irreligious princes who have tried to abolish them or to usurp them. This is what has won so much glory for St. Thomas, archbishop of Canterbury, and what, by making him the victim of justice and piety, has made him the model of good pastors, the example of episcopal courage, the terror of sacrilegious kings, and the firmest bulwark of the afflicted and persecuted Church.

His father was an English gentleman called Gilbert Becket, and his mother a Saracen woman named Matilda, daughter of one of the first princes or emirs of that nation. She had conceived a keen affection for Gilbert, who had become her father’s slave on his way back from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, and she came to find him in England, became a Christian there and married him, after he had escaped, by an extraordinary help from heaven, from the prisons and chains to which his captivity had reduced him. Thomas was born of this marriage in the city of London on 21 December 1117, the day consecrated to the memory of St. Thomas the Apostle, which is why he was given his name. Nature endowed him with several qualities of body and mind capable of commending him in the eyes of men; but grace was still more lavish towards him. From his earliest years it poured into his soul so much wisdom and uprightness, so much zeal and devotion, that it was plain he was a chosen vessel of God, to procure His glory and to uphold His interests before kings and peoples and in the face of the whole earth. His father himself was so convinced that in time he would be a great servant of Jesus Christ that, coming to see him one day in a monastery where he had placed him to receive the first tincture of letters, he greeted him with deep respect, as though he were already a prelate of extraordinary merit.

After his studies in humanities and philosophy, which he made in England and at Paris, he was employed, young as he was, in the government of the police of London. This office gave him the means of gaining some knowledge of affairs of State and above all of discerning the different rights and interests of the Church and of the secular arm. But seeing the unjust encroachments of the magistrates and lords of the city upon the clergy, and that the strongest and most urgent remonstrances could not prevent them, he chose to give up his office rather than have a hand in their iniquity. The people saw him renounce civil magistracy only with sorrow. He was so chaste that a thousand snares laid for his purity could never lead him into any dishonourable act; he had so much candour and sincerity that he was never heard to utter a single lie, even in jest or by flattery. He loved hunting and made it his chief recreation, but always without prejudice to the duties of his office and the exercises of piety he had prescribed for himself. God preserved him miraculously from danger of death: when a stream into which he had thrown himself to save a falcon he used for hunting was carrying him violently under the wheel of a mill, where he would have been crushed, the wheel stopped short and, standing motionless, gave him the chance to escape.

Having given up the charge of the police, he attached himself to Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury. This prelate, recognizing his prudence, his fidelity and his vigour, employed him in the greatest affairs of his diocese; among other things he sent him several times to Rome to negotiate very important business with the Pope, and on one of these journeys allowed him to remain a year at the university of Bologna to perfect himself in the knowledge of civil law. After some years, wishing to secure so precious a treasure for the Church, he engaged him in holy orders, and when his great archdeaconry fell vacant he gave it to him together with some other benefices. Thomas discharged these ecclesiastical offices with as much integrity and vigilance as he had shown in temporal administration. He was a wise steward of the goods of the Church; the increase of his revenues only increased his charity, and the poor found in him a father, a protector and a provider always ready to help them. He applied himself also to the preaching of the word of God, and, as he accompanied it with blameless conduct and the example of every kind of virtue, he made it very effective and caused it to bear great fruit among the people. The archbishop, admiring more and more the rare qualities of so faithful a minister, made him known to King Henry II, whom he had crowned. He set before him Thomas's quickness in grasping and penetrating affairs, his skill in carrying out decisions, his courage in pushing them to their conclusion, and his integrity, always constant and incorruptible, in the missions entrusted to him. The prince, charmed by so many perfections, wished to have Thomas in his service, and, having found by some trials that the archbishop had told him nothing but the truth, and even less than his merit, he made him his chancellor, which was the first office of his kingdom. Never was there seen a minister of State so zealous for his prince's interests, so inflexible in rendering justice to all, so eager to relieve the people and to oblige all who had recourse to him. He knew how to manage his credit with his master so well that he always made it serve the general good of England. The honour of his office obliged him to keep a great retinue and to be magnificent in all things; but he did not on that account lose the spirit of recollection that his state as a cleric required. He gave the day to business and spent the better part of the night in prayer, and when necessity pressed him to take a little sleep, he did not lie in a costly and soft bed but on the bare ground, so as to have only a rest broken by discomfort and pain. The king surprised him several times in this austerity, and the castellan of Stafford also discovered it: one night when he had received him in his house during one of his journeys, he went up to his room and found him in the corner beside his bed, his feet and legs bare and his face pressed against the ground, where, after many genuflexions and a long prayer, he had let himself fall asleep. He also very often took the discipline, so that, his body being humbled by this penance, it might have less strength to rebel against the spirit. His salary was very considerable and his riches grew every day through the liberality of his prince; but it may be said that he was only their distributor. Ruined families, abandoned sick, prisoners without help and needy monasteries had the best share of them.

He served Henry II not only in the administration of justice but also in the affairs of war. He crossed with him into Guienne against Louis VII, called the Young, king of France, and gave him powerful help there by his counsel and even by his arm in various expeditions in which he had to take command. Among other things he took three considerable strongholds thought to be impregnable, which led to his being given their government. In all his actions he behaved with such uprightness and good faith that his very enemies, who suffered every possible hostility from him, could not help praising and cherishing him. Louis VII was one of these: he pursued him as one of the most formidable enemies of his State, but he loved him as a man of honour who served his prince as well as a subject could. Besides these great employments he had yet another no less important for the good of England: the education of the Prince of Wales, whom Henry entrusted to him as the man he judged most capable of making him a great king. Thomas acquitted himself of this to the satisfaction of both, and with incomparable zeal undertook at the same time the upbringing of the young lords placed about the prince, knowing well that the glory, and in some fashion the strength, of a State depends on the first impressions given to the young nobility. The prudence with which he exercised all his functions so increased the English king's esteem for his merit that when the Church of Canterbury, primatial see of all England, fell vacant by the death of Theobald in 1162, he wished him to be elected to fill it.

Thomas opposed this design with all his strength; and after using his own prayers and those of his friends without success, and alleging every reason he could think of to defeat it, he finally told him that if he made him archbishop His Majesty would certainly repent of it, because it was very likely that they would fall out over ecclesiastical jurisdiction, whose limits he could not allow him to narrow. Henry nevertheless held firm in his resolution, because he bore him such friendship that he did not think anything capable of changing it. So in a council assembled at Westminster, the royal monastery of London, Thomas was elected archbishop of Canterbury; and, however great his reluctance, he acquiesced in his election because the cardinal of Pisa, legate of the Holy See, declared to him that he could not oppose it without resisting the will of God. He did so, however, only on two conditions, to which the Prince of Wales gave his word in the name of the king his father, who was in Normandy: first, that he should from then on be entirely discharged of the office of chancellor; second, that he should be given to the Church free of every claim, without being obliged to render account of the charges of the crown he had administered until that time.

He was then forty-four years old, but he was still only a deacon. Having gone to Canterbury, he was ordained priest there on the eve of Pentecost, and the next day he received episcopal consecration from the hands of the bishop of Winchester, to whom this right was adjudged in the absence of the bishop of London. After his consecration he sent envoys to Pope Alexander III, who was at Montpellier, to ask for the pallium, and His Holiness granted it to him very willingly, knowing the merit of the man who asked for it. When it was brought, he went out to meet the envoys barefoot, with singular humility and devotion, to receive it. *Mysterium siquidem grande est*, says his historian: “for this mystery is great,” and signifies a wonderful relation between the archbishop who receives it and the sovereign Shepherd of souls.

The anointing of his consecration worked a surprising change in his soul. He appeared all at once clothed with all the episcopal virtues. He made himself the form and model of his whole flock. He even embraced the regular life professed by his canons, fasting and watching like them and wearing under his bishop’s robes a tunic like theirs. To it he added the hair shirt, to subdue his members by continual crosses and pains, so that, never being without torment, he might be ceaselessly reminded to think of God and to do his actions solely for His glory. He never said Mass without his eyes being seen bathed in tears. In reciting the *Confiteor* he uttered almost as many sighs as words. At the Canon it seemed that his heart touched the Saviour’s wounds, by the feelings of tenderness and compassion with which he was filled. He served the poor at table three times a day: at the first he had thirteen, at the second twelve, at the third a hundred. He could not eat unless there was someone beside him. He provided abundantly for all the other poor of his diocese: he visited the sick, consoled the afflicted, supported the unfortunate, and made himself the father and protector of widows and orphans. He did not allow his officers to take money from those who had business before his tribunal; and one day, when an abbot offered some to several of them to have his case dispatched more quickly, he did not find a single one willing to accept it.

In 1163, the year after his consecration, he went to the Council of Tours. On his arrival Pope Alexander III sent all the cardinals to receive him, except two who remained with His Holiness. There he had the privileges of his church confirmed, and, having set forth the liberty which princes and lords were taking of seizing ecclesiastical property, he had anathema pronounced against these usurpers and against prelates who connived at their injustices. On his return to England he was received by the king with marks of friendship and goodwill, although efforts had already been made to embitter the prince against him, because, wishing to provide more abundantly for the needs of the poor, he was taking back as of right the goods evidently usurped from his church, and was suing at law for those whose usurpation, though certain, was not so evident. The first causes of the coldness that arose between the king and the archbishop are too long to recall here; we should risk being incomplete and inaccurate in abridging them. We shall only say that Thomas on several occasions defended the rights and privileges of the Church without fear of displeasing the king. The king, irritated, assembled the bishops in council at London to have their opinion. They all approved

Thomas's conduct and applauded his view, which they judged in conformity with the ecclesiastical Canons.

(The life continues in the next part.)

The king, irritated to see them all against him, asked them whether they were not disposed to submit to the observance of the royal usages and customs and to take an oath to keep them. They answered that they could take this oath only with the clause *Salvo ordine nostro*, "Saving our order": this was the ordinary form of the oath of fealty of the bishops of England. At this the king flew into a great rage, and, showing plainly enough by his outbursts that he would ill-treat these prelates if they did not take the oath without any restriction, he left London in a fury, without bidding them farewell. Fear of tyrannical oppression made almost all these bishops change their minds, and they implored the Saint, for the sake of the peace of the Churches of England, to give the king some satisfaction. He yielded at last to their prayers and their tears; he went to find Henry at Oxford, where he had withdrawn, and, after some vigorous remonstrances, seeing him inflexible in his resolve, he promised him, for himself and for his brethren, to take the oath he demanded of them without adding the disputed clause.

The king showed himself content with this submission, and, to make it more solemn, he summoned his parliament to Clarendon, so that, by his ordinance and in the presence of all the barons and lords of the realm, the bishops might take this oath in the manner agreed. This proceeding seemed suspect to the blessed archbishop, and he saw clearly that the king's intention was to bring the Church of his kingdom into bondage and to bind it so tightly to his pretended customs that it would no longer have the power to free itself from them. He therefore put up fresh resistance to what was being demanded of him. However, since his brethren, who were being threatened with exile, prison and even death if they did not submit to the king's will, threw themselves at his feet and pressed him with tears in their eyes not to persist obstinately in his refusal, and since several other ecclesiastics commended for their piety and learning assured him that there was no danger in this of offending God, he yielded at last to their advice, and he was the first to swear to keep the royal customs, not putting in the clause "Saving our order", but adding in its place the words "In good faith and in truth". God permitted him to commit this weakness, in spite of the secret repugnance and perplexity of his conscience, to keep him always in humility, so that, knowing by his own experience how great human frailty is, he should not attribute to himself the victories he was afterwards to win in the sight of all Europe. The other prelates took the same oath. After this the king named some lords who were presumed to have a perfect knowledge of these customs to draw them up in articles and put them in writing, so that the bishops might set their seals to them; this was the only manner of subscribing in those days. The next day they were proposed, sixteen in number, as they are given in the fourth book of the Life of St. Thomas composed by four of his disciples. Among these customs there were some that were not ancient at all, but had been forged expressly, as much to flatter the prince's ambition as to harm our Saint and subject the Church to the royal power. Henry himself had no knowledge of them, and it was only on the word of others that he imagined his crown obliged him to uphold them. The blessed archbishop, so as not to vex his sovereign, did not flatly refuse to set his seal to them; but he represented to him that a matter of such great importance well deserved that they be given time to examine the articles and decide whether they ought to subscribe to them. His request was too just to be refused; the delay was granted him. He took a copy of these customs, the archbishop of York took one also, and the king had the original carried off to be placed in the archives of the crown.

On leaving the assembly a dispute arose among St. Thomas's officers about what had taken place, some saying that it had been right to accommodate oneself to the misfortune of the times, and others, on the contrary, maintaining that the just interests of the Church had been betrayed. His cross-bearer above all said aloud: "Alas! the storm has struck the pillars of the sanctuary: the shepherd has gone astray, and the faithful will henceforth be left to the guidance of the wolf. What will become of innocence? who will uphold its rights, who will fight and win victories, now that the leader has been vanquished?" Everyone fell silent at these words; and the cleric, made bolder by this silence, added: "What virtue can he now have who has lost

his soul and ruined his good name?" St. Thomas, hearing him make these lamentations, went up to him and asked him of whom he was speaking. "Of you, my lord," he answered, "because today you have betrayed your conscience, destroyed the high regard your firmness had won you, and given a fatal and scandalous example of cowardice, in stretching out your consecrated hands to bind yourself to keep customs that are execrable and contrary to the just liberties of the Church. You have made a pact with the ministers of Satan against God and against His Christ, and all posterity will feel the effects of so odious a connivance."

The voice of this man, says Cardinal Baronius, was the cock-crow that awakened St. Peter. Thomas came to himself at once; he acknowledged his fault and repented of it, and, heaving a deep sigh, he cried out: "Ah, wretch that I am, to have thus exposed the Church of England to perpetual bondage! My predecessors upheld its liberty; I, by my imprudence, have abandoned its defence. I see well that I am not worthy of the rank I hold, and that, having been taken from a secular life, I have no capacity to be the shepherd of the flock of Jesus Christ. What remains for me but to groan in silence and weep bitterly for so great a fault, until the Pope himself has judged how I ought to conduct myself?" In this frame of mind he abstained from celebrating the holy Mysteries, and sent with all speed to Sens to ask His Holiness, who was there, for absolution from his sin, together with full instructions on what he ought to do. The Pope was already informed of what had happened and of Thomas's penance; he therefore sent him the canonical absolution he asked for, and, in a letter of consolation which he wrote to him, he exhorted him to abstain no longer from saying Mass, but to take up again with entirely fresh vigour the exercises of his pastoral charge. Meanwhile the king, being told that the archbishop was not at all disposed to set his seal to the articles of his customs, and that on the contrary he condemned almost all of them, began to harass him in the administration of his office and to torment him in every way; and the persecution was so evident and so cruel that there was no one who did not judge that he was determined to rid the world of him. This made St. Thomas think of withdrawing secretly from England, where he could have no peace, and going to the Pope, who was still in France because of a schism with which the Church was afflicted. God did not favour his flight. He went aboard a ship to cross the British sea; but the winds were against him, and he found himself obliged to return to his palace, where divine Providence was preparing for him a chalice of reproach and sorrow. He judged from this impossibility that God wished him to apply himself generously to the duties of his office. So he began again to instruct his people, to visit his parishes, to cut away the abuses that had crept in, and to govern his diocese, not according to the articles of Clarendon, but according to the ancient rules of the ecclesiastical Canons.

Henry, growing ever more embittered against him, sent ambassadors to the Pope to have him deprived of the title of apostolic legate attached to that of archbishop of Canterbury and to have it given to the archbishop of York, his enemy, thinking that in this way he could easily make him lay down his dignity. The Pope, hoping to win over the king's mind, granted him part of what he asked, namely that the archbishop of York should be apostolic legate in place of the archbishop of Canterbury; but he forestalled the harmful consequences that might arise from this change by exempting our holy archbishop and all his suffragans from the legate's authority. He also wrote him several letters to console him, strengthen him and encourage him to remain constant and unshakeable in the defence of the legitimate rights of the Church. In one of these letters he tells him that he is having continual prayers said in the monasteries of Clairvaux, Cîteaux and Pontigny to obtain for him from God the graces necessary in the present juncture. The king of England, not having obtained from the Pope the satisfaction he claimed, resolved to proceed to the utmost violence and to use all his authority to destroy him if he could not compel him to subscribe to his royal customs.

He was summoned to the assembly of Northampton, where the bishops, who ought to have been his defenders, wishing to please the court, made themselves his persecutors. His goods were confiscated before he was heard; he was called to account for certain moneys he had received while chancellor and minister of State, and although he answered very wisely that among the conditions on which he had accepted the archbishopric one of the chief was that he should not be held to any account, they did not fail to load him

with insults on this score. He was made out a criminal for having sworn to keep the royal customs and then refusing to subscribe to them and observe them. In short, he was pursued with such animosity and rigour that it was even said publicly that he was about to be put in prison and cruelly done to death.

To prepare himself for this sentence he said the Mass of St. Stephen and carried on his person the august sacrament of the Eucharist, and when he was near the chamber of the assembly he took up the cross which his chaplain was carrying before him. While he awaited his judgement in this state, the bloodiest outrages were offered him; some bishops mocked him and called him a cheat, a hypocrite and a rebel; there were even ushers who, showing him rods and sticks, gave him to understand insultingly that they were ready to flog him. The Saint groaned in his soul to see the Church of England so outrageously treated in the person of its primate; but on the other hand he rejoiced to expiate by his sufferings the faults which a life full of glory, power and pleasure had once made him commit. At last the bishop of Chichester and the earl of Leicester came to declare to him that he had been deposed from his archbishopric as perjured and unfaithful to the king. He showed in a few words that he was not, because he had not sworn to keep every kind of royal custom, but only those which should prove to be truly such, which could not be said of most of the articles of Clarendon; and that, if constraint and human weakness had made him swear to something unjust, far from being bound by his oath, he ought on the contrary to retract it, so as not to commit a double injustice. Then he appealed to the Pope from so impious a proceeding, in which the children had condemned their father, the suffragans their archbishop, and individual prelates the head of the whole English Church. As he withdrew after this appeal, which halted the execution of the sentence, the prince's officers followed him with insults; but in recompense he was welcomed by crowds of the poor and the sick, who sang without any fear: "Blessed be the Lord, who has delivered and saved His servant from the hands of his enemies!" He was conducted with this escort right to his palace, which made him say to the clergy around him: "What a glorious procession accompanies us as we leave a house of tribulation!" Then he had all these people brought in and ordered that they be given dinner in abundance. As for himself, he went straight to the church to thank God for the pains He had sent him, and set his archiepiscopal cross beside the image of Our Lady; then, coming to his room, he exhorted his household to be patient and to say nothing against his persecutors.

Finally, learning that, far from allowing him to go and pursue his case before the Sovereign Pontiff, they were laying snares to put him to death, and reflecting on these words of the Son of God, "If they persecute you in one city, flee into another", that very night he fled in disguise, accompanied only by two religious of Cîteaux and a servant. He suffered much on land and sea; but at last he arrived safely at Gravelines, from there at the monastery of Clairmarais, of the Order of Cîteaux, then at that of Saint-Bertin, of the Order of St. Benedict, at the request of Godescalc, who was its abbot; then at Arras, where before the Revolution there used still to be shown, in the priory of Saint-Nicolas, an altar of St. Anthony at which he said Mass; and finally at Soissons, where the Most Christian King was soon to come. That prince had already rebuffed the ambassadors of the king of England, who had come on their master's behalf to beg him not to suffer the archbishop in his States, testifying to them the incomparable esteem in which he held the holy archbishop and saying that he did not wish to fall short of the generosity of his ancestors, who had gloried in being the refuge of good prelates under persecution. He received him with open arms, offered him whatever place in his kingdom he might wish for his dwelling, and assured him of every other help in money and comfort that he might need during his exile. With this protection St. Thomas went to the Pope at Sens. He had already written to him and sent some of his clerics to set before him the state of his affairs, but it was necessary that he should speak to him in person. The king of England, to whom St. Thomas's secret flight caused mortal vexation, had deputed to His Holiness an archbishop and four bishops, namely Robert of York, Henry of Winchester, Gilbert of London, Hilary of Chichester and Bartholomew of Exeter, who had declaimed furiously against his conduct. The Pope, who was a man of God and of marvellous penetration, did not let himself be deceived by their invectives; but they had prejudiced the minds of most of the cardinals, to such a point that some wanted the archbishopric taken from the holy prelate for the sake of peace. On his arrival he

was rather ill received by that court which had done him so much honour at the Council of Tours. The Pope, however, welcomed him kindly and, the very next day, gave him audience in full Consistory. Thomas did not make himself there the accuser of his king or of his brethren; but, after setting forth simply how advantageous it would be to him, according to the world, to live at peace with them, he showed the articles of the royal customs to which they wished to make him subscribe, and begged that venerable assembly to tell him whether he had not done well to oppose them, and whether he ought not still to suffer death a thousand times rather than let the Church of England be subjected to them. His speech was so strong and so moving that it drew tears from the eyes of the whole assembly, and even those who had let themselves be prejudiced against him acknowledged that they had unjustly condemned a Saint and that his cause was that of the whole Church.

The following day he had a second audience, in which, by an admirable example of humility, he accused himself, first, of not having entered the prelacy by the right way, but only to satisfy the king, without having the capacity or the virtues necessary for so great a charge; secondly, of having let himself be led, through cowardice, to swear that he would keep the royal customs without first having seen them or knowing what they were. He placed his archbishopric in the hands of the Pope and presented his pastoral ring to him for that purpose, protesting that he would have resigned it while he was in England had he not believed that he would be betraying the interests of the Church by yielding through cowardice to the violence of a headstrong prince. The Pope took good care not to accept his resignation. He judged wisely that if Thomas lost his rank for having opposed the unjust pretensions of the Englishman, no bishop would any longer dare to uphold his authority, and that the Church would no longer see herself supported by pillars founded on the rock, but only by reeds. He therefore restored him to his dignity and commanded him to keep it; then, taking upon himself the task of reconciling him with his king, he sent him to the abbey of Pontigny, second daughter of Cîteaux, which was then flourishing in every kind of holiness, commending him very particularly to Guichard, who was its abbot and who was afterwards archbishop of Lyons.

Who could express the holiness with which the blessed Thomas lived in that house? He was distinguished from the religious only in that he surpassed them all in humility, patience, gentleness, austerities and devotion. He was the first at the divine offices and at manual labour, both in the monastery and in the fields. His fasts were the hardest, his disciplines the most frequent and his prayers the longest. He wore continually on his bare flesh a very prickly hair shirt, with drawers of the same material, which did not leave him a moment without pain. His fervour even led him to beg the Pope by letter to allow him to wear the habit of that Order and to send him one blessed by his own hand. His Holiness granted it to him, and, in sending the habit, wrote to him in these terms: “We send you a habit, not such as we should wish, but such as we have”, signifying thereby that he would rather have sent him back to his see clothed in his pontifical vestments than give him only a religious habit. Finally, it is even written that, to mortify himself still more, he plunged naked into almost freezing water, in imitation of St. Bernard, which caused him several infirmities.

(The life continues in the next part.)

Meanwhile the king of England, irritated by the favour Thomas had found with the Pope and the king of France and by the failure of his own ambassadors, first seized all his goods and all those of his kinsfolk, his friends and his household; then, having made them swear that they would go and find the archbishop wherever he might be, so that the sight of so many people made wretched on his account might overwhelm him with grief and affliction and bring him to obey, he banished them all from his kingdom, with their wives and children. Finally, a thing the cruellest tyrants had not done, he forbade anyone in all his States to pray for him, as though he had been excommunicated from sharing in the suffrages of the Church. After this edict, several of these poor exiles could be seen arriving every day at Pontigny, and they pierced his heart all the more because he was in no condition to help them. Yet divine Providence did not abandon them. Most of the princes and lords of Europe who learned of this persecution counted it an honour to receive and maintain

them; Margaret, queen of Sicily, and the archbishop of Saragossa took in a great number and supported them at their own expense, for which the holy prelate thanked them by letter.

He also wrote admirable letters both to the king and to the prelates of England, to touch their hearts and bring them back to their duty through fear of the judgements of God. The Pope for his part did not fail to write too and to employ other means to settle the affair; but, the antipope Octavian having died, he was obliged to return to Rome without having been able to bring it to an end. Before this he summoned our Saint to his court and had several conferences with him; and since his wholly holy conversation was extremely agreeable to him, he took him with him as far as Bourges. It was there that St. Thomas three times changed water into wine in the hands of His Holiness, who had asked him, as a mark of honour, to bless the water he intended to drink. From there he returned to Pontigny, where, when he wished to mend his hair shirt, the Blessed Virgin is said to have appeared to him and mended it for him herself, filling him with consolation by this grace and by the wholly divine words she spoke to him. The Pope having given him back his dignity of apostolic legate, he used it, without leaving Pontigny, with marvellous prudence, gentleness and strength. He annulled the so-called royal customs; he excommunicated the bishops who upheld and observed them; he threatened the king with his thunderbolts, solely with a view to his amendment, if he did not restore to the Church the honour he had taken from her; in short, absent, he did everything he would have done if present. The prince, whom a serious illness could not correct, after appealing to the Pope against anything the archbishop might do, wrote a threatening letter to the abbot and religious of Pontigny, in which he informed them that if they kept the archbishop with them any longer he would ruin all the monasteries of their Order in Normandy and England and drive out all their monks. The Saint, fearing that so many good servants of God might be ill-treated on his account, informed the Most Christian King of this letter. That prince, moved by it, sent him word by his envoys that he should not be troubled; that he declared himself his protector; that, if the whole world abandoned him, he would not abandon him; and that he might withdraw to whatever city of his kingdom he judged most suitable, without fear of lacking anything. St. Thomas, admiring the goodness of so great a monarch, left Pontigny, where he had lived for two years, and withdrew to Sainte-Colombe of Sens, after learning by revelation that he would be a martyr.

He lived in this new monastery as he had lived in the first, and still more austerely. The ground was his bed and a stone his pillow; his shoulders were continually bleeding from the disciplines he received from one of his chaplains or gave himself. All his time was spent in prayer, in instructing his household, in assisting the poor whom he received at his table, or in writing letters full of the Catholic spirit, to discharge his duty as legate. He was so humble that he submitted his letters to the judgement of his officers, especially John, dean of Salisbury, who has left most illustrious testimonies of this.

The king of England, learning how the king of France had behaved towards his adversary, and above all that the move from Pontigny to Sens had served only to make him more glorious, because he had been received there by the archbishop, the clergy and the people with extraordinary honour, sent new ambassadors to that great prince to complain of it; but Louis, whose soul was truly great and noble, answered them with marvellous wisdom and vigour that their master was persecuting the archbishop unjustly; that he himself, powerful as he was, would not undertake to depose the least priest among his subjects; and that if Henry II was so zealous for the observance of his customs, he, for his part, ought to be much more so for the protection of banished and proscribed prelates, which was as it were an appanage and inheritance of his crown.

Afterwards various cabals were formed against our Saint at Rome, which brought fresh persecutions upon him; but the same Louis always protected his innocence and even wrote letters to the Pope in his defence. At last, after several negotiations in which the Empress Matilda, the queen-mother of England, and other princes and princesses exerted themselves very ardently but with little success, it was again this great king who, with no interest of his own, but out of zeal for the glory of God and the peace of the Church, arranged a meeting

between Henry II and the archbishop in order to reconcile them. The king of England had been assured that St. Thomas would leave his whole cause to His Majesty's discretion; and indeed, as soon as he was at the place of the assembly, he threw himself at his feet to pay him his obedience as to his king, telling him that, saving the honour of God, he submitted all their differences to his judgement and his will. This clause, "saving the honour of God", gave great offence to the prince: he called the Saint proud, arrogant and ungrateful; and, turning to the Most Christian King, he told him that the clause he added was nothing but a seed of perpetual disputes, because he would always claim that whatever did not suit him was against the honour of God.

Then he craftily proposed a way of settlement with which, he assured them, he would be content: namely, that the archbishop should behave towards him as the holiest prelates, his predecessors, had behaved towards the least powerful kings of England and those least jealous of their authority. Everyone in the assembly applauded this proposal, and the Most Christian King even found it very reasonable. But the Saint, who saw further than anyone else into Henry's designs, after examining it rejected it absolutely, "because it is certain", he said, "that the holiest prelates did not, and could not, cut away all abuses; so it is not just to oblige us to approve and sign as an inviolable law everything they tolerated." This refusal, which he made only out of fearless zeal for the honour of God and of the Church, was so badly received that there was hardly anyone who did not reproach him for it and call him obstinate, arrogant and rebellious. Those who had been banished on his account conceived much bitterness against him; the king of England went away without speaking to him, and, as though triumphing over the confusion in which he saw him, said a thousand things to his discredit. Louis VII, vexed that his mediation had failed, abandoned him too and would give him nothing more. Our Saint was not shaken by so general a persecution; he went to Chartres and from there to Sens, to go on praying there in silence for all his persecutors and for the kingdom of England.

However, the Most Christian King, recovering from his displeasure and recognizing that the holy archbishop had been right to act as he had towards Henry, a deceitful and crafty prince, called him to his court and brought him into his private room; and although everyone judged, from the sadness on his face, that he was going to rebuke him harshly and drive him from all his States, on the contrary he prostrated himself at his feet with a deep sigh. The Saint raised him as best he could; but the king cried out with tears in his eyes: "Truly, my lord and father, you have seen clearly, and we have been blind; yes, you alone have seen clearly. We gave you bad advice in trying to persuade you to abandon your cause, which is God's, to the whim of a dissembling man. I regret it extremely, and I beg you to grant me pardon and absolution; all I possess is at your disposal, for your people as well as for yourself." The Saint very willingly absolved him of his fault and gave him his blessing; from that time on he received every kind of assistance from him. Moreover, the holy archbishop's reputation grew remarkably, and it was said everywhere that he was the true pillar of the Church. The archives of Saint-Jean of Lyons testify that he took refuge in that city, and that the cathedral chapter gave him a house and a country lordship for his dwelling and his support.

At last, after many other negotiations, interviews, conferences, legations, letters and threats, both from the Sovereign Pontiff and from the Most Christian King; after the king of England had a thousand times shown a wholly blind passion and a furious attachment to his own interests to the prejudice of those of God and the Church, whereas the holy prelate everywhere gave signs of a fatherly gentleness and an ardent zeal for the honour of God and the Church to the prejudice of his own interests, peace and reconciliation were concluded by Rotrou, archbishop of Rouen, and Bernard, bishop of Nevers, legates of the Holy See. Henry II, fearing the interdict of his kingdom, the excommunication of his person, the revolt of his subjects, the arms of the king of France and other scourges of the divine indignation, yielded to everything His Holiness desired of him. He received the Saint and all his people back into his good graces; he promised to put him back in possession of his archbishopric and all his goods and to trouble him no more; he gave him leave to come to court to renew their former friendship; finally, he undertook to say no more about those baneful customs

which had been the cause of so many troubles and evils. This was on 22 July 1170. On this promise St. Thomas, accompanied by the archbishop of Sens, came to meet his prince. They conversed together on horseback with the same familiarity as if they had never had any difference, and promised to keep perpetual peace between them. When they were about to part, the archbishop dismounted to throw himself at the king's feet, but the prince raised him, made him mount again and even insisted on holding his stirrup while he mounted. After this reconciliation St. Thomas, preparing to cross back to England, went to thank all those from whom he had received kindnesses in France, above all the Most Christian King and the religious of Pontigny and of Sainte-Colombe of Sens. He passed through Paris at this time, and, lodging at the abbey of Saint-Victor, he preached an excellent panegyric of St. Augustine in the octave of his feast on the words *In pace factus est locus ejus*, "His place is in peace". On leaving he left there, as a pledge of his friendship, his gloves, his comb and his night-cap, which were afterwards preserved there with reverence, together with part of his hair shirt. From every side he received warnings of the ill treatment being prepared for him in England. The Most Christian King, who loved and revered him singularly, knowing the haughty and vindictive temper of Henry II, begged him not to hasten his return. Others told him that he was going to the slaughter-house, and that nothing was being prepared for him in that island but chains, prison and even death. He also had a presentiment of it from heaven; and the coldness with which Henry received him at Tours, when he went there to take leave of him, was a fairly certain presage of it; but the prospect of martyrdom was more likely to spur him to return to the midst of his flock than to turn him from it, and he had in fact told the bishop of Paris that he was going to die in England. So he went with all speed to the port of Wissant, between Boulogne-sur-Mer and Calais, to take ship. The count of Boulogne had him assured by Milo, dean of the principal church of that city, that if he crossed to England he would there fall victim to the passion of his enemies. "It does not matter, my dear son," he answered; "it is enough that my flock has been seven years without a shepherd. Even if I were to be hacked to pieces, I shall not fail to go to its midst. I fear neither torments nor death." He embarked on the third day of Advent in the year 1170, accompanied by John, dean of Salisbury, whom the king of the English had given him for his safety and to put him back in possession of his prelacy and his revenues; and, landing not at London, where armed soldiers were waiting to do him violence, but at Sandwich, he came at last to Canterbury, where he was received by a solemn procession of the clergy, the religious and the people, with applause and cries of joy beyond words. All the villages through which he had passed had done the same, and on every side they sang, as when our Lord entered Jerusalem six days before His Passion: "Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!" On his see he showed the same zeal he had always shown for justice and for upholding ecclesiastical discipline; and, when some bishops whom the Pope and he had suspended and excommunicated sent to ask him for absolution from these censures, he had them told, with apostolic firmness, that he would gladly presume on His Holiness's goodwill to absolve them if they were ready to make satisfaction to the Church for the crimes of which they had been guilty during the whole time of his exile, but that otherwise it was impossible for him to grant them this favour. This just severity filled them with indignation and fury; they plotted together against him and drew into their cabal a number of other nobles, both ecclesiastics and laymen. The plan was that some of them should go and slander him to the Prince of Wales, whom his father had unlawfully had crowned king by the archbishop of York, and that this archbishop and the bishops of London and Salisbury should cross to France to the king himself, to embitter him and rouse him afresh against their holy primate. And in fact these three prelates, who might rather be called demons, came to Normandy and, throwing themselves at Henry's feet, represented to him, in a malicious and crafty manner, that Thomas had an insufferable pride, that he wished to use his authority only to oppress all the bishops of his kingdom, and that he was even capable of stirring up the people against his royal power and taking the crown from his head. Then this fickle, violent and cruel prince, without considering what he was saying, or reflecting that his accusers were criminals whom he had justly struck with the anathemas of the Church, let himself utter these words, which may be called the murderers of the Servant of God: "Cursed be those whom I feed at my table, whom I honour with my friendship and enrich with my favours, if they do not avenge me on this priest who does nothing but

trouble my heart and strip my best servants of their dignities!" These words did not fall to the ground; they were taken up by four assassins who were present, namely Reginald son of Urse, Hugh de Morville, William de Tracy and Richard le Breton, who soon crossed back to England to give the king the satisfaction he seemed to desire.

(The life continues in the next part.)

On the other side, our Saint, having gone to London to greet the young king and to undeceive him about the bad impressions his enemies had given him, was welcomed there by almost the whole city with the same magnificence and the same devotion as he had been by the people of Canterbury. But the prince, urged on by his courtiers, sent him word by Gosselin, the queen's brother, that he was to withdraw to his archbishopric at once and not leave it without his order. As the feast of Christmas was approaching, for which he wished to be in his church, he willingly made use of this command to retrace his steps. Polydore Vergil, the English historian, relates that when he passed through the village of Strood, the inhabitants of that place, incited by his enemies, cut off his horse's tail in derision, and that the children of these sacrilegious men were punished by divine justice for the insult done to our Saint. But Herbert of Bosham attributes this outrage to Robert de Broc.

On Christmas Day, after the midnight Mass, he went up into the pulpit and foretold in express terms that his death was near and that he would soon be slaughtered by the wicked. This prediction made the whole congregation groan, and nothing was heard throughout the church but lamentations and cries. He calmed the noise, and, putting on a spirit of zeal and justice, he inveighed strongly against those who were sowing division between the king and his pastor, and excommunicated them as plagues of the human race and enemies of the public good. Meanwhile the four assassins arrived at Canterbury, and on the day after the Holy Innocents, which is 29 December, towards eleven in the morning, they came to his house, and, without any order from King Henry or from the young prince his son, they made proposals to him that were absurd and contrary to the honour of the Church and the duty of his conscience. He answered them on each point with singular gentleness, humility and modesty, always showing the respect he had for his princes, but also with extreme prudence and apostolic firmness. At these answers the barbarians told him that it would cost him his life. "I shall not flee," he said to them; "I shall await the stroke of death with joy; I am ready to receive it." And, showing them his head, he added: "It is there that you will strike me!"

After dinner these executioners, having armed themselves, came and laid siege to the monastery where he lived, to carry out their murder. His religious, to save him from their hands, pressed him to come to Vespers and shut himself in the church, where they judged he would be safer. He raised some difficulties, fearing to lose the occasion of martyrdom; but at last he satisfied their wishes and went there, having his archiepiscopal cross carried before him. Hardly was he there when his assassins, having forced the cloister, came to the door leading from it into the church. The brethren ran to prevent them from entering; but the Saint forbade it, saying: "The temple of God must not be guarded like a fortress; we shall not triumph over our enemies by fighting, but by suffering. As for me, I am ready to be sacrificed for the cause of the Church, whose rights I defend." So they came in raging, and cried out like madmen: "Where is Thomas Becket? where is this traitor to the king and the realm?" At these words no one answered. They added: "Where is the archbishop?" Then the Saint, unmoved, said: "Here I am, no traitor to the realm, but a priest of Jesus Christ." One of the executioners said to him: "Save yourself, or you are a dead man." He wanted, that is, to make him leave the church, so as not to murder him in so holy a place. But he answered: "I have no thought of fleeing; all I ask is to give my soul for those for whom my Saviour gave all His blood. But I forbid you, in the name of almighty God, to harm any one of my people." At that moment he was abandoned by almost all who were with him, some fleeing into the corners by the altars, others seeking hiding places to escape the fury of these monsters.

They made every effort once more to drag him out of the church, but, unable to succeed, one of them raised his sword in fury to strike him. Then the holy prelate, seeing that the hour of his triumph had come, bowed

his neck as though to offer it to their rage; and, raising his joined hands to heaven, he commended the cause of the Church and his own to God, to the Blessed Virgin and to the glorious martyr St. Denis, apostle of France. He was still speaking when that execrable assassin dealt him a blow on the head with such force that he would have split it in two, but for one of his clerics, named Edward Grim, who put his arm in the way and turned the sword aside a little. This cleric was grievously wounded and had his arm almost cut off. As for the Saint, only the back of his head was cut away. However, as his blood was flowing abundantly, the murderer cried out: “Strike, strike!” A second then came on and dealt him several blows, which, almost felling him, obliged him to go down on his knees, to die in the posture of a suppliant. He used all the strength he had left to say in a low voice: “I die willingly for the name of Jesus and for the defence of the Church.” A third at that very moment dealt him another blow so violent that it split his head in two and made his brains spurt out over his face. The fourth was going round about to prevent the clerics from coming to oppose this execution; but, the others reproaching him for not striking, he brought his sword down into the wound, and with its point tore out the rest of the brains and scattered them on the marble pavement, with a cruelty that cannot be described without horror. His sword broke with this blow.

Then they cried out: “Let us be gone; he will not get up again.” And indeed the Saint was already dead, and, after so many insults, outrages, persecutions and torments, his soul had gone to receive the reward due to his merits. In this horrible tragedy several things happened which correspond to what the Gospel teaches us of the arrest and Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ. And just as, after that divine Master had given up His spirit, Longinus struck Him again with a lance to make sure He was dead, so, after St. Thomas had expired, Robert de Broc, the man of whom we have already spoken, who had accompanied the four assassins, fearing he was not properly killed, came back and drove his sword once more into the skull that was already empty. This murder was committed on 29 December 1170.

His clerics and religious gathered at once and lifted up his holy body. On taking off his rochet and cassock to prepare him for burial, they found him clothed underneath in the habit of the Order of Cîteaux which the Pope had sent him. They found too that terrible hair shirt, which reached from his shoulders to his knees, but was drawn so tight upon his limbs that it was easy to judge that the torments and death his enemies made him suffer were nothing in comparison with the pain this cruel instrument of penance caused him at every moment. This most holy body was neither washed nor embalmed with any liquid but that of his own blood; and indeed none more precious could have been given it. Besides, no one dared perform any ceremony for him, because his murderers, after their execrable crime, and after plundering his archiepiscopal palace and even carrying off his papers and those of the archbishopric, still wanted to glut their rage on his corpse, crying that he was unworthy to have a place among so many holy pontiffs, his predecessors, and that he ought to be dragged through the streets and thrown into a sewer or hung on a gibbet.

Yet his face did not change colour, his eyes remained bright, no wrinkles were seen on his forehead, and his limbs remained as supple as if he had been alive. He was buried before the altar of St. John the Baptist and St. Augustine, apostle of the English, in a place where no one had yet been buried. Several holy persons had revelations of the time of his martyrdom and of the eminence of the glory he already enjoyed in heaven. Blessed Godric, hermit of Finchale, which is more than sixty leagues from Canterbury, was miraculously informed of it. A religious near Jerusalem, in Palestine, who died the same day, appeared to his superior and told him that this admirable pontiff, having been cruelly murdered, had been led in triumph by the angels into heaven, where Jesus Christ, applauding his generosity, had set a crown of inestimable price upon his head and given him a place beside St. Peter. St. Antoninus also writes that a young man who had just died came back to life to say that he had seen in paradise a magnificent throne being prepared for an English bishop named Thomas. He adds that when, at his obsequies, the Introit of the Mass for the dead, *Requiem*, was intoned, voices were heard in the air singing that of the Mass of a Martyr, *Laetabitur*. Finally, his historians assure us that, when he was laid out publicly to be buried, he raised his sacred hand and gave his blessing to

those present.

St. Thomas of Canterbury is represented: (1) murdered in his cathedral by a horde of brigands; (2) clothed in a purple chasuble: it is related, indeed, that the Mother of God had brought him a red chasuble from heaven as a presage of the martyrdom he was to endure for the defence of the liberties of the Church.

He is one of the patrons of Canterbury, Lyons, Paris, Pontigny and Sens.

Culte et reliques

The holiness of the glorious Thomas soon shone forth through a very great number of wonders; for so many supernatural cures took place at his tomb, of the blind, the deaf, the dumb, the paralysed, the lame, the fevered and every kind of sick person, and even so many raisings of the dead, that the pilgrimage became no less frequented and no less famous than that of Saint-Jacques in Galicia. His blood, which had been gathered up after his death, was an effective remedy against the most pressing and desperate illnesses; this led his religious to distribute it to various places in the kingdom of England and to share it also with France and other places in Christendom. Pope Alexander III, informed of these great wonders by common report and by the official reports of the two cardinals Theodwin and Albert, whom he had sent to England, issued the decree of St. Thomas's canonization; he ordered that his body be raised from the ground and that his feast be celebrated every year on the very day of his martyrdom. For this he sent three bulls, one to the chapter of Canterbury, another to all the prelates of the Church, and the third to the bishop of Aversa. This canonization took place on Ash Wednesday 1173, only three years after the Saint's death.

Devotion to St. Thomas became so great that on 22 August 1179 King Louis the Young crossed to England to honour his tomb and to ask him for the health of his eldest son, Philip Augustus. The Saint had appeared to him three times to urge him to this pilgrimage and to promise him the prince's cure if he undertook it. His chief counsellors found great difficulties in it, but he overcame them all and accomplished it with a fervour and devotion that edified both kingdoms and the many counts and lords who accompanied him. He obtained what he desired, and, besides the precious gifts he made to the church of Canterbury, he assigned to the religious who served it an annual rent of a hundred muids of wine, to be taken every year at the port of Poissy, with exemption from duty on everything they should buy for themselves in France. The first church dedicated under the name of the holy martyr was at Crépy in Valois. It is related that St. Thomas, passing that way one day on his road to Soissons to implore the help of Our Lady, of St. Principius, a former bishop of that city, and of St. Gregory the Great, apostle of the English, was asked under what name he advised the dedication of a church that was being built there. He answered simply: "Under that of the first martyr." Hence, when the news of his death, his miracles and his canonization had afterwards spread everywhere, the inhabitants, remembering this saying, wished it to be dedicated in his honour. It was a collegiate church. Robert of Dreux, brother of King Louis the Young, built one at Paris, Saint-Thomas du Louvre, where there was likewise a chapter of canons, who preserved a manuscript of John, dean of Salisbury, and afterwards bishop of Chartres, the intimate friend and faithful counsellor of our Saint, concerning his life and martyrdom. The abbey of Royaumont, in the diocese of Beauvais, gloried in possessing his head, given by St. Louis, the founder of that house. Finally, there was at Chartres a holy chapel bearing his name, founded by bishops of that see who were English by nation; it was destroyed by the Calvinists.

In 1538, nearly four hundred years after his death, the king of England, Henry VIII, made him endure a second martyrdom. This prince, having revolted against the Church and wishing to pass for the head of the Church in his kingdom, conceived such an aversion for St. Thomas, who had been the firmest support of the authority of the Pope, sole head of the universal Church, that, not content with having plundered all the treasures of his cathedral, of which he had six wagon-loads carried off, he had him summoned in person before his tribunal, in an undertaking as ridiculous as that of the man of old who threatened the elements and had the sea flogged. Then he condemned him as guilty of high treason; ordered that he be struck from the

catalogue of the Saints; forbade, on pain of death, the keeping of his feast day, the imploring of his intercession by vows and prayers, the visiting of his tomb, and even the possession of a calendar from which his name had not been erased; he had his sacred bones burned and the ashes thrown to the wind; in short, he spared nothing to abolish his cult and memory entirely. In this he was far more impious than Henry II had been, since Henry II had persecuted him only during his mortal life, when his holiness was not yet revealed by the brilliance of countless wonders; whereas Henry VIII persecuted him at a time when the Church, convinced by so many miracles, acknowledged him as one of the illustrious martyrs who reign with God in heaven. This deplorable example shows clearly that passion in the heart of a king is dangerous and fatal, and that heresy and schism are furies which attack heaven and earth and spare nothing to glut the violence of their rage.

Life of St. Thomas, by four of his disciples; Annales and Notes of Baronius. — Cf. Saint Thomas Becket, sa vie et ses lettres, by Mgr Darboy.

ST. MARCELLUS OF APAMEA, ABBOT OF THE ACOEMETAE AT CONSTANTINOPLE (485 OR 486)

The Order of the Acoemetae differed little from that of St. Basil. Each of their monasteries was divided into several choirs, which followed one another without any interruption and sang the divine office night and day. From this came their name of Acoemetae, which in Greek means “the sleepless”. The institute had for its founder a gentleman of Syria named Alexander, who had served several years with distinction. Having renounced the world in 402, he built a monastery on the bank of the Euphrates, where he gathered nearly four hundred monks and divided them into several choirs in the manner just described. The practice of singing the praises of the Lord night and day without interruption was called the perpetual praise.

Alexander afterwards came to Constantinople. He founded a monastery near that city, on the side of the Black Sea, and had as many as three hundred monks under his direction. This monastery, called St. Menas, later became so numerous that he founded another at Gomon on the Black Sea, in Bithynia. John, Alexander’s successor, gathered all his religious into the monastery of Gomon. Marcellus, who succeeded John, raised the Order to the height of its renown. He came of an illustrious family of Apamea in Syria. On their death his parents left him a considerable fortune. Though in the flower of his age, he did not let himself be seduced by the dangers of the world. He withdrew to Antioch, where he divided his time between study and the exercises of piety. Meditation on the law of the Lord convinced him more and more of the vanity of earthly things and inflamed him with love for those of heaven. He gave up his rights to his brother and distributed to the poor the part of his goods of which he could dispose. Freed from all the ties that held him in the world, he withdrew to Ephesus, where he placed himself under the direction of some servants of God who lived in that city. He gave the greater part of the night to prayer and spent the day copying books, which provided him with the means to live and to help the poor. Having heard of the austerities and the solitude of the Acoemetae, he resolved to enter their Order. He took the habit and ran with incredible ardour in the course of penance. After Alexander’s death he was elected to replace him; but he fled and hid himself so that he could not be found. When he returned, Abbot John, Alexander’s successor, wished him to help in the duties of his office. Yet, to test his humility, he made him fill for a time the lowest employment in the community. Marcellus acquitted himself of it in the most edifying way and even begged the abbot to leave him in it all his life.

On John’s death our Saint was chosen to succeed him, about the year 440. He attended the council held eight years later at Constantinople, and he agreed to the request made to him to bring his religious back to their first monastery. He governed his Order with admirable virtue and prudence. Being obliged to enlarge the buildings of his community, he found help for the purpose in the generosity of Pharetrius, a very rich lord who renounced the world with his sons to live under the direction of the holy abbot. They all took the habit

on the same day. About the year 463 Studius, who had been consul, built a considerable monastery for the Acoemetae in the city, near the Golden Gate. It is said that as many as a thousand monks were found there at one time. They were afterwards given the name of Studites, from the monastery Studius had founded.

St. Marcellus attended the council which St. Flavian held at Constantinople against Eutyches, and there condemned the errors of that heresiarch after the Fathers who made up that venerable assembly. He lived a very long time and practised every kind of good work during the sixty years he spent in the monastic state. He died in 485 or 486. The Greeks and the Latins honour him on this day.

Godescard.

ST. GERARD (GIRAUD), MARTYR AT FONTENELLE, IN NORMANDY (1031)

Gerard was born near Mantes, at a place called Jésia, of which his father held the domain. His first teacher was the celebrated Gerbert, who afterwards became Pope under the name of Sylvester II. Fulbert, bishop of Chartres, completed his formation in piety and learning. Under such masters Gerard soon understood that there is no true knowledge but that which leads to God, and no happiness but in loving and serving Him. Guided by these holy thoughts, he left the world and went to take the religious habit at the monastery of Lagny. (A former monastery of the Order of St. Benedict, founded about the year 644. It gave rise to the town of Lagny, about four leagues from Meaux.)

The Saint was leading in this retreat a humble life, detached from the senses and united to God by prayer, when Walter the White, count of Crépy, wished to replace the canons of Saint-Arnoul by regular clerics. Desiring to give these religious a head who would lead them to piety even more by his conduct than by his words, Walter asked Herbert, abbot of Lagny, to send him Gerard, whose eminent virtues he knew. But the modest servant of Jesus Christ regarded this burden as beyond his strength, and his consent was hard to obtain: he gave it only at the order of his superior, who made it his duty to obey the will of God.

The Blessed man soon showed that the very voice of the Lord had called him to the direction of the abbey of Saint-Arnoul. The wisdom with which he chose the members of this new community, and the manner in which he governed it, gave the highest idea of his prudence and virtues. He drew his brethren to the love and practice of religious perfection by the sweet fragrance of Jesus Christ that breathed from each of his actions; he recalled that divine Master by the goodness of his heart, the delicate purity of his life and the gentle firmness of his character. He had a tender compassion for sinners: he was often seen shedding tears over their insensibility and their resistance to grace. So admirable a conduct raised up faithful imitators: his monastery soon won such a name for piety and obedience to the rule that Richard, duke of Normandy, asked the holy abbot to come and renew at Fontenelle the wonders he had worked at Saint-Arnoul.

Count Walter consented with difficulty to Gerard’s departure. He yielded, however, to the pressing requests of the duke of Normandy, and even allowed several religious to accompany their head. No sooner had this zealous reformer arrived at Fontenelle than he set about reviving there the spirit of St. Wandrille, the founder of that monastery. God blessed his efforts and rewarded his zeal. His words were so powerful and his example had so great an ascendancy that in a short time the community offered the most edifying spectacle: the bonds of discipline were drawn tighter, the knowledge of the divine Scriptures was restored to honour, and piety regained its empire. There was, however, in this pious house one wretched religious who would not give up his guilty disorders, and the devil made use of him to put an end to a work so useful to the glory of God. Having breathed his jealous fury into the heart of this monster, he moved him to lay a murderous hand on the holy abbot in the night of 29 to 30 December in the year 1031. So died the celebrated reformer of Saint-Arnoul and of Fontenelle, a victim of his zeal for the reform of monastic life. His holiness was soon made manifest by miracles, and his name was inscribed in the catalogue of the Blessed.

Extract from the Saints de Beauvais, by the Abbé Sabatier.

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[1] According to the tradition of the Church of Arles (an incontestable tradition, victoriously defended against the partisans of St. Gregory of Tours by the Abbé Faillon in his *Monuments inédits*, vol. II, pp. 347–384), St. Trophimus is the same as the saint of that name who was the disciple of St. Paul and the companion of his labours. He was from Ephesus and born of Gentile parents. Having been sent into Gaul, he preached the Gospel in Provence and founded the see of Arles, while St. Saturninus founded that of Toulouse, St. Paul that of Narbonne, St. Martial that of Limoges, St. Austremonius that of Clermont, and St. Gatian that of Tours. The Church of Arles has always honoured St. Trophimus as its founder. The details of his actions are unknown. He died at the end of the 1st century, on the 4th of the calends of January (29 December), and was buried at Arles in a little oratory he had dedicated under the invocation of the Blessed Virgin. His relics were translated in 1152 into the cathedral of Arles, which has since taken the name of Saint-Trophime instead of that of Saint-Étienne, which it formerly bore. — Cf. *Proper of Arles*.

[2] St. Crescens, disciple of St. Paul and first bishop of Vienne, is already entered in the Roman Martyrology of 27 June; we gave his life on that day (vol. VII, pp. 387– 389).

[3] St. Augustus, priest of Berry, translated the relics of St. Ursinus from the common cemetery to his abbey of Saint-Symphorien of Bourges. Tradition has fixed the date of this translation at 9 November 558, whose anniversary has become the feast of the first bishop of Bourges, originally kept on 29 December, the presumed day of his death. We ourselves gave the life of St. Ursinus on 9 November, vol. XIII, pp. 274–279.

[4] His relics formerly rested in the Benedictine abbey of Saint-Laurent of Bourges (a monastery of women founded about the year 795 by Charlemagne and Louis the Debonair), near those of St. Thalassius, bishop of Bourges. — *Local notes.*

[5] Born in the neighbourhood of Sées (*in Sagensi*), St. Albert applied himself early to the practice of all the virtues. After living in that diocese for several years, he withdrew into a solitude called Gambron, situated on the banks of the Oudon. Some men, moved by a great desire to work for their sanctification, came to place themselves under his direction. He founded for them a monastery that soon became famous because of the holiness of Blessed Albert and the miracles he worked. Every day he recited with great recollection the office of St. Benedict and that of St. Columban. He applied himself ardently to contemplation, and took his delight in conversing with God. Full of charity for his brethren, he omitted nothing to draw them to Jesus Christ. Several great sinners were converted on hearing his preaching and came to swell the number of his monks. Soon a single monastery was no longer enough for this holy family. To procure the glory of God and the salvation of his brethren, the pious abbot built several other religious houses, which he placed under the Rule of St. Benedict. After devoting his whole life to good works, St. Albert saw death approach with calm. He knew that for the Christian faithful to his divine Master it is the end of temptations, the term of sufferings and the gate of heaven. Greeting from afar that land of the living, he gently gave up his soul into the hands of his God on 29 December, towards the end of the 7th century. — *Lives of the Saints of the diocese of Sées*, by the Abbé Blin, curé of Durcet.

[6] Canton of Isigny, arrondissement of Bayeux (Calvados).

[7] Canton of Gacé, arrondissement of Argentan (Orne).

[8] Today Saint-Evroult, canton of La Ferté-Fresnel, arrondissement of Argentan (Orne).

[9] Almenêches, canton of Mortrée, arrondissement of Argentan (Orne).

[10] La Cochère, canton of Exmes, arrondissement of Argentan (Orne).

[11] Rebais, chief town of a canton, arrondissement of Coulommiers (Seine-et-Marne).

[12] Canton of Savigny, arrondissement of Vendôme (Loir-et-Cher).

[13] Canton of Bonneval, arrondissement of Châteaudun (Eure-et-Loir).

30 December

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY

At Spoleto, the heavenly birthday of Saints Sabinus, bishop, Exuperantius and Marcellus, deacons, and Venustian, governor, with his wife and sons, martyred under the emperor Maximian. Marcellus and Exuperantius were first hung on the rack, then cruelly beaten with sticks; finally their nails were torn out and their sides burned with blazing torches, which completed their martyrdom. As for Venustian, he was put to the sword shortly afterwards with his wife and children. St. Sabinus, after having his hands cut off and suffering a long and hard imprisonment, was beaten with rods until he expired. Although their martyrdoms took place at different times, their feast is nevertheless kept on the same day. 303. — At Alexandria, Saints Mansuetus, Severus, Appian, Donatus, Honorius and their companions, martyrs. — At Thessalonica, St. Anysia, martyr. About 303. — In the same place, St. Anysius, bishop of that city.[1] About the year 404. — At Milan, St. Eugenius, bishop and confessor. — At Ravenna, St. Liberius, bishop. — At Aquila, in Further Abruzzo, St. Rainerius, bishop. 12th c.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED

In the diocese of Marseilles, St. Trophimus, first bishop of Arles and confessor. We have spoken of him on the previous day, when he is named in the Roman Martyrology. 1st c. — At Boulogne-sur-Mer (Pas-de-Calais), in the diocese of Arras, the translation of St. Peter of Ambleteuse, or of Dorovernum, apostle of England and first abbot of Canterbury, whose heavenly birthday is given in the Martyrology of France of 6 January. 608. — At Tours, St. Perpetuus (Perpet), bishop of that see and confessor, named in the Roman Martyrology of 8 April.[2] 494. — At Vaucelles (Nord), in the diocese of Cambrai, Blessed Ralph (Raoul), founder and first abbot of the Cistercian monastery of Vaucelles-sur-l'Escaut (Vallicella). 1152. — In the former Cistercian abbey of Adewerth or Adwert, near Groningen (Holland), Blessed Richard or Rigard, monk. Before becoming a religious he had taught at Paris. Wigbold, third abbot of Adwert, received his profession. In the monastery he was always seen as a perfect model of virtue. After serving the Lord there for more than thirty years, he died there at a very great age. 1266.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS

At Rome, Blessed Margaret Colonna, virgin, of the Order of St. Clare, named on 17 December in the martyrology of the three Orders of St. Francis. 1284. — At Verduno (Piedmont), in the diocese of Alba, Blessed Sebastian Valfré, priest, of the Congregation of the Oratory of Turin. 30 January 1710. — At Aosta (Augusta Praetoria), a city of the kingdom of Italy (Piedmont), St. Jocundus, bishop of that see and confessor. About 869.

ST. PETER OF AMBLETEUSE, APOSTLE OF ENGLAND AND FIRST ABBOT OF CANTERBURY (608)

The office of preaching is more pleasing to the Father of mercies than any kind of sacrifice, above all when it is carried out with ardent charity.

St. Francis of Assisi.

St. Peter was sent, under the leadership of the monk Augustine, with other gospel labourers whom Pope St. Gregory the Great had appointed for the regeneration of Great Britain. They crossed France and stopped for a moment at Tours, to pay their devout homage in passing to the precious relics of the great St. Martin.

In the spring of the year 597, Peter and his companions, followed by forty other persons whom they had taken in France to serve as interpreters, landed on the little isle of Thanet. They at once sent messengers to the king of Kent to make known to him the object of their journey and to announce that they had come to bring him good news, namely the sure promise of eternal joy and of a reign without end with the living and true God. Ethelbert had been disposed in favour of these envoys by everything that Bertha and her confessor Liudhard had told him about religion. Although still given to idolatry, he showed them generous hospitality in his welcome and saw to it that they lacked nothing they might need. His kindness did not stop there, for he wished them also to have suitable lodging in the capital of his kingdom. So Peter and his companions soon left Thanet for Canterbury. It was then Eastertide. As they passed the little church of St. Martin, where the devout Bertha had so often prayed and wept for the conversion of England, they sang, as though in the name of the inhabitants: "Lord, we appeal to Thy mercy; turn away Thy anger from this people and from Thy holy house, for we have sinned."

The missionaries lived close by Ethelbert's palace, and he often attended their devout exercises and took pleasure in their edifying conversations. They lived like apostles, in prayer, vigils and fasting. They preached the word of life to all who were disposed to hear it, receiving from their disciples only what was absolutely indispensable to their needs, and conforming themselves in all things, with extreme strictness, to their profession and their teaching. They seemed to set aside the good things of this world as not belonging to them. They bore disappointments and obstacles calmly and without anxiety; they would willingly have died

to defend the truth they preached, had such been the will of God. And so a great number of the natives, won over by the simplicity and purity of their life and the sweetness of their heavenly doctrine, believed and received baptism.

The conversions multiplied with ever-growing speed, until at last He who turns the hearts of kings like the course of rivers deigned to make Ethelbert himself feel the first effects of His spirit of light. The reasons that decided this prince to embrace the Christian faith were the multitude of miracles which, worked before his eyes, gave full credit to the missionaries' promises. It was on the day of Pentecost, 2 June 597, that the king of England received baptism, according to the forms still in use today in the ritual of the Roman Catholic Church. Five months after this ceremony St. Augustine returned to France, where he was consecrated bishop of Great Britain by the hands of Archbishop Virgilius. During this interval the preaching of the good example given by Ethelbert had been so powerful that in the same year, on Christmas Day, more than ten thousand English came to seek the grace of regeneration in the holy waters.

From the time Ethelbert had put on the glorious title of child of God, all the honours and grandeurs of the earth had become for him as though they had never been; and so that God alone might be glorified in his place in the person of His ministers, he withdrew of his own accord from his palace, which he placed entirely at the disposal of Augustine and the other religious, his brethren. Under this illustrious roof, made into a monastery, our missionaries returned to their former habits of cloistered life, reconciling them, however, with the active duties which their character as missionaries imposed on them towards society, and drawing from it, for the fulfilment of those duties, a vigour of faith and an energy of action they would have sought in vain elsewhere.

So far we have said nothing of Augustine that does not apply equally to Peter of Ambleteuse, long the faithful companion of all his labours. Invested with the particular confidence of the head of the mission, it was our Saint who, with Laurence, had the honour in 598 of being sent by him to the Holy Father to give him an account of the success of their undertaking and to ask him for reinforcements of gospel labourers, made necessary by the ever-growing number of their neophytes. St. Peter and the priest Laurence spent two years in Rome and returned to England in 601, accompanied by twelve new missionaries. They carried letters of recommendation to the bishops and sovereign princes of the part of France they were to cross. All hastened to welcome them with the marks of honour and distinction called for by their personal merit joined to their character as envoys of God. King Clotaire II above all conceived a quite particular esteem and affection for our Saint.

To regain the coast of England, the holy apostles chose for their place of embarkation the port of Ambleteuse, which then enjoyed a certain renown. There they were the object of the most attentive care on the part of the inhabitants. So, in return for the bodily food they received from them in abundance, they thought they could not better prove their gratitude than by lavishing spiritual nourishment upon them. St. Peter distinguished himself among them all by the marks of affection he gave them. During the night he spent at Ambleteuse he rose in turn with his companions to make stations and pray in the church before the relics of several saints and martyrs, among others those of St. Peter and St. Paul, with which, thanks to the munificence of Pope Gregory, they were about to enrich England.

The next day the ship that was to carry our Saint back to England weighed anchor, and after a short and happy crossing he had the satisfaction of handing over in person to Augustine, King Ethelbert and Queen Bertha the letters and presents which Pope Gregory was sending them.

A little after St. Peter of Ambleteuse had left for Rome, Bishop Augustine, in concert with his royal disciple, had founded near Canterbury a monastery intended not only to offer a model of Christian society in what it has most perfect on earth, but also consecrated to receive the burial of Augustine and his successors, and of the kings of Kent. The first patrons of this monastery were the apostles St. Peter and St. Paul; but

St. Dunstan, who used to spend whole nights there in prayer before the altar of the most holy Virgin, later renewed its dedication and added St. Augustine to the number of its special protectors. St. Peter of Ambleteuse was elected by his companions to be the first abbot of the royal monastery of Canterbury. King Ethelbert, as founder, gave him investiture, and Bishop Augustine the abbatial blessing.

The venerable abbot's first care was to choose from among the English suitable subjects to recruit and strengthen his community. Nothing could give an idea of the zeal and prudence he displayed in the government of this little commonwealth. Yet his lively and constant concern for the salvation of souls could not be confined within the very narrow limits of his abbey. If some gospel labourers felt the need to come to him to recollect themselves and renew their strength in the solitude of the cloister, it was St. Peter who restored their strength, revived their courage, rekindled their ardour for the conversion of the idolaters, encouraged them to bear with joy all the pains and fatigues inseparable from a life of labour and devotion, and suggested to them the means best suited to draw a happy success upon their work.

After St. Peter had followed this noble career with honour for the space of two years, a major matter arose that had to be negotiated in France for the good of England. Ethelbert, who knew all our Saint's wisdom and the high esteem in which the king of France held him, would entrust this important mission to no one else. So Peter took ship for France, giving himself up once more, without hesitation, to all the perils of the sea. But hardly had he made half the crossing that separates England from the Boulonnais when the ship that carried him, assailed by a violent storm, went down with a great part of its crew. This shipwreck cost our Saint his life, or rather gave it to him, since it took from him the life of the body only to put him in full possession of the life of the soul. It was 6 January in the year 608.

Culte et reliques

His body, found on the beach at Ambleteuse, was at first buried without honour, like that of the commonest stranger. But this injustice was soon repaired, for God permitted a marvellous prodigy to make the merit of our Saint shine before all eyes and reveal all the glory his soul enjoyed in heaven. It is said that every night a brilliant light shone above his tomb; the inhabitants, astonished at so miraculous a happening, made inquiries to find out who the holy person could be whom the Lord favoured in this way. Thus they recognized in him that venerable priest Peter who in his lifetime had already shown them so much kindness and devotion; and the unhoped-for possession of his precious remains was for them as it were the confirmation and sure pledge of his continued protection.

However, since the little town of Ambleteuse was not as well able to defend itself against the enemy's attempts as the town of Boulogne, the latter claimed and soon obtained the keeping of this priceless treasure. The translation from Ambleteuse to Boulogne took place on 30 December 608, and in the most solemn manner. The burial was made within the cathedral itself.

For a long time devotion to the relics of St. Peter of Ambleteuse drew to Boulogne a great affluence of the faithful, who were seen to obtain through his intercession a multitude of spiritual and temporal graces. Goscelin testifies that the whole body of St. Peter of Ambleteuse rested, in the eleventh century, in the church of the canons regular of Boulogne. Later, the flesh having decayed, the bones were moved to the sacristy. The head was enclosed in 1528 in a rich silver reliquary weighing twenty-four marks. One of his arms was likewise enshrined in a silver arm whose hand was gilded. The other arm, as well as several other parts of the body, were left for the veneration of the inhabitants of Ambleteuse. But all these glorious remains, which had once helped to form a true living temple of the Holy Spirit, were pitilessly profaned and scattered in 1567 by the French Calvinists, who also carried off all the gold and silver reliquaries, nearly a hundred in number, possessed by the cathedral of Boulogne. The other relics of St. Peter likewise disappeared from the church of Ambleteuse when the English stayed in that town. The Protestant soldiers who then occupied the port of Ambleteuse had made it so much their business to efface the least traces of

Catholic piety that they succeeded in dealing a fairly severe blow to the cult of which our Saint was the object in the district.

Yet it entered into the designs of Providence to raise His servant from the oblivion into which his memory had fallen. In 1763 the report spread that the cathedral of Boulogne still possessed two considerable portions of his body. At once people were persuaded that the exposition of these holy relics would help to revive the devotion of the inhabitants of Ambleteuse towards their former protector, and the whole village made the request to the chapter of Boulogne. Mgr de Partz de Pressy, bishop of Boulogne, gave his approval. Accordingly, on 24 January of that same year 1763, the parish priest and the inhabitants of Ambleteuse went to the cathedral of Boulogne, where, after attending a solemn Mass in honour of the Saint, they received his precious relics from the hands of M. Ballin, chaplain of the chapter. A great concourse of the faithful, preceded by their pastor and making the air ring with hymns of thanksgiving, accompanied this devout procession to its destination. The festival at Ambleteuse went on for eight days and called forth the most edifying signs of devotion from the surrounding populations. Whole parishes came in procession to pay homage to the holiness of the blessed abbot; and throughout the following year a multitude of miraculous cures worked through his intercession bore witness to its power.

When our first revolution broke out in 1789, there could still be seen in the church of Ambleteuse a chapel dedicated to St. Peter, at the top of which, on a cornice, stood the statue of the Saint, represented in the habit of a Benedictine religious. The portion of relics just mentioned was also preserved there with much care and respect. But the revolutionary flood, which overturned everything in its path and left none of the holy things standing, spared this church no more than all the others. It was entirely devastated, and the chapel destroyed with all the most sacred things it contained. The relic, however, had fortunately been saved, and it remained secretly deposited in a neighbouring house belonging to M. Antoine Poilly until 1806, when, the house having been entirely consumed by fire, the precious deposit disappeared with it. From 1806 the church of Ambleteuse possessed nothing more of its blessed patron. But in 1846 M. Hamy, parish priest of Ambleteuse, having had an altar to St. Peter, abbot, rebuilt in his church, received as a gift on that occasion from M. Leroy, a priest attached to the establishment of M. Haffreingue, besides some other small particles likewise from the body of our Saint, a large bone which appears to have belonged to one of the thighs. To save this interesting relic from the rage of the enemies of the faith in ’93, it had been carefully hidden in the masonry of an old wall of a house in the upper town. It was the demolition of this wall that later led to this unhoped-for discovery.

In former times a considerable number of pilgrims went to Ambleteuse, not only to venerate the relics of our Saint but also to drink the water of a spring which bore his name and had the quite special power of curing fever. This spring, which according to a local tradition formed at the very spot where St. Peter’s body was washed ashore, remained buried under the sand for a long time. Before 1791 many excavations had been made to find it, but in vain. It was only about two years later that, after a violent storm, the sea, clearing it a little of the sand that blocked it, laid part of it bare. At this happy news the inhabitants of the three hamlets that make up the commune of Ambleteuse all hurried to the work and finished what the sea had begun, completely freeing the approaches to the spring of everything that might hide it from view. It was then surrounded by dressed stones forming a square, which was covered by one or more other large stones. On the side towards the village, to make it easy for the inhabitants to draw water, an opening had been left, closed by a wooden door, which rotted away immediately after the clearing. The water was at once tasted, and, although it had been completely deprived of air for a very long time, it was found excellent. From that day the sick, and above all those with fever, came again as before to seek health there. A chapel has been built over the spring.

Légendaire de Morinie.

BLESSED MARGARET COLONNA, VIRGIN, OF THE ORDER OF ST. CLARE (1284)

Is Sanctorum mos est, ut plurimum afflictis afficiantur et compatiantur.

It is the mark of the Saints to grieve much over the lot of those who are in trouble, and to be compassionate towards them.

St. John Chrysostom.

The noble family of the Colonna gave to the Church and to the Order of Friars Minor this illustrious virgin, who was born in Rome about the middle of the thirteenth century. She lost her parents very early, and the care of her education was entrusted to her brothers, who had her brought up in a Christian manner, but with no nobler aim than to see her hold her rank in the world to advantage. With this intention they proposed to her, as soon as she was of an age to marry, a match fully in keeping with the brilliant position of her family. Margaret felt no attraction to marriage, and she was hesitating a good deal before giving her consent to this union when one of her brothers, who had been away until then, came back from the University, where he had just finished his studies. Better enlightened than the others as to God's designs for his sister, he set himself to develop in her the pious inclinations he noticed there, and to turn her heart towards the one Spouse of faithful souls. He had no difficulty in succeeding, for the young girl had already conceived the thought of giving herself to the Lord and of keeping intact the precious treasure of chastity. So she refused the husband who was proposed to her, and made a vow of virginity. God at once rewarded her for this sacrifice, and at the same time let her know that He accepted the offering she had made Him; for the Blessed Virgin appeared to her, encouraged her to persevere in the way on which she had entered, and promised to help and sustain her in all the combats she might have to fight, whether against men or against demons. Margaret's joy is easily understood. Acknowledging herself unworthy of this heavenly vision, she drew from it a deeper humility and an altogether new fervour in fulfilling the will of God.

Our Saint stayed some time longer in her brothers' house, giving herself ardently to the practices of piety, finding all her happiness in sharing in the divine Eucharist and in long and frequent visits at the foot of the altars. But she soon felt the need of a more retired and solitary life. Her brothers were continually receiving the members of their family and their acquaintances, and gave many splendid feasts. Margaret could hardly excuse herself from appearing at these gatherings, but their pomp and noise were a burden to her; they disturbed her recollection and kept her from conversing with God in the depths of her heart. She therefore resolved to escape from them and, leaving the house secretly, withdrew to the mountain of Praeneste, where she kept absolute solitude. Drawn on more and more by grace, she felt the desire to embrace the Rule of St. Clare and so to vow herself without return to a life of poverty and penance. To this end she obtained the habit of a Poor Clare and put it on. Her hair was magnificent, and she had always tended it with great care; but she understood that she must now make the sacrifice of it. Having so reflected, she herself took the scissors and cut off without hesitation the one earthly ornament in which she had always taken pleasure. Strengthened by this act of courage, which required more heroism than one would be tempted to suppose, Margaret thenceforth gave herself to the practices of the most austere penance, keeping the Seraphic Rule in all its rigour, but without being attached to any convent. For, not yet being of age, she did not have the free disposal of her person, and her brothers, already put out by her refusal of marriage and her abandonment of their house, would not have allowed her to carry things further by entering a monastery.

Margaret used the leisure of her solitude for the service of the poor. She visited the sick and nursed them with love. Her delicate nature at first rebelled somewhat when she found herself face to face with certain repulsive diseases; but she courageously overcame these repugnances, and carried heroism so far as to seek out by preference the most loathsome sores. Grace alone can give the strength to master in this way the natural feelings of the heart in the presence of such ills; and so it was in prayer and in union with Jesus Christ that our Saint drew the courage needed for her ministry of devotion.

When Margaret came of age, she entered into possession of her fortune and at the same time of her liberty. It will be readily understood that she had no other thought than to consecrate both to the Spouse to whom she had already given herself entirely. She began by distributing her patrimony to the poor; then she went to the convent of St. Clare at Assisi and asked to be received as a postulant. She was accepted eagerly, but she could not carry out this plan because of a violent illness that seized her and so shook her health that the superiors of the monastery no longer thought it fitting to admit her. Margaret, resigned to the holy will of God, which had shown itself in so sensible a way, returned to her solitude of Praeneste and took up again the life of charity and penance she had led there before, continuing to observe the Rule of St. Clare privately. But since she had already distributed all her fortune to the needy, she had no means left of relieving the unfortunate who came to beg her help, or whom she visited in their homes. Her heart suffered very keenly from this helplessness, and she resolved, in order to provide herself with resources, to go and beg from door to door for the means of aiding the needy. She carried out this generous thought, and the daughter of the Colonna could be seen holding out a suppliant hand to the rich whom she met on her way, happy to buy with a few humiliations the money that enabled her to provide for the needs of the poor of Jesus Christ.

We have already seen that one of Margaret's brothers had been chosen by the Lord to foster in her the love of chastity and to help her remove the obstacles that stood in the way of her religious consecration. This brother, whose name was James, was himself the object of the Saviour's special graces. Having become a priest, and then a cardinal of holy Church, he never ceased to spur his sister on in the pursuit of an ever greater perfection, thus continuing the work he had begun some years before. It was under his direction and in his company that Margaret made a pilgrimage to the tomb of the Apostles St. Peter and St. Paul, a devout journey which did not a little to strengthen her in good, by showing her how far, if need be, our love for Jesus Christ must go.

Margaret had several times been tried by violent illnesses, among others by the one that had kept her from entering the convent of St. Clare, and she had shown very great resignation in these circumstances. But her divine Spouse willed to mark her still more perfectly with the sacred seal of suffering. That is why, during the last seven years of her life, He sent her a frightful ulcer, which made her endure horrible tortures. Margaret bore her affliction with heroic patience and let no murmur escape her lips. When she saw herself near death, she asked for the last sacraments, which she received with admirable fervour; then she went to receive in heaven the reward of the virtues she had practised in so sublime a degree while she lived on earth (17 December 1284). Pius IX beatified her in 1847.

Taken from the Année franciscaine.

BLESSED SEBASTIAN VALFRÉ, PRIEST OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE ORATORY OF TURIN (1710)

> *Like the wheat which, cast into the ground, puts forth ears full of grain, almsgiving produces abundant harvests of justice and bears unspeakable fruits.*
>
> *St. John Chrysostom.*

Verduno, a village of Piedmont, was the birthplace of the servant of God; he first saw the light there on 9 March 1629. His family was an old one and had once held an honourable rank; but through misfortunes at home his father had been reduced to the condition of a simple farmer and worked his fields himself. This man, who like his wife faithfully fulfilled his duties as a

Christian, brought up his large family in the fear of God, and sowed in young Sebastian's heart the seeds of the virtues which later bore abundant fruit. One of the happy qualities first noticed in this child of blessing was his tender compassion for the poor. From his earliest years he found his happiness in relieving them. If a poor man came to the door of his parents' house, he would run eagerly to say to his mother: "Here is a poor

man asking for charity: quick, the alms!" To refuse it to anyone was enough to make him weep, and even to make him cry out so loudly that the neighbours, who heard him and knew his happy inclination, would bring him bread so that he might give it away, which he always did with unspeakable joy. Sometimes, when his parents had nothing to give the needy, he would go himself to beg bread or other food, and then hasten to hand it to the unfortunate man who was waiting for this help. This holy child, so attentive to his neighbour's needs, was severe with himself. Accustomed early to mortification, when he was only ten years old he fasted a whole Lent on bread and water.

The attraction to the ecclesiastical state soon showed itself in young Sebastian. His pure morals, his lively mind, his happy memory, everything about him led people to expect that he would later be a worthy minister of the altar; but his parents' slender means stood in the way of his desire to study. His tears and prayers at last obtained this favour, and he was sent to Bra to begin. Soon his progress in piety and in letters surpassed all the hopes that had been formed of him. He frequently approached the sacraments, carefully shunned bad company, and showed the greatest submission to his masters. His merit and talent raised him above his fellow pupils; but these successes, which so often puff up the hearts of young people, could not spoil his humility.

Having finished his first studies, Sebastian applied himself in turn to philosophy and theology. Faithful to his vocation, he consecrated himself to God without reserve by receiving the subdiaconate at Turin in December 1650. His zeal for perfection soon led him to enter the Congregation of the Oratory, which had just been established in that city. A nuncio of the Holy See had brought about this foundation by his devout solicitude, and it was struggling to survive; the candidates who came forward did not feel the courage to settle there and withdrew. More generous than the others, the virtuous subdeacon was not put off by the difficulties that usually accompany the beginnings of the best works; he attached himself firmly to this infant institution, of which he later became both the support and the glory. Scarcely had he been raised to the diaconate when, giving himself to work with a zeal that never flagged, he began his wholly apostolic life. It was by catechisms, by instructions on the truths of religion, by his prayers, and by assiduous service in the church that he first showed his desire to procure the glory of God and the salvation of souls. The Marquis of Pianezza, first minister of the Duke of Savoy, more famous still for his virtues than for the high rank he held in the world, used to attend with his wife the poor chapel of the priests of the Oratory. The modesty and piety of Sebastian and his brethren so touched the couple that they took an interest in the success of the house and several times helped it with generous alms.

The congregation of Turin, after several trials it had to undergo, was at last loaded with the Lord's most abundant blessings and became established in a way that seemed miraculous. The servant of God, attentive to this guidance of Providence over his house, thought that he would be more useful there if he were invested with the priestly character. Not yet having the age required for the priesthood, he obtained a dispensation from the Holy See and was ordained on 24 February 1662 in the cathedral of Alba, in the diocese to which he belonged by birth. This dignity only increased his charity and his zeal. Devoted without reserve to the service of his congregation and of the faithful, he spent all the time at his disposal in instructing the people and administering the sacraments to them. The desire to make his ministry fruitful gave him a great love of study; he gave himself to it with such success that it was thought right to raise him to the rank of doctor of theology, despite the reluctance his humility made him feel towards this distinction. But study did not so occupy him that he forgot to strive for perfection; on the contrary, his constant concern was to labour to acquire all the priestly virtues and to become a holy priest, formed on the model of his founder, the illustrious St. Philip Neri.

Having thus grown ever firmer in virtue, in the spirit of prayer and in recollection, Father Sebastian, who lived, so to speak, only to serve his neighbour, devoted himself entirely to the spiritual and bodily relief of all the unfortunate. He instructed them, reconciled them with God, consoled them and relieved them with his

alms; the poor in the hospitals, prisoners, beggars and the sick were the constant objects of his care. It was above all in the old hospital of St. John the Baptist that he loved to preach the word of God to the sick who lay there. After some time his virtue and zeal drew there people of the town, who came from outside to hear him. He took advantage of this good disposition to preach there every Friday, and the crowd was so great that the place where he spoke was completely full. Encouraged by this success, he undertook to instruct in the truths of salvation the idlers and vagrants who were to be found in Turin. To reach this end he went to the public square and, with another devout priest, began a dialogue on some article of faith or some important maxim of religion. This device served to hold the attention of his hearers, and he used it to teach them the most essential points of Christian doctrine, correct them of their faults, move them to devotion and inspire them with horror of sin. For several years it was on the Piazza del Vino that the servant of God regularly carried on this good work, because it was one of the places in the city most frequented by the class whose conversion he chiefly had in view. People flocked there, listened to him with respect, and he did much good there.

His dealings with the various ranks of society made him aware that the salvation of the servants in wealthy houses was rather neglected. He gathered them in a private oratory and taught them to serve God by serving their masters, to avoid the vices that idleness produces, to abstain from obscene talk when they were together, and to frequent the sacraments and receive them with profit. He assembled them every Saturday, and there, in a fervent exhortation, recalled to them the truths he had already taught them, and sowed in their hearts precious seeds that afterwards yielded abundant fruits of salvation.

Nothing escaped the holy priest's attention and charity when the good of souls was at stake. The beggars who came to ask alms at the door of the Oratory received it only after he had taught them some devout prayer or the way to fulfil some religious duty properly. On the day of the distribution he took the opportunity to teach them the catechism. He would stop on the roads to question them on Christian doctrine.

Returning once from the country to Turin about noon in very hot weather, he saw by the roadside a very old blind beggar. He went up to him and asked him kindly whether he had said his prayers that morning and whether it was long since he had been to confession. The blind man answered that he had quite other things on his mind. Nothing more was needed to rouse his zeal. In spite of the heat of a burning sun he spoke to him at length about the dispositions needed for a good confession, made him promise to come and find him, gave him an alms, embraced him affectionately, and then took leave of the beggar, leaving one of his brethren who was with him full of admiration for his charity.

Soldiers too were objects of the Blessed man's care. He went to the barracks to find those of the garrison of Turin, especially at Eastertide; having gathered them, he taught them the catechism and how to live their profession in a Christian way, and then gave each of them some small present. Among these soldiers there were sometimes Protestants, who, far from avoiding him, gladly listened to him speaking on religious matters. But while he treated kindly those Protestants who did not show themselves declared enemies of the Catholic Church, he kept the most careful watch to prevent other persons of the same sect, who were trying to spread their doctrines in Piedmont, from sowing their errors among the people; he fought them at every encounter. On various occasions he silenced by the force of his arguments several heretical ministers who had chosen to enter the lists with him, and, after convincing them, he more than once had the consolation of bringing them back into the bosom of the Church.

Although almost continually occupied in instructing, confessing and winning to God the ordinary faithful, or in relieving their bodily needs, Sebastian did not neglect his brethren. His merit and virtue had placed him at their head as superior. He fulfilled with zeal all the duties this important office imposes. The spiritual good of those under him concerned him above all; he wanted them to become men given to prayer, interior and recollected. He required them to be exact in serving their neighbour and to be in the confessional at the hour appointed for that duty, whether penitents came or not. To persuade them the more effectively, he told them

how in this way he had had the consolation of bringing back to the Church an apostate, who, seeing him unoccupied in the confessional with a book in his hand, came up to him and, yielding to the impulse of grace, humbly confessed his errors to him.

It is impossible to relate all the kinds of good works to which the servant of God gave himself in the course of his life. We shall content ourselves with saying here that his preaching, his alms, and his eager care for the unfortunate and the afflicted earned him the glorious title of apostle of Turin. He ended his holy course by a death precious in the eyes of the world. Although he had reached the age of eighty-one, he was still labouring ardently for the salvation of souls. The fatigues he underwent on 24 January 1710 brought on an inflammation of the throat which soon became mortal. Wholly detached from the things of earth and perfectly submissive to the will of God, he faced death without fear. Having received the sacraments of the Church with admirable fervour, he peacefully gave back his soul to his Creator on the 30th of the same month. He had worked several miracles during his life; others took place at his tomb. These wonders and the perfection of his virtues led Pope Gregory XVI to beatify him on 26 May 1831. The ceremony of his beatification took place in Rome with great pomp in the Vatican basilica on 31 August 1834.

Continuators of Godescard.

BLESSED RALPH OF ENGLAND, FIRST ABBOT OF VAUCELLES, IN THE DIOCESE OF CAMBRAI (1152)

Born in England, where he had been given charge of an important parish, Blessed Ralph (Raoul) had occasion to make a journey to Rome. On his return he passed through Clairvaux and asked hospitality of the community which the name of St. Bernard had made famous throughout Christendom. It was there that God was waiting for the traveller, to give him a complete distaste for the world and to inspire him with love of the religious life. The happiness he read on the brow of all the brethren, the piety one breathed in that solitude, the salutary unction of grace which made itself felt more keenly in his heart, all combined to awaken in him the desire to settle in that place. Blessed Ralph asked permission, and it was at once granted. St. Bernard quickly appreciated the merit of the new disciple whom Providence had sent him; and so, although only three months had passed since Ralph’s profession, he chose him to go and found the abbey of Vaucelles.

Frightened by this charge, but reassured by the thought of God, in whom he put all his trust, Ralph set out and governed this community with rare wisdom and consummate prudence. And so the monastery of Vaucelles became in a short time the admiration of the whole district. The abbot began by ordering everything there for the most perfect observance of religious discipline. He instructed the brethren, formed them in virtue and guided them in the sublime ways of perfection. His example was even more persuasive than his words, and did not a little to make them bear with holy joy the difficulties and discomforts of a first foundation. Eight years in fact passed before anyone could think of building a church. At last, in the year 1140, its foundations were laid, and 26 May 1149 was the day fixed for the consecration of this building, placed under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin. The ceremony, which had drawn an immense crowd of spectators, was presided over by Samson, archbishop of Reims, metropolitan of the province. There were present besides the diocesan bishop, Nicholas of Cambrai, and then Gerard of Tournai, Milo of Thérouanne and Joscelin of Soissons.

The son of the founder of Vaucelles, Simon of Oisy, then back from the crusade preached by St. Bernard, tried the venerable abbot’s patience more than once again, as he had often done before his departure. Blessed Ralph behaved in these difficult circumstances with extreme restraint, but no human consideration could make him forget his duty. Careful to render to the benefactors of his community the spiritual help of the prayers he owed them, he fearlessly refused them what they sometimes asked of him to satisfy their unjust wishes. One day in particular, when the castellan Simon, preparing to attack the people of Cambrai, had sent

to ask the abbey of Vaucelles for fodder for his horses, Ralph courageously answered, “I will not make myself the accomplice of this sin,” and refused to submit to this demand. But as firmly as he held on to the goods of his monastery when the powerful of the world wished to seize them, so was he holily lavish with them towards the poor, for whom he was filled with the most affectionate charity. He gave striking proofs of this during his rule. After several years of extraordinary plenty, during which the watchful abbot had laid up considerable stores of corn, a great famine happened to strike the country. Ralph, like another Joseph, hastened to open the monastery’s granaries and to distribute food and clothing to all who were in need. The abbey had become as it were the home of the unfortunate. Strangers received hospitality there, the needy help of every kind; and so that no one should go without, the necessities of life were carried to the sick, to women with child, and to those nursing little children.

At the sight of this multitude of poor people flocking to the abbey of Vaucelles, the bishop of Cambrai and Simon of Oisy could not contain their admiration. They could not understand how a single abbey could meet so many needs; there were counted there as many as five thousand poor, not to speak of those who were helped in their homes. They thought it their duty to ask the charitable abbot to limit himself to a smaller number of the needy; but he answered them calmly: “God forbid that we should do that. As long as we have corn, we will distribute it to all who come. When we have no more, we will kill the sheep, the oxen and the other animals of the monastery, and distribute them too for the food of all.” Blessed Ralph was not obliged to resort to this extreme measure: the monastery’s stores sufficed for the poor, the strangers and the sick until the day when a new harvest put an end to the famine. Yet one may think that God deigned to work a wonder on this occasion to reward his charity, and it would be hard to explain without this intervention of Providence how an abbey which then possessed only ten arpents of land could have fed thousands of the needy for so long a time.

Abbot Ralph was thus a worthy son of St. Bernard and a faithful servant of Jesus Christ. His name, blessed by the people, was also dear to his contemporaries. All felt for his virtue a well-deserved veneration. He fell asleep in the Lord on 30 December 1152. Vaucelles then numbered one hundred and seven monks, three novices and one hundred and thirty lay brothers.

Lives of the Saints of Cambrai and Arras, by Abbé Destombes.

ST. SABINUS, BISHOP OF SPOLETO, AND MARTYR (303)

At the time of the great religious persecution kindled by the emperor Maximian Herculius (286–305), the cruelty used against the faithful went to such lengths that, to discover them and destroy them, no one was allowed to buy or sell, or even to have corn ground or to draw water, without first offering incense to little idols set up for the purpose in the markets and at the street corners. As these horrible acts of violence were capable of shaking the firmest, truly apostolic men were needed to strengthen them in their religion. Sabinus, bishop of Spoleto, of whom we know neither the country nor the glorious beginnings, acquitted himself admirably of this task, not only in his episcopal city but also in several others of Umbria. Venustian, governor of Tuscany, being informed of this, soon checked this happy progress; for, having met our Saint at Assisi, where he was preaching the Gospel, he had him put in prison with Marcellus and Exuperantius, his deacons, and several other members of his clergy. Some time later he had them brought before him and tried to force them to adore a small statue of Jupiter, made of coral and clothed in cloth of gold, which he kept in his apartment. But Sabinus took it in his hands, generously threw it on the ground and broke it in pieces. This action so enraged Venustian that he had the holy prelate’s hands cut off, and his deacons stretched on the rack, where they were beaten with clubs, torn with iron hooks and burned with flaming torches until they gave up their souls under the severity of these torments.

Sabinus, who encouraged them throughout their martyrdom, was taken back to prison, where, after six days, a widow of high birth named Serena, who used her wealth for works of charity, came to find him and offer

him her services. From then on she took great care to assist him and to supply him with the necessities of life; and her piety was not without reward, for, having a blind nephew called Priscillian, she brought him to St. Sabinus, who restored his sight. This caused the conversion of fifteen prisoners who witnessed this great miracle. Venustian had left the Saint in peace because of a cruel pain in the eyes with which he was tormented for thirty-two days; but, learning of the wonder of Priscillian's cure, he came to find the wonder-worker in the prison with his wife and his two sons, to beg him to give him also some relief in the unbearable torment he was enduring. Sabinus answered that if he would believe in Jesus Christ and be baptized with his family, he would at once obtain what he asked. He consented, threw into the river the pieces of the coral statue we have spoken of, had himself instructed in the mysteries of our religion, and received the sacrament of spiritual regeneration. His wife and children shared in this happiness; and shortly afterwards they all lost their heads for confessing the Gospel, by sentence of Lucius, whom Maximian sent expressly to judge them.

As for St. Sabinus, this new president had him taken to Spoleto, where he was condemned to be scourged with leaded cords. The executioners carried out this sentence with such violence and cruelty that he expired in their hands. This was on 7 December 303; but as the Roman Martyrology marks him only on the 30th, we have deferred his Acts until this day. Serena, who was herself afterwards crowned with a glorious martyrdom, took away his body and buried it honourably a mile from the city, with his hands, which she had bought back and embalmed and kept preciously in a crystal vessel. Since then a notable basilica and an underground church have been built in his honour. His relics were carried to Faenza (Romagna), which has made some authors say that he was its bishop. Several other cities of Italy have some of his bones, and his memory has always been so celebrated there that several monasteries are to be seen built under his name.

This account is from Father Giry.

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[1] When St. Ascholius, bishop of Thessalonica, died, the clergy and people gave him as successor his disciple Anysius. They then wrote to St. Ambrose of Milan, who congratulated them on the excellence of their choice and in his answer praised the new prelate. The holy doctor also wrote to St. Anysius personally, to exhort him to walk faithfully in the footsteps of his predecessor. Pope St. Damasus wished to show that he had no less regard for the merit of the new bishop than he had shown for that of St. Ascholius, and he named him apostolic vicar of the Holy See in Illyricum. St. Anysius governed his church of Thessalonica for a long time and showed to the end all the vigilance, zeal and charity of a faithful pastor. In the troubles that shook the Church at that time he was always seen firm in the faith and attached like a brother to St. John Chrysostom. He was at Constantinople with the forty bishops of that Saint's party while Theophilus of Alexandria was holding the pseudo-council of Chalcedon. — *Continuators of Godescard.*

[2] According to some hagiographers St. Perpetuus of Tours died on 8 April, according to others on 30 December 494. That is why he is named on these two different days. Since the Roman Martyrology mentions him on 8 April, we have given him a notice under that day (vol. iv, pp. 290–294).

31 December

ROMAN MARTYROLOGY

At Rome, the heavenly birthday of St. Sylvester, pope, who baptized the emperor Constantine the Great, confirmed the decrees of the Council of Nicaea, accomplished many other holy works, and rested in peace. 335. — Also at Rome, on the Salarian Way, in the cemetery of Priscilla, the holy martyrs Donata, Paulina, Rustica, Nominanda, Serotina, Hilaria and their companions. — At Sens, Saints Savinian, bishop, and Potentian, who, having been sent to that city by the Sovereign Pontiff to preach the Gospel, ennobled that Church by the witness of their confession.[1] 1st c. — In the same place, St. Columba, virgin and martyr, who, having overcome the torment of fire, perished by the sword in the persecution of the emperor Aurelian. 274. — At Rhessara (Rhaesaena), St. Hermes, exorcist. — At Catania, in Sicily, the martyrdom of Saints Stephen, Pontian, Attalus, Fabian, Cornelius, Sixtus, Florus, Quintian, Minervian and Simplician. — On the same day, St. Zoticus, a Roman priest, who, having gone to Constantinople, took care to feed the orphans there. — At Ravenna, St. Barbatian, priest and confessor. — On the same day, St. Melania the Younger, who, leaving the

city of Rome with Pinian her husband, went to Jerusalem, where, after living in the observances of the religious life, Melania with women consecrated to God and Pinian in a monastery of men, they both died holily. 439.

MARTYROLOGY OF FRANCE, REVISED AND ENLARGED

In the diocese of Autun, the holy martyrs Savinian, Potentian and their companions, named in the Roman Martyrology of this day. 1st c. — In the diocese of Cologne, St. Sylvester, pope and confessor, named today in the same source. 335. — In the dioceses of Mende and Nîmes, St. Columba, virgin and martyr, named in the Roman Martyrology of this same day. — At Sens, the holy martyrs Altinus, Serotinus, Eodaldus (or Edoaldus) and Victorinus, companions of Saints Savinian and Potentian in their apostolic labours, their combats and their victories. 1st c. — At Saverne (Bas-Rhin), in the diocese of Strasbourg, St. Leobard or Leuvart (Leobardus), founder and abbot of Marmoutier.[2] 618. — At Valence (Drôme), St. Festus or Sextus, bishop of that see and martyr. Valence, like many other cities of the south of France, had fallen into the power of Chrocus, chief of the barbarians. This sacrilegious conqueror found there a Church flourishing under the guidance of a holy bishop, and resolved to bring fire and sword upon it unless shepherd and flock agreed to apostatize. But Festus was not a man to bend before threats: he exhorted his people to martyrdom and was soon pitilessly massacred with several of the faithful, whose names are written and known only in heaven. 5th c. — At La Louvesc (Ardèche), in the diocese of Viviers, the heavenly birthday of St. John Francis Regis, of the Society of Jesus, whose life we have given on 16 June. 1640. — At Souvigny (Allier), in the diocese of Moulins, the death of St. Odilo, abbot of Cluny, whose life we have given on 1 January.[3] 1048. — At Bourges, the death of St. Eustadius or Eustace, bishop of that see, after having been archdeacon of Autun. 607. — In the former abbey of Mont-Saint-Martin (Order of Prémontré), in the original diocese of Cambrai, Blessed Garembert of Wolpen, founder of that monastery. 1141.

ADDITIONS MADE FROM VARIOUS HAGIOGRAPHERS

At Barcelona (Catalonia), St. Mary of Succour (de Cervellón), first religious of the Third Order of Our Lady of Mercy. 1281. — At Avenches (Aventicum), a town of Switzerland (canton of Vaud), St. Marius, bishop of that ancient see and confessor. He was born at Autun of noble parents about the year 532. By the age of forty-three his talents, his piety and his eminent merit had made him known far and wide, and the Church of Avenches wished to have him as bishop (575). In this capacity he signed the second council of Mâcon, assembled in 585 by order of Guntram, king of Burgundy, and was one of the chief lights of that assembly, which adopted very valuable regulations. Never did a bishop show more wisdom in his administration, more zeal for divine worship, or more charity. He provided sacred vessels for the churches that lacked them and gave immense largesse to the poor. He had many tears to shed, and more still to wipe away, in that age full of wars and devastation; but he did not fail in his task as pastor and father of his people. Avenches itself, his episcopal city, was ruined by the barbarians, and the holy bishop was obliged to transfer his see to Lausanne (590). He died in that city after an episcopate of twenty-one years full of good works.[4] 596.

ST. SAVINIAN, ST. POTENTIAN AND THEIR COMPANIONS, APOSTLES OF SENS AND MARTYRS (1st CENTURY)

Although the names of the seventy-two disciples whom Our Lord chose after the Apostles to preach His Gospel are not given in Holy Scripture, several authors of ecclesiastical history have nevertheless recorded some of them for us, according to the ancient traditions found in the churches; and they have not forgotten St. Savinian and St. Potentian, who brought the faith and the Christian religion into the Senonais, one of the principal parts of Burgundy. It is true that this rank is disputed by other authors, who maintain that in past centuries a great confusion arose between the disciples of Our Lord and those of the Apostles and of apostolic men, and that these two preachers of the Gospel should be placed not in the first rank but in the

second or third. Although we do not claim to attribute this title of honour to them as something beyond dispute, we must nevertheless defer on this point to what has always been believed in the diocese where they are venerated, and which has not been contradicted by the bishops of the place who have seen and examined their Acts. On this principle we shall say that our Saints, having been enlightened with the light of eternal life by the preaching of Jesus Christ Himself, attached themselves inseparably to St. Peter after His Ascension. Thus they followed him not only to Antioch but also to Rome, when he came there to banish from it the superstition of idolatry. It was from there that this visible Head of the Church, extending his care over all the provinces of the Roman Empire, resolved to send them into Gaul, to make it share in the mystery of salvation. He therefore consecrated Savinian bishop and gave him as companions Potentian and Altinus, who, some have written, were also disciples of the Son of God, perhaps in a wider sense than that which belongs to the seventy-two disciples.

This was about the year of grace 45, the second year after the establishment of the sovereign pontificate at Rome. Savinian obeyed this order at once, and having crossed the Alps and several provinces, he came to the town of Ferrières in the Gâtinais, below Montargis. There he had a heavenly vision on the day of the Nativity of Our Lord, in which this holy mystery was shown to him as though it were still taking place at Bethlehem. Having converted part of the people, he built a chapel under the title of Notre-Dame de Bethléem, which has since been turned into a fine church and become a place of great devotion. To cultivate these happy beginnings he left St. Altinus there and went on his way to Sens. It is said that on arriving there he went all round the walls and everywhere engraved on them with his finger, mightier than chisel and graver, the saving sign of the cross, which could still be made out there several centuries later. He received hospitality outside the city, in the house of a lord called Victorinus. Victorinus received him and treated him very courteously with all his company, and when he learned that he came from Rome, he did not fail to ask him what was happening in that great city, mistress of the world. Savinian took this opportunity to tell him of the happy change taking place there in religion, through the ruin of idolatry and the establishment of the Christian Church. Victorinus liked this account, and seeing that his guests' conduct matched perfectly the purity of their doctrine, he was ashamed of having worshipped the creature instead of the Creator, and asked to be cleansed by the waters of baptism. Serotinus, a gentleman of the neighbourhood, and Edoaldus, a very eloquent man, wished to share in the same grace, and they were in fact baptized with all their households. Then the holy bishop, recognizing the merit of Serotinus and Edoaldus, his new disciples, ordained them deacons to assist him in the sacred functions of his priesthood. Altinus arrived at this time, laden with the merit of several conquests he had made in the Gâtinais. Meanwhile many came out of the city of Sens to see these new preachers; and as they joined miraculous cures to the force of their words, they soon won to Jesus Christ a good number of the inhabitants of the city, and even the whole village where they were living, which Jacques Taveau, in his History of the Bishops of Sens, calls "le Vif". This gave our Saint the boldness to turn its temple into a church in which to assemble the faithful, so that what had served for the invocation of the devil might serve thereafter for the true and religious worship of one God subsisting in three Persons.

After such happy successes he entered the city of Sens and preached the faith of Jesus Christ there. Grace went with his preaching. People listened to him and welcomed the truths he taught, and many, opening their eyes to the light of the Gospel, wished to enter the Church by the sacrament of spiritual regeneration. St. Savinian built three oratories or chapels in which to gather the neophytes and celebrate the holy Mysteries: one in honour of Our Lady, another under the name of St. John the Baptist, and the third dedicated to St. Stephen, the first martyr. This last, once enlarged, became the cathedral and now encloses the other two. It was right to inform the Vicar of Jesus Christ of this happy spread of the faith, in order to move him to send new labourers into Gaul. Potentian took this mission on himself and went back to Rome for the purpose, where the Apostles gave him an excellent welcome and warmly congratulated him. His journey, however, was not long; he came back to Sens as soon as he could, to continue the conquest of the whole country for Jesus Christ. It was then that St. Peter suffered martyrdom and went to receive in heaven the reward of his

labours and his love. He appeared to St. Savinian, told him of his execution and of the great happiness it had won him, and exhorted him to follow in his steps even to death. Our Saint dedicated a church in his honour outside the city, which was called Saint-Pierre-le-Vif. This was not, as some have believed, because St. Peter was still alive when it was dedicated, but because it was in the village we have already spoken of, which was called “le Vif”. Perhaps it was the very temple of the false gods which, as we have just said, had been turned into a church.

As the Apostle had exhorted the blessed bishop to extend his conquests to the other cities of Gaul, he sent his companions out in different directions to preach the Gospel. We find this distribution reported differently by the authors. Du Saussay, in his martyrology, says that St. Potentian went to Orléans, Chartres, Paris and Troyes, and everywhere made wonderful and countless conversions. At Orléans he ordained St. Altinus as first bishop. At Chartres he dedicated an oratory in honour of the Blessed Virgin and entrusted the new faithful to St. Adventinus. At Paris he drew several idolaters to the faith of Jesus Christ, and St. Edoaldus, the deacon whom he left there to confirm them in the faith, converted St. Agoard and St. Aglibert, who were afterwards martyred at Créteil with a great number of other neophytes. Finally he went to Troyes with St. Serotinus, where he built a small oratory which he dedicated to Our Saviour under the name and invocation of the holy apostles Peter and Paul; it is today the chapel of the Sacred Heart in the cathedral. Others say nothing of all these journeys of St. Potentian, but say only that St. Altinus with St. Edoaldus went to Orléans, and St. Potentian with St. Serotinus to Troyes. What is beyond dispute is that the Church of Troyes recognizes St. Potentian as its first bishop, and that the Church of Orléans honours St. Altinus as its apostle and the most ancient of its bishops.

All these glorious missionaries laboured with untiring zeal to destroy idolatry and to raise up the religion of the true God on its ruins. But just when they were labouring most zealously at this great ministry, they were driven out of the places they had won, after many insults and torments, by those who governed there for the emperor. So they were forced to go all together to St. Savinian, to make new plans with him. But God was bringing them there to receive the palm of a glorious martyrdom.

Severus or Severinus, a Gallic lord who held a prefecture at Sens under the authority of the Romans, had Savinian and Victorinus seized as guilty of impiety towards the gods. Then, seeing them constant in the faith and in the confession of Jesus Christ, he sent them to prison, loaded with blows and chains. Our Lord honoured them there with His visit, healed their wounds, and encouraged them to suffer death generously for His service. A few days later, as the priests of the idols never ceased crying out against them in the ears of this wicked judge, he had them brought before his tribunal again and condemned them to death. Before his execution Savinian obtained leave to go and embrace his disciples and to pray in one of his oratories. It was that of Saint-Sauveur, which he had had built in a suburb. He celebrated the holy Mysteries there and gave an exhortation to the assembly; but as his zeal kept him longer than the executioner intended, this cruel man came into the oratory itself and struck him two blows of an axe on the head, as can still be seen on his skull, which is preciously kept in his church of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif. Victorinus and a young boy, believed to have been his son, were beheaded at the same time.

The other companions of St. Savinian survived him for some time, divine Providence hiding them from the tyrant’s pursuit, so that they might further strengthen the new faithful in the resolve to die for Jesus Christ. If St. Potentian had the episcopal character, as is recognized at Troyes and throughout the rest of that diocese, it is probable that he then exercised its functions in the Church of Sens, mourning the death of its bishop. And so he is marked in the breviaries and calendars of that Church as its second bishop, and the authors who have given us the lists and the acts of the prelates who governed this metropolitan Church have not failed to name him as St. Savinian’s successor, although others recognize him only as a martyr. But his episcopate did not last long; for at the end of the year he was taken with St. Altinus, St. Serotinus and St. Edoaldus or Eodaldus; and after the torments of the whip, the scourge, the rack, iron blades and others like them, they were all

beheaded.

Culte et reliques

The body of St. Savinian was buried at the very place of his martyrdom, which for that reason changed its name and became the church of Saint-Savinien. As for the others, after being exposed for some time to the beasts without being harmed by them, they were buried beside this blessed primate. The relics of St. Potentian were raised from the ground and placed in a more fitting spot, first by Hugh, bishop of Sens, and later by Peter, one of his successors. It was only in 847 that Archbishop Wenilo, to answer the pious wishes of the abbess of Jouarre, his sister, gave her community the greater part of the relics of St. Potentian, which were enclosed in a reliquary of silver-gilt set with precious stones. It is probably at the same period that the cathedral of Troyes received, as its most precious gift, one of the ribs of St. Savinian and of St. Potentian, and the collegiate church of Saint-Étienne in the same city a considerable part of the body of St. Altinus, except his fingers, which were sent to Orléans, and some other particles that were distributed to various churches.

As for the relics of our two Saints which Archbishop Wenilo kept back, he carried them to the church of Saint-Pierre-le-Vif and placed them in lead coffers, for want of a more precious material. For fear of the Normans they were hidden a few years later in vaults, and were not taken out until 1001. A new translation took place in 1006, and in 1026 Queen Constance, wife of the King of France, Robert the Pious, had them placed in a silver reliquary enriched with gold and precious stones and adorned with figures in relief. This was a token of her gratitude for a signal favour obtained through the intercession of St. Savinian. This translation took place on 19 October, the day the churches of Sens and Paris have chosen for celebrating the feast of these holy martyrs.

The cathedral of Nevers possesses a fairly considerable portion of the relics of St. Savinian and St. Potentian, and a great many altars in that diocese contain particles of them in their tombs.

The relics of St. Serotinus were likewise divided among several churches. The parish of Longpont, near Paris, still possesses a considerable portion of them. The church of Les Croûtes, in the diocese of Troyes, today possesses a bone of St. Potentian.

From the year 1100 to 1683, St. Potentian and St. Savinian had an office of nine lessons on 19 October in the breviaries of Troyes, with a commemoration on 31 December. From 1683 to 1840 this office became semi-double. The Holy See has recently granted the dioceses of Sens and Troyes the office of St. Savinian and St. Potentian.

Father Giry, completed from the Vies des Saints du diocèse de Troyes by Abbé Defer, the Hagiologie Nivernaise by Mgr Crosnier, and the France pontificale by Fisquet.

ST. COLUMBA, VIRGIN AND MARTYR AT SENS (274) — (1)

> *Enlightened by faith, and become herself a hearth of light, she lived for Christ with a joy and a glory that never faltered.*
>
> *Prose of the ancient office of the Saint.*

During the bloody persecutions by which men tried to halt the progress of Christianity in Spain, many of the faithful suffered martyrdom with constancy, sometimes even with eagerness. There were also souls no less ardent whom particular circumstances led to follow this word of the Gospel: “When they persecute you in one city, flee into another.” These resolved to leave their country and seek in a foreign land the means of following freely the light of grace.

Now this is just what happened to the young heroine whose story we are going to tell. The blessed virgin Columba, born in Spain of a royal but pagan family, was from her tenderest youth so enlightened by the splendours of the divine light and so set on fire with so great a love of God that her parents could never bring her either to pray to the idols or to adore them. More than that: although she was then only about sixteen years old, she did not hesitate to leave her father's house without her family's knowledge and to come into Gaul, with a courage as admirable as it was extraordinary, in order to embrace Christianity there, in the company of St. Sanctian, St. Augustine, St. Beata her kinswoman, and several others. So she sacrificed of her own will the pleasures of the senses, the honours that awaited her, and, what is more, the love of her dear parents.[1]

Tormented by a burning thirst in the course of this long journey, she miraculously obtained by her prayer that a spring should gush forth at the very spot where they had rested a moment because of the fatigue of the road. Then, having arrived at the city of Vienne in Dauphiné, she was cleansed there in the sacred waters of baptism. As a monument of this fact there is still to be seen there, in the church of the notable monastery of nuns of the Order of St. Benedict, consecrated to God on account of our Saint, a chapel built on the spot where she was baptized, which bears this inscription: Baptisterium sanctae Columbae.[2]

The Lord asked new sacrifices of our Saint by inspiring her to go still further from her country. Learning that the worship of the Christian religion flourished at Sens more than in any other place in Gaul, she came there with those who were with her, and there they gave themselves wholly to vigils, prayers, fasts and visits to the tombs of the Saints.

But so large a number of strangers, leading such a manner of life, could not fail to draw the attention of the inhabitants of the city and to arouse the suspicion of the pagans. And so, scarcely had the emperor Aurelian arrived in the city of Sens, "where he made his entry on the eighth of the Kalends of January, the day on which religion honours and venerates the birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ, when these new Christians were denounced to him." It was not the first time that this prince had come into Gaul, nor the first time that he had shed the blood of the disciples of Jesus Christ. Already in 250, when he was governor of the city of Troyes, he had ordered the death of several Christians, among them the holy martyr Patroclus. He came back afterwards into the Senonais in 273 to receive the submission of Tetricus, who had secretly called him in. On his return to Rome he received there the honours of a triumph, and it was after these brilliant successes, whose glory still intoxicated him, that he passed into Gaul for the third time, in the year 274, and himself carried out the edicts of proscription he had issued against the Christians.

Columba, Beata, Sanctian and the others who had followed them, about twenty in number, therefore appeared before the author of the ninth persecution. "Aurelian inquires carefully into their conduct, but, finding them firm and unshakeable in the profession of the Christian religion, he orders that they be put to death after being tormented with the most frightful tortures. Columba, however, was excepted. The tyrant knew the nobility of her origin;[3] he had noticed her rare beauty and the air of greatness that marked her out, and he fully hoped that the sight of the torments in which the others were about to die before her eyes would bend her constancy."

It was about a mile to the north-east of the city of Sens, near the road leading to the village of Saligny, that their martyrdom was accomplished.[4]

Our young heroine had witnessed the cruel death of her companions, and she longed in vain to mingle her blood with theirs. Aurelian, to give her plenty of time to reflect on what she had seen and on the fate awaiting her if she did not yield to his wishes, had her thrown into prison. A constant tradition places in the middle of the city this underground dungeon, over which the piety of the faithful raised one of the first churches built in honour of our Saint, that of Sainte-Colombe-la-Petite.

What happened in that dark dwelling? Who will tell us the fervour of the Christian virgin's prayers, and the visit of Him who goes down into prisons to console the just…! All we can know is that Columba drew from it a new energy to sustain new combats.

The emperor then had her brought before him again. She presented herself without bitterness and with a noble simplicity before the tyrant's tribunal, thus keeping the dignity of her rank. Aurelian, casting an angry look upon her, said to her: "What is your name?" — "My name is Columba, strengthened as I am by the love of Christ." — "Your first answer already tells against you. Why do you let yourself be deceived by a false belief?" — "I cannot believe in any other God than Him who at the beginning of the world created us in His image, and in His only Son Our Lord, who showed Himself on earth for our salvation, who we believe suffered under Pontius Pilate, and who after His resurrection enlightened His Church by the coming of the Holy Spirit. I confess that He is true God before all ages, and that in time He took the true form and likeness of humanity." — "Do you not know our decrees?" — "Which?" — "That all Christians abandon their superstition, present themselves before me, the head of the government of men, and adore my gods."

The virgin answered: "Gods made by the hand of men will perish with those who adore them. They are inventions of the devil; they have neither feeling nor movement. They are not to be adored, but rather to be burned, lest, at the devil's persuasion, this false veneration should draw the hearts of the foolish to them. As for me, I must adore and venerate the Lord my God, the Christ who deigns to promise me life, who sees the angels subject to His rule in heaven and all the elements trembling before Him."

Aurelian, seeing her inflexible, had recourse to the most flattering promises and dazzled her with all the advantages and all the glory of an illustrious marriage, assuring her that because of the charms of her beauty and the nobility of her birth, everyone in his palace would hasten to obey her voice. Then he added: "What perversity could still keep you in your obstinacy?" — "It is not hard for me to despise the treachery of your promises when I remember the examples of the Gospel. The ancient enemy, in whose footsteps you walk, attacked my Master with three temptations, and, leading Him to the top of a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world and said to Him: If, falling at my feet, you will adore me, I will give you all these things. But the Lord answered him: Begone, Satan, for it is written: You shall adore the Lord your God, and Him only shall you serve. Following his example, you use every means to make me share in your damnation. You wish, O tyrant, to separate me from the love of Jesus Christ, my heavenly Spouse; but you will never succeed in tearing me from His eternal embraces. And you, who by this betrothal would drag me into the corruption of an earthly love, deserve eternal torments with the devil whose promptings you follow and whom you falsely believe to be God, unless before passing through the first death you appease Christ my Lord by the confession of the faith. As for me, I feel myself destined for an eternal kingdom, for the passing goods you promise will never be able to turn me from the love of my God. Bound as I am to an eternal Spouse, how could I submit to the laws of a mortal man?"

"Words come to you in great abundance," said the emperor, "but in the end, if you do not sacrifice to my gods, as I have told you, there will be no more truce for you from now on: I will have you dishonoured, and you will perish in the midst of the flames." — "God is powerful enough," answered Columba, "to protect His servant, keep her pure and lead her to the palm of virginity. I am ready, to confess His name, to face the snares and all the torments you may wish to make me suffer, so that He may deign to crown me in the presence of the dwellers in the heavenly court and number me among His martyrs."

Aurelian, seeing that he could obtain nothing by promises or by threats, flew into a rage and ordered Columba to be loaded with chains and taken to the amphitheatre,[5] to be kept there under strict guard in a narrow prison. Then, having had a young man of infamous morals sought out, he said to him: "Go where the virgin Columba is shut up; I give her up to you." Filled with brutal joy at these words, he ran to the amphitheatre, and he was already near the doors of the cell when the young Christian, casting on him a look full of dignity, said to him: "Why, young man, do you come here so fiercely? Held back by the weakness of

my sex, I cannot struggle against you; but see, I call upon my Lord and my Spouse Jesus Christ, who can snatch me from your snares and your violence."

Since the door was open, however, he went in; but the chaste and courageous virgin drove him back, saying to him: "Listen, young man, and prepare your heart for what I am going to tell you. My Lord and my God, whom I have pledged myself to serve by the purity of my life, will not allow me to fall into shame. Take care lest the divine vengeance strike you suddenly, at this very moment, and you become the prey of an eternal death."

ST. COLUMBA, VIRGIN AND MARTYR AT SENS (274) — (2)

These words, which had made the corrupter recoil in terror, were scarcely ended when a she-bear, sent by Providence to the help of the virgin, came into the prison, sprang upon the young man, threw him to the ground, and, holding him under her claws, looked at Columba, quivering, as if to learn from her what was to be done. Columba, knowing that the animal had been sent by God for her defence, commanded it in the name of Christ to take no vengeance on the young man and to let him go, so that she might speak to him. The bear at once obeyed the voice of the virgin Columba, and, letting go her prey, went and lay across the doorway, as though to prevent him from going out and to stop any who might wish to come in.

Then the blessed virgin spoke again and said to him: "You must understand now what power lies in calling upon the name of Christ, since you see that this wild beast has been sent by the Lord to defend me and to drive back your infamies. She obeys her Creator, she, a creature without reason; and you, a man created with reason, are far from the knowledge of Christ. Well, then! Promise now that you will become a Christian; or, if you refuse, I shall give this animal leave to devour you." Then the young man, pierced with compunction, declared his faith in these words: "Let him who does not confess Christ not go out of here alive. As for me, I confess openly that there is no other God than the One in whom the blessed Columba professes to believe." When he had finished these words, the bear left free the door of the cell, which she seemed to be guarding by God's command, and gave him liberty to go out.

Carried away with joy at seeing himself thus saved, the young man went through the whole city crying out that there was no other God of the universe than the One for whose name the blessed Columba was enduring so many and such great torments, and he told all the wonders that the Lord had worked in her favour. It appears that he was martyred outside the city for his firmness in the faith. Meanwhile the bear stayed in the amphitheatre to go on protecting Columba. On learning these things, Aurelian, carried away by anger, ordered the soldiers to drag Columba out of the amphitheatre and bring her before his tribunal. They found her at prayer in her prison with the bear beside her, and this struck them with such fear that they dared not approach the Saint. They went back and told the emperor that they had been unable to bring her, because a bear that was with her in her cell would not let them in.

Then Aurelian had wood piled round the walls of the prison and ordered it to be set alight, so as to destroy at one stroke Columba and the bear that protected her. The animal, seeing the flames come gradually nearer and no doubt fearing death, began by instinct to roar. But Columba, moved with pity for her, calmed her with her words and promised her that not only would she not perish by the fire, but that she would not be taken either and would die a natural death, because all these things were happening only for the glory of God. At these words the bear came several times to lick the feet of the powerful virgin; then, escaping through an opening, she fled all trembling, made her way through the crowd of people, and got back to her lair through a thousand dangers.

But Columba, what will become of her in the midst of the burning flames that are about to devour her? "Clouds having gathered above the amphitheatre at the Lord's command, they poured down torrents of water which put out the flames of the fire." It is in memory of this miraculous event that this beautiful prayer is

addressed to God on our Saint's feast: "O God, who were pleased to send from heaven an abundant rain to put out the flames by which the blessed Columba, virgin and martyr, was surrounded, we pray you to send us, by her intercession, the saving dew of your mercy, to protect us from the fiery darts of the ancient serpent."

The emperor, told of all that was happening, could not help being struck with amazement; but instead of recognizing in it the wonderful works of divine Providence, he persisted in the hardness of his heart, and, calling Columba before him again, he said to her: "What then is your secret? What are the spells you use to work such enchantments, to make a wild beast run so promptly to your help, and to obtain an abundant rain to put out the fire prepared for you? By what power can you thus get the better of me?"

Columba answered that she worked these wonders by calling, not on the devil, but on our Lord Jesus Christ, and then she reproached the tyrant with his cruelty.

Aurelian, carried away by an unspeakable fury, ordered the executioners to beat her with rods, to tear her with iron combs, and to take her to the first milestone outside the city, there to have her head cut off by the sword.

But before she was led out of Aurelian's presence, the blessed Columba had the strength to say to him: "I do not fear your sentence of condemnation; I shall finish my martyrdom with a new ardour. Our Lord and Redeemer exhorts us to it in his Gospel: 'He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that shall lose his life for my sake shall find it unto life eternal.' But it is only with trembling that I think of the sentence of the judgment to come which Christ will pronounce against the wicked: 'Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, which my Father hath prepared for the devil and his angels.' It is to deserve to go and receive that sentence that you labour without rest, so as never afterwards to cease to be the companion of Satan and his angels in those eternal flames. This condemnation that you pass on me seems to me very small and very light compared with that eternal torment. For although you can separate my soul from my limbs, yet, once my body has been put to death, no one will have power over my soul except the One who placed it in me, who after the future resurrection can call it back again into my limbs, joined together once more by his power. You, then, who are without God and who understand the wickedness of your works, look carefully at my face; and when I come before the tribunal of Christ to accuse you, you will remember then, in the presence of my Bridegroom, with what glory you crowned me by the very things that are preparing eternal pains for you." After these words, the sentence having been pronounced, the ministers of death obeyed the orders of the cruel emperor.

When they had brought her to the appointed place, Columba, at the moment of receiving the fatal blow, asked for a few moments so as to address her prayer to God before leaving this life. But as the savage executioners refused her any delay, she broke off her prayer to offer them, with a devout entreaty mingled with tears, the new cloak she was wearing, saying to them: "Take this, and give me leave to pray."

Won over by this gift, they gave her the leave she asked. Then the blessed Columba, prostrating herself on the ground and pouring herself out wholly in the Lord, prayed, saying: "Lord Jesus Christ, almighty God, you know that it is for the confession of your name that I suffer these torments. Lend me the help of your goodness, O boundless, O merciful One, lest the second death, that is, eternal punishment, should have power over me; but grant that, upheld by your mercies, I may be destined for eternal glory."

At that very instant this fervent prayer pierced the mysterious depths of heaven, and a divine voice was heard, saying: "Come, Columba, the heavens are open to you; the choir of the heavenly spirits and the choir of virgins, full of joy, come forward to meet you; the Son of God awaits you and prepares for you the crown of eternity; the angels will receive you and lead you into the city of the Saints, into the heavenly Jerusalem."

Then, while she offered her head to the steel of the executioner who was about to strike her, she imitated once more the example of the Master, saying: “You know, Lord, that the desires I had of showing you my love are today fulfilled. Do not lay this fury to their charge, for they sin against you through ignorance.”

These last words were still sounding on her lips when her voice was cut short under the blows of the executioner, whose sword struck off her head. And so this illustrious martyr, bathed in her virginal blood, flew away rejoicing to eternal glory! It was on 31 December of the year of grace 274 that this glorious death took place.

St. Columba is represented: (1) leaving Spain to come into Gaul in the company of St. Beata; (2) making a spring of water gush forth; (3) receiving baptism; (4) praying at the tomb of the martyrs; (5) appearing before Aurelian; (6) in the prison of the Carrouge; (7) surrounded by flames that a miraculous rain puts out; (8) led to the place of execution; (9) beheaded; (10) with a bear beside her; (11) holding out a cross to a young man who tried to do her violence and who is attacked by a bear escaped from the circus, while the Saint prays that he may not be devoured.

CULTE ET RELIQUES (Veneration and Relics)

The principal feast of St. Columba has always been kept (barring particular circumstances) on 31 December in the lands, monasteries and churches that recognize her as patroness. The place sanctified by the blood of one of the first women martyrs of Gaul is called the Fontaine d’Azon. It lies between the villages of Saint-Clément and Saint-Denis, a few steps from the spot where there once passed the Roman road from Sens to Meaux, which in the country it crosses is still called today the “iron” or “paved” road, and which a very old chronicle names the Appian Way.

It was long a famous pilgrimage. Every year, on the Wednesday of Easter week, numerous pilgrims could be seen hurrying from the town and from all the surrounding country to ask God for favours through the powerful intercession of Columba, and to draw high lessons of virtue from the memories of innocence and heroism recalled to them by the image of the virgin martyr placed there by the piety of our fathers. For there, near the spring, stood a solitary chapel where from time to time was offered the Sacrifice above all others, which was the model of the sacrifice of St. Columba and of all the other martyrs, and which gave it its merit.

With what fervour and simplicity must God have been adored and his servant honoured beside that venerated sanctuary! Within its narrow walls, where an altar stood surmounted by the statue of Columba, there was room only for the priest and his ministers; but outside, an immense crowd, which no building raised by the hand of man could have held, covered the plain far and wide in an attitude of the most respectful devotion. Alas! It too has disappeared, like so many other Christian monuments, this chapel of the Fontaine d’Azon; it fell under the blows of the revolutionary hammer, and no visible trace of it remains! But for some time now the spring so dear to the devotion of the faithful, whose waters were dyed with the blood of the virgin and martyr of Sens, and this little plot of ground where so many memorable things took place, have been given to the monastery of which we shall speak further on.

Let us return to the mortal remains of the holy martyr and say in a few words what became of them. “At the time of the martyrdom of

St. Columba,” says the Rev. Fr. Burteau, “there lived in a very pleasantly situated castle, in the midst of a fine plain on the right bank of the Yonne, a mile north of the city, a prince of an illustrious family named Aubertus, who was general of the Senonian region. Whether because of his crimes (for he was still an idolater), or so that the glory of God and the power of St. Columba might shine out the more in the cure of this infirmity, he had long been deprived of his sight.

“Now the report of the wonders taking place around the body of the Christian virgin, which the executioners had left unburied so that it might become the prey of wild beasts, soon reached him. At this news his soul

was suddenly enlightened by the Holy Spirit, who knows neither slowness nor delay, and at the same time he conceived the hope of recovering the gift of sight. He had himself led to that sacred spring, and, bending his knees, prostrated himself on the ground in the most suppliant manner and deeply venerated the body of the virgin martyr, which gave off the sweetest fragrance. Then, taking some of the blood with which the glory of her passion had adorned her, he touched his darkened eyes with it in faith, piety and devotion, and at once recovered his sight. All present were filled with amazement and joy; and he, full of gratitude for this divine favour and for Columba, the beloved bride of Christ, had that chaste body carried like a precious treasure into his own palace and buried it with honour." Over the very tomb of the virgin he had a church built at his own expense. For its upkeep he gave a large meadow whose site is marked in the oldest documents under the name of Pré Aubert, a name it still bears today; it almost touches the Fontaine d'Azon.

The crowds of pilgrims at the tomb of St. Columba had become too great for the secular priests attached to the church founded by Aubertus to receive them. Clotaire II, king of the Franks, founded a monastery there in the year 620. He endowed it with royal magnificence, giving it an estate of his domain called Cuy (Cusiacum), with all the rights belonging to it. Two years later St. Desiderius (Didier), bishop of Auxerre, left by his will an estate called Viscla, to be divided between the two basilicas of Sainte-Colombe and Saint-Léon, built near the city of Sens.

The illustrious St. Lupus (Loup) increased the revenues of this abbey still further and magnificently, giving it the estate of Sarmaise, which he had inherited from his family. He was buried in a tomb dug under the eaves of this building. When miracles had revealed the holiness of this humble pastor, his tomb was placed near that of the virgin martyr. From then on these two tombs would be inseparable: the same temple would cover them, the same honours would be paid to them, and both would be regarded as the two most powerful protectors of the Sens country.

King Dagobert gave the basilica of Sainte-Colombe an estate called Grand-Champ in the Gâtinais, and named the famous St. Eligius (Éloi) administrator of the goods of this monastery, in which he took the keenest interest.

It was a true consolation for this man of God to see himself charged with such an office, and so he put all his care into enriching the basilica of Sainte-Colombe, which he loaded with a thousand gifts. Among the works he chose to make with his own hands, the most remarkable was a reliquary-shrine richly adorned with silver, gold and precious stones, whose cost was borne by the king. It was plundered by the Northmen, and nothing remains of it today but the feretrum, or wooden coffin, which still holds the relics of the Saint.

The monks, wishing to employ for the glory of God part of the riches with which this abbey had been liberally provided in honour of St. Columba, thought, about the middle of the ninth century, of building a new basilica to replace the first, which was no doubt threatening ruin and had certainly become too small for the throng of the faithful. It was solemnly consecrated on the eleventh of the calends of August (22 July) in the year 853 by Wenilo, archbishop of Sens, in honour of St. Columba, virgin and martyr, of St. Lupus, confessor, and also of the Holy Cross. On the day after this consecration the bodies of St. Columba and St. Lupus were raised from the ground; that is, the holy relics were taken out of the crypt below the floor of the church in which they had been enclosed and placed in a higher spot. This ceremony was carried out with the greatest solemnity amid an immense gathering of clergy and people.

Some years later the new church was embellished by Betto, one of the monks, who died bishop of Auxerre. Born at Sens itself, he was provost of Sainte-Colombe at the time when Richard the Justiciar was its lay abbot. With the latter's help he raised the walls of the enclosure up to the battlements and protected them with strong towers. Then, wishing also to satisfy his devotion to St. Columba, he set himself to adorn her church, and the shrine in which her relics were enclosed, with sumptuous ornaments of gold and silver.

In 867 Welf, lay abbot of Sainte-Colombe and of Saint-Riquier near Abbeville, gave a relic of our Saint to the latter monastery.

On the nineteenth of the calends of February (14 January) 936, the illustrious King Raoul (Rudolph), who held the sceptre of the Franks with such glory in peace as in war, died at Auxerre and was buried in the monastery of Sainte-Colombe. He had given this abbey his own crown and had enriched it with lands and magnificent gifts, such as holy relics, chalices, precious stones, books adorned with gold and silver, and other ornaments.

During his stay in the province of Sens, St. Peter Damian came on pilgrimage to the tomb of St. Columba, and we find among his works an excellent panegyric of this Saint, which he no doubt delivered on that visit, just as, when he was at Cluny, he had celebrated the virtues of St. Odilo.

In the twelfth century the basilica of Sainte-Colombe was rebuilt for the third time and consecrated by Pope Alexander II. This dedication took place in the year of grace of the Incarnation of our Lord 1164, on the sixth of the calends of May (26 April). The ceremony was carried out with such splendour, and the throng of people while it lasted was so great, that the coming and going and the offerings of the faithful never ceased day or night, and on a single day the number of pilgrims rose to thirty thousand.

Scarcely had the vaults of this happy basilica ceased to echo with the voice of an exiled Pope when another outlaw, more famous still, came to ask it for an altar and a place of recollection: it was the great archbishop of Canterbury.

In 1546 a rib of the Saint was given to the church of Sainte-Colombe du Carrouge.

It is well known that the region of which Rimini is the capital was formerly called Senonian Gaul. The cathedral of Rimini was dedicated under the title of St. Columba. Now a bishop of Rimini who had come to France as nuncio of the Holy Father went on pilgrimage to the tomb of our Saint and obtained a relic, consisting of a rib of the Saint.

In 1626 the archbishop of Sens, Octave de Bellegarde, opened the shrine and took from it a relic intended for the monastery of Sainte-Colombe-lès-Vienne. In 1635 a relic of the Saint was granted to the church of Sainte-Colombe-en-Auxois, and some particles to that of Sainte-Colombe-la-Petite. In 1648 a relic was also granted to Mgr. de Gondrin, archbishop of Sens. The ravages of the Huguenots obliged the monks of Sainte-Colombe, in 1667, to carry their relics to the monastery of the Celestines at Sens. The canons of the metropolitan church of that city obtained from the monks, in 1699, a relic of the Saint, consisting of a collarbone, and placed it in a magnificent reliquary given long before by Charlemagne; it was solemnly carried to the cathedral on the first Thursday of May.

During the French Revolution, all the goods and all the buildings of the royal abbey of Sainte-Colombe, after being confiscated, like all church property, for the benefit of the nation, or rather of those who bought them for a song, were wretchedly sold off to be handed over as prey to the most frightful greed. And that magnificent church, one of the wonders of the Sens country, could find no mercy before the revolutionary hammer! Happily, after about half a century of desolation, better days began to dawn on that ravaged ground. It became the property of the newborn congregation of the Religious of the Holy Childhood of Jesus and Mary, whose mother-house was established on the ruins of the old abbey. Thus, after some years of interruption, the cult of St. Columba, which had flourished in that place for about sixteen hundred years, was restored.

As for the relics of the Saint, which were taken to the treasury of the cathedral of Sens at the time of the Revolution, they were stripped there of their magnificent silver shrine, but remained intact in the wooden coffin that held them, which tradition and the findings of scholarship alike attribute to St. Eligius. They have since been placed in a new shrine.

In 1833 Mgr. de Cosnac, after visiting the precious remains of the Saint, took from them some fragments to be distributed to several churches. In 1847 one of her relics was granted to the parish of Sainte-Colombe (Côte-d'Or). A precious relic, the one granted in 1699 by the old abbey to the metropolitan chapter of Sens, was brought back to the new monastery of Sainte-Colombe on Tuesday, 29 July 1847. A relic was granted in 1849 to the church of Sainte-Colombe in the town of Saintes.

The Fontaine d'Azon, so famous for the martyrdom of our Saint, has been restored to its first purpose.

Excavations made on the site of the sanctuary of the old basilicas built one after another over the tomb of St. Columba have brought to light the remains of a crypt showing signs of the highest antiquity. It is two metres wide and four long, and about thirty centimetres of the old walls remain all round it.

The Abbé Brullée shows very well that this is the original crypt, the one that would have been built when the body of the Saint was brought from the Fontaine d'Azon to the castrum of the general of the Senonian region, and the one where St. Eligius found the precious relics when he came to make the marvellous shrine that was to hold them.

M. Brullée has restored this venerable crypt, preserving its remains with religious respect. Two inscriptions, placed on either side of the altar, will record, one the history of the crypt, the other the names of the chief benefactors of the church of Sainte-Colombe, who will multiply for the building of a new church, of which this crypt is in some sort only the foundation stone.

For this biography we have summarized the Life of St. Columba by the Abbé Brullée.

ST. SYLVESTER, POPE AND CONFESSOR (335)

In verbis suis monstra placavit.

At the powerful voice of this illustrious pontiff, idolatry, Judaism, and the hideous train of all the errors then springing up sank shamefully into the shadows. Ecclus. 45:2.

If the Roman Church owes her establishment and foundation to the apostle St. Peter, we may say that she owes her freedom to St. Sylvester. She was a slave, and for more than three hundred years she had groaned under the tyranny of idolatrous princes, who allowed neither the head to exercise his authority nor the members to have with him and with one another the dealings they needed in order to fulfil all the duties of Christianity. But when this great Pope had drawn Constantine to Jesus Christ and brought him under the sweet yoke of the Gospel, this Church, from a slave, became free; from a servant, a mistress; from wretched, glorious and triumphant; and she began to reign over those crowned heads which until then had kept her in chains and bondage. It is with reason, then, that she regards this heavenly man as her liberator and pays him particular honours, as the one who made her victorious over her most formidable enemies.

Sylvester was a Roman by birth and the son of Rufinus. He was trained in piety by a holy priest named Cyrinus, and he profited so well from his teaching that from his earliest youth he was seen endowed with all the Christian virtues. He joyfully received into his house the Christian strangers who came on pilgrimage to the tombs of the holy Apostles; he washed their feet, fed them, and provided them with all they needed. Among others he received St. Timothy, martyr, who had come from Antioch to Rome to honour the relics of the Martyrs, and who, after labouring there for the conversion of unbelievers by the power of the word of God, earned by a happy death to be joined to the number of those whose great credit with God had drawn him to that city. St. Sylvester took his body and buried it with all the honour that the persecution of the pagans allowed. Tarquinius Perpenna, prefect of the city of Rome, being informed of it, imagined that the goods of Timothy, which he believed to be great, had remained in the hands of this charitable man; and, as he wanted to have them, he had him seized and thrown into prison. But it was not for long: for the very next day, as the Saint had foretold, the prefect, while eating fish, swallowed a bone which choked him, and his

death set the holy prisoner free.

At the age of thirty he was ordained priest of the Roman Church by Pope St. Marcellinus, which is why St. Augustine called him “the priest of Marcellinus”. As in this rank, which gave him occasion to exercise his zeal and charity, he was marvellously distinguished among those who made up that venerable clergy, he soon drew upon himself the persecution of the Donatists. After the death of St. Miltiades (Melchiades) he was raised to the Apostolic See, which he filled most worthily for nearly twenty-two years. This was on 21 February 314, under the reign of Constantine the Great. That prince had already overcome the tyrant Maxentius by the power of the cross, which had appeared to him with the inscription “In this sign thou shalt conquer”, and, having entered Rome in triumph, he had openly declared himself protector of the Christian religion. Yet the Acts of St. Sylvester, approved by a great number of authors both Greek and Latin, testify that the Christians did not cease to be persecuted still in that capital of the world: whether Constantine had grown cool towards them, as several have written, or whether, while he was occupied with the great wars against Maximin and Licinius, his colleagues, the pagan magistrates took advantage of his absence to torment them. So the holy Pope, to preserve himself for his flock, found himself obliged to leave Rome secretly and withdraw to Mount Soracte, called Monte San Silvestro, about seven leagues away.

But, according to the same Acts, the emperor, after triumphing by the defeat and death of these two sworn enemies of his glory and of Christianity, was struck with the leprosy which physicians call elephantiasis. Perhaps he had caught it in Egypt, where Pliny says it was fairly common and did not spare even kings, though to the great harm of their peoples, because to be cured they had a bath of human blood prepared for them, which cost the lives of many children. Constantia, this prince’s daughter, also suffered from this disease, but she was cured of it by the merits of St. Agnes. He himself had recourse to the usual remedy: he had a great number of children seized so that a bath of their blood might be prepared for him. The deed was about to be done when, moved with compassion on the one hand by the innocence of the children and on the other by the laments and groans of their mothers, he resolved rather to die of the violence of his disease than to use so inhuman a remedy. So he had the children given back to their mothers, with money to help them take them home.

The following night the blessed Apostles appeared to him, and, after showing how pleasing to God this act of clemency had been, they told him to send to Mount Soracte for the sovereign Pontiff of the Christians, named Sylvester, who would teach him another bath, far more salutary than the one the physicians had proposed, since by it he would be cured at once of the leprosy of the body and of that of the soul. Constantine obeyed this command and sent for Sylvester, who thought he was being summoned to be put to death; and the emperor told him of the vision and of the order he had received from heaven. The Saint judged at once that those divine men who had appeared to him were St. Peter and St. Paul, and he showed him their images; Constantine acknowledged that they were perfectly like the Saints he had seen. Then a great change took place in the soul of that prince. He wished to be thoroughly instructed in the mysteries of Christianity and to enter the ranks of the catechumens; and after some days of instruction, according to the rules of the Church, he was plunged into the sacred waters of Baptism, which, by virtue of the blood of Jesus Christ, wash away sins and give the soul the life of grace. After this benefit he received another that he desired, the cure of his leprosy. He came out of the font with his flesh as clean as a child’s, and he learned by experience that, although this Sacrament is not instituted to restore health to the body, it can nevertheless do so when God chooses to use it as an instrument to work that miraculous effect.

One cannot express the esteem, affection and gratitude that Constantine had from then on for St. Sylvester, or the good he did the Church on his advice and at his request. The Acts of this blessed Pontiff relate that his illustrious neophyte, during the eight days in which he wore the white garment after his baptism, made most holy ordinances for the establishment and glory of the Christian religion. At the end of that time he had the building begun of the famous basilicas of the Saviour, or St. John Lateran, and of St. Peter and St. Paul. Later

he also had the temples of the false gods pulled down, their statues broken, and Christian churches built on every side, to which he gave vessels of gold and silver and ornaments of precious stuff, with large revenues for the support of the clergy who would serve them. This can be seen in the life of St. Helena and in the discourses on the feasts of the Finding of the Holy Cross and of the dedication of the churches of the Saviour and of St. Peter.

One thing that greatly confirmed him in the religion he had embraced was the signal victory that St. Sylvester won in his presence in a disputation against the Jews and pagans, who charged him with imprudence and even with impiety for having abandoned the religion of his fathers to adore a crucified man. Sylvester fought them with such force and showed so solidly the truth of Christianity that they were left dumb and unable to make any reply, the more so as he confirmed his teaching with great miracles and supernatural cures, against which, for all their subtlety and malice, they could set nothing.

Many learned persons believe that these Acts of St. Sylvester are spurious, and prefer to follow what Eusebius of Caesarea says in the fourth book of the Life of Constantine the Great, chapters 62 and 63: that it was only at the end of his life, and in a suburb of Nicomedia, that he became a catechumen and received the sacrament of spiritual regeneration. This opinion is supported by the authority of St. Ambrose in the funeral oration for Theodosius, of St. Jerome in his Chronicle (unless indeed a stranger's hand made this addition), of Socrates, Theodoret, Sozomen and Gelasius of Cyzicus in their histories, of Cassiodorus in his, called the Tripartite, and of some other more modern writers. The letter of the orthodox bishops of the council of Rimini to the emperor Constantius is also cited. Yet there are so many Greek and Latin authors who subscribe to the baptism of Constantine at Rome and to the Acts of St. Sylvester (while admitting that these have been corrupted on some points): St. Gregory of Tours, St. Venantius Fortunatus, Anastasius the Librarian, Hincmar, Theophanes, Symeon Metaphrastes and Nicephorus Callistus; besides the popes Gelasius I, in a council of Rome of seventy bishops, where so exact a sifting was made of the genuine Acts of the first centuries from those that were spurious; Hadrian I, in his Epistle to Constantine and Irene, which was read at the seventh council; and Nicholas I, in a letter to the emperor Michael, where he calls St. Sylvester Magni Constantini baptizatorem, "he who baptized Constantine the Great"; that it is difficult not to believe them.

Cardinal Baronius, under the year 324 of his Annals and in his Notes on the Martyrology, maintains that all those who placed Constantine's baptism at Nicomedia and put it off to the end of his life merely followed Eusebius of Caesarea; and that this historian, whom St. Jerome calls the standard-bearer of the Arians, invented the tale so as to make it believed that Constantine had been baptized by Eusebius, bishop of Nicomedia, the chief abettor of Arianism. Scholars, however, find little likelihood in this, since, as Constantine's baptism could not have been secret, if Eusebius had placed it at another place and another time than it took place, his fiction would at once have been recognized as a pure imposture, and he would only have discredited himself. Father Morin of the Oratory, in his History of the Deliverance of the Church by Constantine the Great, after seriously examining the reasons for both opinions, leaves the matter undecided and counts it among those difficulties of which no certain knowledge can be had. In this doubt, if one wishes to come to a decision, it is safer to follow what the Church sets before us in the Lessons of our Saint's feast; and that is what we adopt, not as beyond doubt, but as probable and supported by sufficient authority.

During the pontificate of this great Pope several councils were held, both for the defence of the faith against heretics and for the restoration and perfecting of church discipline. One of the chief was that of Arles, attended by the bishops of Gaul, Italy, Spain, Africa and Great Britain. There it was ordered that Easter should be kept on one and the same day by the whole world, on the Sunday after the fourteenth of the moon of March. The repetition of baptism practised by the Africans was condemned. The case of St. Caecilian, bishop of Carthage, was decided, and he was found innocent of the crimes of which the Donatists accused him. Very equitable laws were also made against schismatics. The Fathers of this council wrote a letter to

St. Sylvester in which, after telling him of the joy they would have had had they been honoured by his presence, which the affairs of his See had prevented, they gave him an account of what they had done in their assembly.

The first general council of the whole Church, that of Nicaea, was also held in his time. The reason for its meeting was the heresy of Arius, which, far from being extinguished by the many particular councils called for that purpose, had spread so widely in the East that the whole Church was close to being set ablaze by it. This evil had to be forestalled, and no better remedy was found than to bring together the principal bishops of the whole Christian world, so that they might define together what they had learned by apostolic tradition of the divinity of Jesus Christ. This council was held only by the authority of St. Sylvester, and he presided over it through his legates, who were the great Hosius, bishop of Córdoba in Spain, and the priests Vitus (or Victor) and Vincent, members of the Roman clergy. In this council the consubstantiality of the Word, and consequently of Jesus Christ, with his Father was defined, and the second Creed of the Church was composed, which, with the additions made to it at the council of Constantinople, is the one we sing at Mass.

The emperor Constantine attended it and gave rare examples of humility, modesty, patience and zeal for the faith and the Christian religion; and the bishops for their part paid him great honours, receiving him into the midst of their assembly. This is one of the strongest proofs used by Cardinal Baronius to show that he was already baptized. After the condemnation of Arius and the establishment of the faith, the council wrote to St. Sylvester to ask him to confirm its decrees; and the holy Pope, having called another council at Rome for that purpose, confirmed them in these words: “We confirm with our mouth, in agreement, all that was established in the city of Nicaea in Bithynia by the three hundred and eighteen blessed bishops for the support of our holy mother the Catholic and Apostolic Church; and we anathematize all those who shall undertake to destroy the definition of this great and holy council, made in the presence of the most pious and venerable prince Constantine Augustus.”

Besides this, the blessed Pontiff did several things worthy of everlasting memory. Among others, he built a church on the land of one of his priests named Equitius, near the baths of Trajan, which is still called the title of Equitius.

He baptized St. Romana, daughter of Calpurnius, prefect of Rome, who consecrated her virginity to Jesus Christ, withdrew into the wilderness near Tivoli, worked great miracles there, and led a life more angelic than human; her feast is kept on 23 February. Several decrees are also attributed to the holy Pope, some of which only renewed or confirmed what was already in use in the Church: first, that the Chrism should be consecrated by the bishop alone (this was the practice of the first centuries, which no doubt came from the ordinance of the Apostles); second, that in Baptism the priest should anoint the crown of the head of the person baptized (a ceremony observed even before the fourth century); third, that deacons should wear dalmatics at the altar; fourth, that the Body of our Lord should be consecrated only on linen cloths, and not on cotton or silk, to represent the linen winding-sheets in which that holy Body was wrapped after his death; fifth, that no layman should be so bold as to make himself the accuser of a cleric, and that no cleric should be judged by a secular judge; sixth, that the days of the week, except Sunday and Saturday, should be called feriae, to make clerics understand that they ought to detach themselves from all temporal cares and apply themselves only to the service of God. This was already done before St. Sylvester.

He fixed the intervals to be observed in receiving Orders. In seven ordinations which he held in the month of December he made forty-two priests, thirty-seven deacons and seventy-five bishops. To this heavenly prudence with which he governed the Church he joined an admirable piety and a singular charity towards the poor. He took care of the virgins consecrated to God and had them supplied with the necessities of life. He also saw to it that the clergy had enough to live on decently, and that those who had large revenues shared them with those who were in need.

At last, after a pontificate of twenty-one years, ten months and twelve days, he passed from this mortal life to go and enjoy in heaven the life that will never end. This was in 335. His body was buried on the Via Salaria, in the cemetery of Priscilla, a league from Rome. His relics rest under the altar of the church of San Silvestro in Capite. On his feast his head is exposed above the tabernacle in a silver reliquary.

He is represented: (1) laying the body of St. Peter in the catacombs, at the place called the Confession of St. Peter, with a warrior on his left who may well be Constantine; (2) standing, holding a closed book and blessing; (3) baptizing Constantine; (4) binding the jaws of a dragon set in the midst of flames, with three cardinals behind the Pope and two angels holding his cope; (5) kneeling, seeing an angel holding a cross surrounded with branches. This cross no doubt alludes to the finding of the true Cross, recovered during his pontificate through the care of St. Helena.

We have revised and completed this account of Father Giry with the History of the Church by the Abbé Darras.

ST. MELANIA THE YOUNGER, WIDOW, RELIGIOUS AT JERUSALEM (439)

Continentia quasi fastigium est omniumque consummatio virtutum.

Continence is as it were the summit and crowning of all the virtues. Lactantius.

St. Melania the Younger, so called to distinguish her from Melania the Elder, her grandmother, was the daughter of Urbanus and had for her mother Albina, one of the greatest ladies of the city of Rome. She was the only fruit of this marriage, and so her parents, who had immense estates not only in Italy but also in Britain, in Spain, in Africa, in Egypt and in almost every province of the Roman empire, thought early of marrying her. She greatly wished to remain a virgin and to have no other bridegroom than Jesus Christ; but she was finally compelled, to satisfy their wishes, to marry Pinian, one of the richest and most illustrious matches in the empire. He was only seventeen and she fourteen; but she did all she could to bring him to keep virginity in marriage. Pinian had piety and love for God; yet the desire to have heirs who would uphold his house and succeed to his offices and his goods kept him from granting what she asked. They had first a daughter, whom Melania, already dead to the world and the world dead to her, offered at once to Jesus Christ to be his disciple and his bride. Then they had a son, but God took him from them as soon as he had received baptism. This death would have kept Pinian from agreeing to live with his wife in continence, had not a dangerous illness into which she fell obliged him to make the vow himself to obtain her recovery.

As soon as she was restored to perfect health, they both thought only of leading on earth a heavenly life, free of all the affections of the senses. Many people, and even their closest relatives, opposed this resolution; and indeed it was an extraordinary thing that two young married people, one only twenty-four and the other twenty-one, and among the first of Rome, should thus trample the world underfoot when they could enjoy it in such peace and contentment. But they despised all this talk and did not fail to obey the inspirations of heaven. After the death of Melania's father, to whom their conduct gave the most pain, they withdrew to a country house near the city to give themselves more freely to the spiritual exercises they had set themselves. They excelled in the three kinds of holy works that make up the Christian life: prayer, which includes all the practices of devotion directed to God; fasting, which includes all the mortifications and austerities by which the body is afflicted and tamed; and almsgiving, which includes all the works of charity and mercy towards the poor and pilgrims. They prayed day and night, and as they shunned the company of men, their conversation was almost always in heaven.

They gave up the brilliant clothes and precious ornaments allowed them by their rank, and wore only plain garments of cheap, coarse stuff. Their abstinence was extreme, and they joined one fast to another to quench the flames of concupiscence, which their youth always gave them reason to fear. Their house was a public

hospice where the poor and pilgrims were well received. They went into the prisons to console and help the criminals and to set free those who were prisoners only for debt. In short, their greatest desire was to strip themselves entirely so as to clothe the members of Jesus Christ.

One of Pinian's brothers, named Severus, seeing that this distribution would deprive him of the goods he could hope for from his inheritance, seized some of his estates and brought a lawsuit to get others. They bore this persecution patiently and left him master of what he had usurped, leaving the rest that he wanted to the disposal of divine Providence. God took their cause in hand: for the empress, who had heard Melania spoken of as a woman of incomparable piety, had her brought to her palace and was so charmed by her angelic modesty, her perfect detachment from the things of this world and her wholly heavenly conversation, that she declared herself her protectress. She even wished to have the usurper punished; but Melania in her great kindness prevented it, and afterwards begged her to leave him what he had already taken, assuring her that it was only the consideration of the poor, to whom all these goods were consecrated, that made her accept her protection, so that they should not be wholly despoiled of them.

When the holy couple found themselves fully free to dispose of their inheritance, they first sold the estates they owned in Italy and used the money to help the poor of the various provinces. They sent it to Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, Syria and Egypt, where they knew the poverty of the poor was extreme. They founded monasteries of men and of women, adorned churches, and supplied priests with precious vessels and vestments for the celebration of the holy Mysteries; and there was hardly a place in East or West that did not feel their generosity. In 407 or 408 they left Rome with Melania the Elder, our Saint's grandmother, and Albina, her mother, on a prediction that this capital of the world was soon to be taken and sacked by the barbarians, as indeed it was, in 409, by Alaric, king of the Visigoths.

They went first to Nola to see St. Paulinus, whom they regarded as their spiritual father. From there they crossed to Sicily to sell the lands they owned there. That island had been so impoverished by the extortions of the prefect who had governed it that they lacked no occasions of exercising their charity. From there they took the road to Carthage; but a furious storm arose and they found themselves in danger of shipwreck. The Saint, judging from this that God wanted them elsewhere, ordered the sailors to let the ship go where the winds would take it. As soon as this was done, divine Providence brought them to a little island which pirates had just ravaged, carrying off a great many captives. Our Saints ransomed them and distributed large sums throughout the island to keep the inhabitants alive. One may say that God's goodness had brought them there only for this work of mercy; for when they put to sea again they had a favourable wind all the way and reached Carthage, the port where they had meant to land, without difficulty. From Carthage they went to Tagaste, whose bishop was St. Alypius, the disciple and friend of St. Augustine. This country too shared in their great generosity, and the esteem they had for that learned and virtuous prelate kept them there a fairly long time. They founded two monasteries there, one of monks and the other of nuns.

It was then that Melania redoubled her austerities. She began by fasting every day, taking only one meal towards evening, which consisted of nothing but a piece of hard bread and sometimes a soup made with oil. As for wine, she drank none, and after long enduring thirst she was content with a glass of water in which she mixed a little honey. Then she accustomed herself to eat only every other day; then she extended her fast to three days; and at last she carried her abstinence so far as to eat only once a week. With all this fasting she did not fail to carry out all her spiritual exercises strictly. She slept only two hours, and her bed was only the ground covered with a sack. She spent the rest of the night in prayer, and the day she used for reading the holy books and making copies of them, in which she surpassed the best scribes. She imposed hard penances on herself for a useless word, for an action too hasty, for a laugh a little immoderate and for a frivolous thought, because she feared that, if she gave access to all these things which seemed light, dangerous clouds might rise in her soul and make it incapable of divine impressions.

She read the whole of Holy Scripture three times a year, and gained a very perfect understanding of it. Her conversation delighted all who heard her, so that even the philosophers hurried to enjoy for a few moments the happiness of talking with her. She had so tender and ardent a love for Jesus Christ that, unable to keep it shut up in her heart, she studied to communicate it to everyone by proclaiming the beauties and excellences of her Benefactor. Nothing could be more charming than her simplicity, gentleness and kindliness. Yet she could not bear heretics, nor even that they should be spoken of in her presence. By the force of her exhortations she drew many young men and a great number of young ladies to virtue, who after her example embraced the practices of penance. She also converted heretics, Samaritans and idolaters. Finally, her zeal for solitude and mortification went so far that she had a cell built so low that she could not stand upright in it, and so narrow that she could scarcely turn round. She had only a small hole made in it, through which she spoke to the people who came to profit by her instruction. Albina, her mother, visited her often; but when she found her at prayer she waited out of respect until she had finished. Such were the virtues that St. Melania the Younger practised during the seven years she remained in Africa.

At the end of that time she undertook the pilgrimage to Jerusalem to visit the holy places. Albina and Pinian went with her, Melania the Elder having gone before them. Passing through Alexandria, they had the consolation of seeing St. Cyril, nephew of Theophilus, who was patriarch there, and a great servant of God named Theodore, who had the gift of prophecy. From there they went on into Palestine, where, having received the money from the estates they had commissioned others to sell, they distributed it to the poor, among whom by their almsgiving they at last numbered themselves. But what Melania earned by copying books was enough for their support, in the admirable frugality in which they lived.

After honouring the holy places, they went back into Egypt to visit the solitaries. They had kept part of their treasures for them and offered them; but those generous servants of Jesus Christ so despised gold and silver that they would not accept it. Among others, St. Hephaestion, noticing that Melania had secretly thrown into his cell some gold pieces that he had refused, took them and, running after her, begged her to take them back. Melania begged him to keep them for his needs or to distribute them to the other monks who were in want; but he would not, and threw the money into the river, lest it should be an occasion of temptation to him. So, whereas people of the world go to law with one another to get riches, these holy persons contended with one another not to have them and to be rid of them.

When Pinian and Melania had thus travelled through all the deserts as far as the mountains of Nitria, they returned to Jerusalem, where Albina, who had stayed there because of her age, was having a hermitage built for her daughter on the Mount of Olives. On their arrival Melania shut herself up in it and wished to be seen by no one, except once a week by her mother, by Pinian, whom she now regarded only as her brother, and by a kinswoman whom she had drawn away from the pomp of Roman grandeur to lead her into the ways of holiness. She remained fourteen years in this state, leading a wholly heavenly life; but at the death of her mother, which occurred about then, she left this cell to shut herself in another still more hidden and austere. There she spent a whole year in tears and in the other exercises of penance.

But whatever care she took to hide herself from the eyes of the world, she could not prevent her virtue from spreading on every side and drawing to her grotto a vast number of people who came to ask her for instruction and wished to put themselves under her direction. This gathering of souls chosen by heaven led her to build a monastery, in which she received ninety virgins and a great number of women who wished to renounce the pleasures of the world. She gave them rules of heavenly wisdom; but she would never be their superior, not thinking herself worthy even to be their servant. In the exhortations she often gave them she particularly recommended purity of heart, which consists in admitting no bad or useless desire or thought, and recollection and fervour in prayer. “For if people compose their faces and their whole bodies so carefully when they are about to appear before the kings of the earth,” she would say, “what care should we not take to compose our souls when we are called into the private chamber of the King of heaven?”

Noticing that some of her daughters had a great inclination for abstinence and fasting, and fearing that they might make their whole perfection consist in that and neglect the other virtues, she said to them with marvellous prudence: “A woman would make herself ridiculous if, wishing to please her husband, she were content to adorn one part of her body, for example to put on fine shoes, and leave the rest neglected. It is the same with a soul in regard to Jesus Christ. If she is content with abstinence and fasting, which are only the adornment of the feet, it is in vain that she hopes to make herself pleasing to the divine Bridegroom. He wants to see her adorned with all the graces, and above all with a profound humility, a blind obedience and a perfect charity.” She also very particularly recommended to them gentleness and patience in suffering every mortification, as the essential foundation of the religious life.

On this point she used to tell them this fine example. A young man came and begged a holy solitary, already accomplished in the exercises of the monastic life, to receive him among his disciples. Before admitting him, the old man ordered him to go and heap insults and blows on a statue near his hermitage. The aspirant obeyed and then came back to the old man, who asked him whether the statue had not complained and whether it had borne these outrages without opening its mouth. “It did not cry out or say a single word,” he replied. “Go, then,” said the solitary, “and treat it still more roughly.” He made him do this three times. Then he added: “See, my son, whether you can suffer like this statue, without complaining and without murmuring, the ill treatment you will be given in religion. If you are in that disposition, I receive you among my disciples; if not, you are not fit for a monastery.” It was thus that Melania led all her religious to the practice of the highest virtues. She also had a church built for them where they could perform the divine office in common; this church was later consecrated in honour of the prophet Zachary, St. Stephen and the Forty blessed Martyrs.

It was about this time that St. Pinian, her husband, perfected in every kind of virtue, left the exile of this world to go and reign in heaven. Melania paid him the last duties, not as her husband but as her dear brother in Jesus Christ. Then she spent four years in almost continual prayer, never leaving the church and pouring out her heart unceasingly before God at the foot of the holy altars. It was there that she was inspired to undertake also the building of a monastery of men, so as not to be useful only to persons of her own sex. She no longer had any money for this expense, but divine Providence provided for it and brought it to completion by extraordinary help.

Shortly afterwards she received a letter from Volusian, her uncle, asking her to come and see him at the court of the emperor of the East. He was an obstinate pagan, for whose conversion St. Augustine had laboured greatly, but without success. He was even so attached to superstition that when Theodosius the Great was making his laws against the idolaters, he had the boldness to set up a new altar to the false gods in Rome. Yet he had been made prefect of that city by the emperor Valentinian III, and had gone on his behalf as ambassador to Constantinople, to Theodosius the Younger and Pulcheria, his sister. Melania asked the holy solitaries whether she should make this journey. They advised her to, and God drew his glory from it; for, finding Volusian ill, she showed him so powerfully the errors of paganism and the truth of the Christian religion that she converted him and brought him to receive baptism and the holy Eucharist, with which he died full of hope of eternal bliss. The patriarch St. Proclus also contributed much to this conversion. Volusian said of him that if Rome had three like him, the very name of paganism would be wholly banished from it. Our Saint also worked for the conversion of those who had let themselves be drawn into the errors of Nestorius, and she did so with great success, several having returned through her into the bosom of the Catholic Church. Finally, it is said that it was on her good advice that the empress Eudocia, wife of Theodosius the Younger, withdrew into Palestine to end her days there in the exercises of Christian piety.

Melania, having accomplished at Constantinople all that God asked of her, returned to her monastery at Jerusalem. How much longer she lived there is not known; what is certain is that she ended her days there in a most eminent holiness which drew the admiration of the whole Church. She had a revelation of the day of

her death and prepared for it by most fervent prayers and continual aspirations towards heaven. She gave a wholly motherly exhortation to her dear daughters to encourage them to perseverance, and, after commending their monastery to the bishop of Eleutheropolis, who had come to visit them, she gave up her beautiful soul to her divine Master, saying these words: “May the will of God be done!” It was 31 December 439.

She worked several miracles during her life. She cured the empress Eudocia, who had dislocated her foot. With her girdle she delivered a woman who was in labour, and with oil of the martyrs she drove out of a girl the devil which held her mouth so tightly shut that she could take no food. Her funeral was very solemn, and the patriarch of Jerusalem, with the clergy, the monks and the people, attended it with great ceremony.

St. Melania the Younger is represented holding in her hand a small model of a church, to recall that she founded a monastery at Jerusalem and spent large sums of money on the adornment of the sanctuaries.

The substance of this account is from Father Giry.

BL. GAREMBERT (WALEMBERT), FIRST ABBOT OF MONT-SAINT-MARTIN, IN THE OLD DIOCESE OF CAMBRAI (1141)

I see in the cloisters heavenly men, or rather earthly angels, whose life is in heaven and whose noble pride tramples underfoot the honours and riches of the world.

Peter of Blois.

It was about the year 1084 that Blessed Garembert was born at the place called Wulpen, in the territory of Furnes, in Belgium (West Flanders). His father was called Beldralanus and his mother Raganilde; both lived as Christians and in respectable circumstances. Seeing the happy dispositions their son showed, and wishing to give him all the advantages of a fine education, they placed him in the community of Sainte-Walburge at Furnes, to be trained there in learning and virtue. The young man answered their care and made rapid progress in study and above all in piety. Already he was held up as an example to his fellow pupils, who could not help admiring and loving him.

Meanwhile thoughts of the future and of a vocation often came to the young Garembert’s mind. He would gladly have entered one of the religious Orders that were being established at that time; but he foresaw that if he proposed it his parents would at once put obstacles in the way. So, to prepare them little by little for a separation that would later be inevitable, he asked their leave to go and settle for a time at Cambrai, on the pretext of learning the French language there, which was not spoken in his country. When this permission was refused, Garembert waited for God to make his holy will known to him in some sensible way and to prepare the circumstances that might make it easier to carry out.

We do not know how Providence answered the devout young man’s prayers; but when he had reached the age of twenty-two he left his father’s house and went to Cambrai. For four years Garembert lived with a respectable townsman, whom he apparently served as a domestic. When that time was over he came to Saint-Quentin, where Providence led him to the house of two noble and illustrious persons, Oylard, who was mayor of the town, and his brother Baldwin. As at Cambrai, Garembert made himself loved by his masters and by everyone who had dealings with him. His happiness would have been complete if he could have believed that it was for that place and that condition that God had called him away from his family. But a voice from heaven kept telling him that he must withdraw into a solitude to consecrate himself there wholly to the service of God. A vision had shown Blessed Garembert this solitude; but he did not know where it was. And so, as he wished to withdraw there in secret, this ignorance caused him a sadness that he was not always able to hide. One day his fellow servants and his master Oylard noticed that some inner trouble was pursuing him. Oylard came up to his faithful servant and said to him kindly: “What is the matter with you, and what grief is gnawing at you? Why do you no longer eat? Could I be of use to you in anything? Speak.”

“Several times,” answered Garembert, “the Virgin Mary has warned me to look for a place called Boni; it is there that I must serve her for the rest of my days. But I do not know where this place is, and that is what makes me sad.” “Be cheerful again,” Oylard answered at once. “I know that place very well; it is even among my possessions and belongs to me. Tomorrow we will go and visit it, and if it suits you, you shall take what you please of it to consecrate yourself there to the service of Mary your mother.”

The next day Oylard and his servant went to Boni to look at that wild, uncultivated place so often shown to Garembert in his visions. Scarcely had he arrived when he recognized it perfectly, with inexpressible joy. Oylard shared this joy, and since he too was very devout and gladly contributed to every work that served the glory of God, he told Garembert that he gave him this property with part of the adjoining wood. Garembert went at once to Cambrai to tell his plan to Bishop Burchard, in whose diocese Boni then lay, and to ask his blessing; then he returned to his beloved solitude and began to practise the hermit’s life there.

At first our Blessed lived alone, in a little hut roofed with bark. Wild apples and roots that the wood provided were his only food. All his time was given to prayer, meditation and the contemplation of heavenly things. Soon the people of the country learned that a devout solitary was living in the wood of Boni, and they came to him in crowds to commend themselves to his prayers, to ask his advice, and often also the cure of their infirmities. Many wished to stay near him and live in his company. Garembert would agree to admit only one companion, known by the name of Albricus. But the repeated requests of all who presented themselves soon forced him, to satisfy them, to open a shelter for them beside his cell. Then, to feed them, he condemned himself to go begging in the places round about, out of a sense of humility that raised his merit still higher in the eyes of his first disciples.

It was at this time that he formed the plan of having a church built in which to celebrate the divine mysteries and sing all the offices, as in ordinary communities. Burchard, bishop of Cambrai, to whom the Blessed presented himself again for this purpose, approved his plan and gave him by a special charter the permission he asked. It is fairly generally held that it was at this same time and at the hands of this prelate that he received the order of priesthood. The Rule of St. Augustine, adopted in the twelfth century by a great number of new communities, was the one that Garembert and his disciples first began to observe.[1]

This community of Boni had already grown so considerably in members and in lands that Liétard, bishop of Cambrai and Burchard’s immediate successor, thought of raising it to an abbey. In a charter still preserved he calls Garembert “the superior of the brethren who live canonically with him”. Yet it was not at Boni that the Blessed founded his abbey: that place, though very healthy, could not suit a community, for no water was to be found there. For this reason he acquired a piece of land called Mont-Saint-Martin, half a league from Boni, to build a monastery there. “This mount is only a fairly small hillock, said to have been so named from an act of zeal that St. Martin showed there when, passing through our country while serving in the troops of Julian the Apostate, he destroyed an idol set on the top of the mound. The tradition of the district that reports this fact adds that it used to be called the Mount of Oxen.”

It was at the foot of this hill that Blessed Garembert moved his community. The land was partly covered with wood, and the Scheldt, which rises not far from there, flowed through the religious’ garden. The founder asked Walter, abbot of the monastery of Saint-Martin of Laon, for some of his most fervent religious, to join them with his own disciples in his monastery. All together they adopted the Rule of Prémontré, which Walter and his religious followed at Laon. Nicholas, bishop of Cambrai, soon raised Mont-Saint-Martin to an abbey and granted it new immunities and privileges to ensure its prosperity.

Garembert, content to have secured the future of his spiritual children, left to Oderanus, who had been elected abbot, the care of maintaining regular observance and fervour there. As for himself, he withdrew again to Boni, meaning to live there unknown to the world. “There,” continues the Blessed’s contemporary biographer, “this great servant of God lived almost alone. He often shed tears at the Saviour’s feet and filled

his narrow cell with his sighs and groans. Nothing could express the ardour of his love for Jesus Christ. 'O most merciful Jesus,' he would cry, 'you, the Desire of the everlasting hills, draw me to you, and I will run in the odour of your ointments. O sweetness of my soul, he does not love you enough who loves anything together with you without loving it for your sake! Yes, he is too greedy for whom you are not enough.'" Often too, in the ardour of his charity, he was heard speaking to the birds that sang near his cell or to the trees that surrounded it, and he said to them with that touching simplicity which faith alone can understand: "I adjure you, if you have found my Beloved, tell him that I languish with love for him! At last I have found him whom my soul loves; I hold him and I will not let him go until he has brought me into his eternal and delightful dwelling."

This love, so burning in Blessed Garembert's heart, gave him an extreme energy in practising all the religious virtues. Nothing, it seemed, could satisfy his fervour or his desire to work and suffer much for God. And so, when the brethren withdrew to take their rest, he could still be seen occupied with some devout reading or plunged in meditation on the divine greatness and perfections.

Who shall tell, too, with what care every day, to fulfil the Lord's precept, he washed the feet of the poor with his own hands, gave food to the hungry and clothes to the naked, visited the infirm, and procured every necessary help for the sick and for orphans? Who shall tell his vigils, his prolonged fasts, his mortifications, and the holy joy that shone on his brow amid these continual austerities? Who could worthily express that charity which never put on his lips anything but words of gentleness, peace and kindness? Who, finally, shall tell how many souls he won for Jesus Christ?

Among the women who then left the world to embrace the religious life was Blessed Garembert's sister. She came to settle near him in his solitude of Boni, and there she was placed at the head of a small community following the Rule of St. Augustine.

Shortly before his death the servant of God had his church of Boni dedicated; he even had himself carried there to receive the holy Viaticum and to prepare himself for the great passage into eternity. From that moment his soul remained as if absorbed in God. He was often heard repeating with a wholly seraphic ardour these words of the Psalmist: "What can I desire in heaven or on earth that may be compared with you, O Lord? You are the God of my heart, and you shall be my portion for ever! Let my tongue cleave to my palate if it ever forgets to sing your praises!" "Lord," he would sometimes cry too, with his face prostrate on the ground, "Lord, see my humiliation and give me eternal life in reward for this passing life that I consecrate to you. O good Jesus, my soul has clung to you; may your hand deign to receive me! My soul has been wounded by the darts of your love, and it desires nothing so ardently as to quench its thirst in you, who are the Fountain of salvation."

This great servant of God gave back his soul to his Creator on the last day of the year 1141. His funeral was celebrated with pomp amid a great concourse of people. He was buried in the church of Boni, facing the altar of St. Mary Magdalen.

CULTE ET RELIQUES (Veneration and Relics)

Several miracles were worked at the tomb of Blessed Garembert, whom the people commonly call Walembert, and who for a long time in the following centuries received the homage of the people of the country. The tomb was raised and set on four small marble columns, under which the pilgrims and the sick passed. The sick almost always found there the cure of their ills and went home praising and blessing God for the grace he had granted them through the merits of their holy patron. In 1670 there were still old men in that country who remembered seeing miracles worked there. Unhappily the church of Boni was destroyed in 1656 by the Spanish troops who had seized the fort of Le Catelet.

The name of the devout founder of the abbey of Mont-Saint-Martin has always been venerated in that country, though no public cult has been paid him. However, in the parish of Wulpen near Furnes he was still invoked publicly in 1620, and had even been recognized as a Saint since his death. There was a well there whose waters were blessed every year for the pilgrims who came to drink them to be cured of fever and plague. This well bore the name of St. Garembert's Well, and it is believed to be that of his father's house.

Lives of the Saints of Cambrai and Arras, by the Abbé Destombes.

ST. MARY OF SUCCOUR (DE SOCOS), FIRST RELIGIOUS OF THE THIRD ORDER OF OUR LADY OF MERCY (1281)

This devout virgin was born at Barcelona (Catalonia) in 1231 of noble and rich parents, and received the name of Mary in baptism. From her childhood she began to love God with all her soul, to pray to him fervently, and to torment her body with almost incredible mortifications. A sermon by Father Bernard of Corbaria, a religious of the Order of Mercy, on the miseries and dangers of the Christian slaves of the Turks, touched her so deeply that she thought of nothing but helping them by every means. She made a vow of virginity early, to free herself from all suits of marriage, and by the protection of the Blessed Virgin, her dear patroness, she kept it inviolate until death. Her parents having left her heiress to very great wealth, she was only its steward and distributed it to the poor, to prisoners and to the sick; and this boundless charity won her so high a reputation in Barcelona that she was commonly given the surname "of Succour", in place of her family name, which her historians do not record.

Having joined with two illustrious widows, Eulalia Pinet and Elizabeth Berti, she obtained, after much entreaty with the superiors of the Order of Mercy, that all three should be religious of their third order. They had not yet received any, and these three were the first of that institute. Their obligation was, besides the three vows of religion, to pray to God for the Christian slaves, to have compassion on their miseries, and to accompany in spirit the religious who went to procure their freedom. Their number grew in a short time, and our Saint, in spite of her resistance, was named superior. Until then she had been a model of modesty, penance and devotion; but she took so strongly to heart the obligation of superiors to be the living rule of their subjects that she redoubled all these practices, and there is no virtue of which she did not give rare examples.

Her prayer was most exalted, and in it she received from God many supernatural lights, even prophetic ones. When she learned of the need of a poor man, or the misery of a slave, or the danger of a ship carrying religious ransomers, or the pitiable state of some sinner, there were no penances, prayers, tears or other holy devices that she did not use to help them; and God did not reject the desires of his servant, since they were often followed by a miraculous deliverance. No one spoke to her without her seeing into their spiritual needs and their most secret thoughts, and she used this gift happily to work countless conversions. She also knew by revelation the time that divine Providence had appointed for establishing in his Church enclosed religious women of the Order of Mercy, bound to the same constitutions as the Fathers, the habit they would wear, and the great number of daughters who would be sanctified in it.

Nothing could be more admirable than her counsels, her conversations and her answers. It was evident that the Holy Spirit spoke by her mouth, so richly was grace poured upon her lips, and every word she spoke satisfied those who had the happiness of hearing her. One day she explained so excellently these words of Proverbs, Manum suam misit ad fortia, et digiti ejus apprehenderunt fusum, "She hath put out her hand to strong things, and her fingers have taken hold of the spindle", that the doctor who had put them to her in order to confound her, delighted with an explanation deeper than that of all the commentators, threw himself at her feet to ask her pardon. At last, perfected in all the exercises of the religious life and filled with the merit of countless good works, she was told by her Bridegroom that he wished to give her a share in the glory

with which he rewards his friends in heaven. She prepared for that last hour by receiving the sacraments and by three days of loving colloquies with her Beloved, and in one of her transports of love she ended her mortal life to begin in heaven, with the Blessed, a life that will never end (31 December 1281).

At the hour of her death her room was filled with a heavenly brightness and perfumed with so exquisite a fragrance that one would have said all the perfumes of Arabia had been burned there. Her body was buried with great solemnity in the church of the Order of Mercy, where a prodigious number of miracles took place at her tomb and during her various translations from one place in that church to another. The holy body is still entire, as is that of Father Bernard of Corbaria, her director. It is now in a shrine, shut under four keys.

This account is from Father Giry.

END OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER.

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[1] They are already mentioned in the Martyrologies of France of 19 and 22 October. The dioceses of Chartres, Meaux, Nevers, Paris, Poitiers and Sens keep their feast on the first of those days; the diocese of Versailles on the second. We have reserved them for 31 December because it is the only day on which they are mentioned in the Roman Martyrology, whose dates we adopt by preference.

[2] We have given the life of St. Leobard on 25 February (vol. iii, pp. 23–30).

[3] According to a number of hagiographers St. Odilo died on 31 December 1048; according to others he did not expire until the next day, 1 January 1049. We have followed this latter date, and our readers will find the life of St. Odilo in vol. i, pp. 32–41.

[4] He was buried in the basilica of St. Thyrsus at Lausanne; this church afterwards took the name of Saint-Marius, which the gratitude and veneration of the people gave it. Distinguished by his learning as by his piety, this holy bishop is the author of a short Chronicle which begins at the year 456, where that of St. Prosper ends, and goes down to the month of September 581. Although this chronicle sometimes errs in chronology, it is very interesting, simple and clear in style, and throws valuable light on the Frankish kings, the Gothic kings, and above all the kingdom of Burgundy, of which the diocese of Avenches was then a part. The authors of the Histoire littéraire de la France also attribute to Marius, with much likelihood, another work, the Life of St. Sigismund, king of Burgundy. Thus the worthy prelate, by devoting to study his nights and the few moments left to him after fulfilling the duties of his pastoral charge, found, in a laborious and always busy life, the time to be useful not only to his contemporaries but also to posterity, and showed that the Church has always known how to cultivate letters and virtue, even in the most troubled ages. — Abbé Dinet, Saint Symphorien et son culte.

[5] We have more than one example of such emigrations, above all in the first centuries of the Church, and everyone knows that this was even one of the means Providence used, either to bring the faith into lands that did not yet possess it, or to revive it in countries that saw it dying out. Indeed, the sight of the sacrifices made by such Christians, who are not afraid to abandon goods, glory, rest and family for the preservation of their faith, cannot but make a happy impression on those who witness them. If, setting out from the Pyrenees to go to Sens by way of Vienne in Dauphiné, one follows the Roman roads as they are traced on the Peutinger map, one will find a great number of places named Sainte-Colombe through which our Saint must have passed and where her memory is held in great veneration. This fact has seemed to us weighty enough to deserve to be added to the other proofs that support the tradition.

[6] This monastery, now in ruins, was founded about the eighth century, and perhaps it even existed before the invasion of the Moors, who ravaged this part of Gaul in 726. The most ancient chronicles state that it was consecrated to St. Columba in memory of the fact that this illustrious virgin had received baptism in that place. The town in which it stands was formerly called Vienne-la-Belle, but it has since taken the name of Sainte-Colombe, and this, the traditions also say, because this great Saint is said to have stayed some time in that country. When in 1626 Octave de Bellegarde, archbishop of Sens, went to the abbey of Sainte-Colombe to take from our Saint's reliquary a particle of her relics which the monks were granting to the monastery of Sainte-Colombe-lès-Vienne, he mentions this same fact in his official report. If we add now that St. Columba is the only one of the women saints of Gaul to appear in the Mozarabic Missal of St. Isidore of Seville (601), and with a proper Mass that relates part of the circumstances of her martyrdom, it will be easy to establish the authenticity of the legend we have just related, which brings St. Columba from Spain.

[7] Some traditions state that she was the daughter of a prince of Saragossa.

[8] To perpetuate its memory a church was built on that spot in honour of St. Beata. Around it there soon grew up a village called Sancy, from the name of St. Sanctian; but it was destroyed later in the wars that laid waste those regions in the eleventh century. The church, however, was spared, and we see it bearing the title of priory of Saint-Sanctien and Sainte-Béate before the thirteenth century, when it was burned and its priory completely ruined. But a chapel was soon rebuilt there; devout hermits carried on the tradition of the cult of St. Beata, St. Sanctian and their companions, and every year a countless crowd of the faithful came there on pilgrimage on the feast day of our holy martyrs. In 1793 the chapel of Sainte-Béate was sold like the other Church property; but a respected priest, whose name is still venerated in the surrounding country, M. Varin de la Mare, bought it. He beautified it as far as his modest income allowed, and built beside it a small dwelling, where he lived until his death, joining to the solitary life the exercise of the most tender charity. People flocked from all sides to his cell to receive the teaching of the truth, the consolations of the faith and the grace of the sacraments. But he is no more, that venerable guardian of the land of the martyrs; the chapel of Sainte-Béate has disappeared, and soon all memory of that sacred place will vanish in this indifferent country.

[9] The Gallo-Roman amphitheatre of Sens (whose existence was still a problem a few years ago) is situated in the part of the faubourg Saint-Savinien which still bears the name of Clos-des-Arènes or Champ des Chrétiens, two names that the inhabitants of this part of the town apply to it indifferently. It has the elliptical shape of monuments of this kind… The excavations carried out by the Archaeological Society of Sens have brought interesting discoveries to light.

[10] Boni belonged to the parish of Gouy, which belonged to the abbey of Saint-Aubert of Cambrai; for this reason Garembert's community remained subject to the abbot and chapter of that house.

Appendix: Dissertation on the Origins of the Faith in Gaul

DISSERTATION ON THE ORIGINS OF THE CHRISTIAN FAITH IN GAUL

For three centuries the date at which the Gospel was brought into Gaul has divided the learned and the critics, who have given this question diametrically opposed answers. Some, who have called themselves the *historical and anti-traditional school* (as if tradition were not one of the foundations of history), hold that Christianity was not established in the principal dioceses of Gaul before the second, third and fourth centuries of the Christian era. Others, on the contrary, assign to this introduction of the Gospel faith into our country an earlier date, the first century of the Church; they are known as the *traditional school*. Belonging to the latter, we hope, by reproducing below the learned Dissertation of M. Corblet on the *Origins of the Christian faith in Gaul*, to make many of our readers share the conviction that this conscientious study has given us.

M. Corblet divides his work into five articles, namely:

I. A brief account of the controversy. — II. General proofs of the universal spread of the Gospel during the first two centuries. — III. Indirect proofs of the introduction of Christianity into Gaul before the third century. — IV. Direct proofs of the evangelization of Gaul in the first century. — V. Refutation of the principal objections against this historical system.

I. A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE CONTROVERSY

The evangelization of Gaul in the time of the Apostles is not one of those historical theories that can be accused of novelty: until the seventeenth century it was the perpetual and immemorial tradition of the Churches of France. All the historical documents of earlier times and the monuments of the liturgy agree in showing us Christianity brought into Gaul from the first century by three groups of missionaries and by a certain number of individual preachers. St. Lazarus, St. Maximinus, St. Mary Magdalen and St. Martha, setting out from the East fourteen years after the Ascension of Our Lord, brought the light of the faith to Provence. About the same time seven missionaries sent by St. Peter evangelized several of our provinces: St. Trophimus stopped at Arles, St. Martial at Limoges, St. Austremonius at Clermont, St. Paul at Narbonne, St. Saturninus at Toulouse, St. Gatian at Tours, St. Valerius at Trier. Later St. Denis, sent by Pope St. Clement, came from Rome to Lutetia, while his companions and disciples founded other episcopal sees: St. Regulus (Rieul) at Senlis, St. Julian at Le Mans, St. Lucian at Beauvais, St. Sanctinus (Saintin) at Meaux, St. Taurinus at Évreux, and so on. Outside these three principal groups we see appearing, at various dates but before the third century, St. Crescens at Vienne, St. Benignus at Dijon, St. Savinian at Sens, St. Sixtus at Reims, St. Memmius at Châlons, St. Sinicius at Soissons, St. Clement at Metz, St. Front at Périgueux, St. Eutropius at Saintes, St. Pothinus and

St. Irenaeus at Lyons, and others. One could point out some differences of opinion about this or that one of these figures, but belief was uniform on the capital fact of the introduction of Christianity in the first century.

It was Jean de Launoy, the doctor of the Sorbonne of whom Adrien de Valois has drawn so sad a portrait, who first tried to make a clean sweep of traditions that could claim sixteen centuries of uninterrupted possession. The reaction against the Middle Ages that was then dominant assured the success of Launoy's

pamphlets,[1] and a great number of Catholic writers, following the example of the Jansenists, subscribed to the system of a writer whose heretical opinions had caused him to be excluded from the Sorbonne, and who had no fewer than twenty-nine works condemned by the Congregation of the Index.

The reformers of breviaries little by little brought into the liturgy the chronological innovations that had been accepted and sponsored by scholars of the first rank, such as Tillemont, Dom Calmet, Fleury, the two de Valois, Ellies Du Pin, Dom Rivet, Denys de Sainte-Marthe, Father Longueval, Baillet, the Bollandists and most of the Benedictines. Yet one must be careful not to think that the old traditional opinion kept no supporters; they were much more numerous than is commonly supposed. Some, such as Dom Bondonnet,[2] Pierre de Marca,[3] Ouvrard,[4] Bullet[5] and Maceda,[6] wrote special works to combat Launoy's historical doctrines; others, such as Baronius, Bellarmine, Noël Alexandre, Sponde, the two Pagis, Mabillon, Claude Robert, Dom Doublet, Gretser, Father Le Quien, Dom Liron, A. du Saussay and others, more than once affirmed in their writings their reasoned conviction in favour of the evangelization of Gaul in the first century. Provincial writers have always been less open than those of Paris to the influence of fashion, whose empire extends over questions of scholarship as much as over the frivolities of life: we could name a great many who remained faithful to the belief that Bossuet proclaimed thus in his *Discourse on Universal History*: "The infant Church filled the whole earth, not only the East but also the West: besides Italy, the provinces of Spain, the various nations of Gaul, Germany, Great Britain."[7]

Beside the writers who stated their opinion plainly, there were some who hesitated and did not pass beyond doubt. "Whatever several modern scholars may say," write the learned authors of *L'Art de vérifier les dates*, "it is very likely that it is to St. Clement and not to St. Fabian that the mission of the first bishops of Gaul should be referred." Tillemont himself, so positive on certain points, finds himself obliged to express his perplexity: "We see nothing," he says, "that absolutely prevents us from believing that St. Luke and St. Crescens preached the faith in Gaul." We could quote hesitations of the same kind from Father Labbe, Dom Vaissète, Honoré de Sainte-Marie, Papebroch and many others.

The question had long been dormant when it was brought back to the order of the day by the learned work of the Abbé Faillon.[8] From then on a strong reaction set in in favour of the ancient traditions that the rigorist criticism of the seventeenth century had attacked, and contemporary scholarship hastened to retry the case that Launoy had brought against them. The Abbé Arbellot,[9] the Abbé Darras,[10] M. Charles Salmon,[11] Canon Robitaille,[12] the Abbé Richard,[13] the Abbé Cordière[14] and others have demonstrated the antiquity of our Christian origins by a host of proofs that have been disputed but not refuted. It was not enough to take up the general question afresh from beneath; it was necessary to concentrate research on each of the principal missionaries of apostolic times to whom our ancestors owed the first light of the faith. Several of the writers just named[15] have entered on this path, which has been followed also by the Abbé Maxime Latou,[16] the Abbé de Lutho,[17] the Abbé Dion,[18] the Abbé Bougaud,[19] the Abbé Pergot,[20] the Abbé Blond,[21] the Abbé Rolland,[22] Father Gouilloud[23] and others.

Similar studies, with the same chronological conclusions, have been pursued by many of those who have occupied themselves particularly with the historical origins of our dioceses,[24] with local hagiography,[25] with general hagiography[26] and with the history of the Church.[27]

The contrary opinion still has many supporters, but it must be acknowledged that, to state its case, it has produced only a very limited number of books and pamphlets.[28] Here and there we do see very categorical assertions on the subject, but we fear their authors have not always gone deeply into the question. A less summary study might perhaps have produced the change of mind on this point that has taken place in more than one scholar. We shall confine ourselves to naming M. Paulin Paris and M. Augustin Thierry. The latter wrote to the Abbé Arbellot: "I have read with keen interest your Memoir on the date of the apostolate of St. Martial. I think you are entirely right, and that on this point local tradition really prevails against history. The method you apply to this demonstration seems to me irreproachable; I do not doubt that it will be

appreciated by all true scholars."[29] M. Paulin Paris, who in a celebrated report to the Académie des Inscriptions had regarded the movement already then taking place in favour of apostolic origins as a strange return to the ideas of the eleventh century, expresses himself thus in his excellent edition of the *Histoire littéraire de la France* (vol. 1, p. 441): "We confess that we long held Tillemont's view on the Asiatic origins of Christianity [in Gaul]; but the new arguments put forward by the upholders of the contrary opinion have brought us entirely to a different conviction. Rome, where Christianity was making new progress every day from the reign of Nero; Rome, which had already inflicted great persecutions on the Christians; Rome had relations too immediate and too constant with Gaul for priests and confessors not to have passed frequently into that nursery of rhetoricians, philosophers and grammarians who were forever coming and going between Rome and Lyons, Arles, Marseilles, Toulouse, Nîmes and Narbonne. No, that seems to us today morally impossible; for our great cities lived by the life, the feelings and the manners of imperial Rome. And to suppose that Christianity, which had already invaded Germany and Spain, did not make enough stir for the report of it to reach Gaul, is to go against Seneca, Pliny and Tacitus; it is to close one's eyes to the light of history."

One of the considerations that most hastened the repudiation of Launoy's system[30] is the universality and constancy of the traditions that reigned until the seventeenth century in the Churches of France concerning the period in which their first founders lived.

The insults addressed to the partisans of Gregory of Tours would not only have the drawback of spoiling good reasons to no purpose; they might also excuse, up to a point, the undeserved disdain that some of them heap on us. There is one of these ironical reproaches against which we feel the need to protest: the name of *legendary school* that our opponents inflict on us, while giving themselves the title of *historical school*. They would like it believed that we rest solely on the traditions contained in the legends of the Middle Ages. Certainly we invoke their authority when their accounts seem to us worthy of belief; but in the general question before us we can produce numerous testimonies of historians. We even wish to leave aside those of the Middle Ages and to let speak only writers not later than the sixth century. By the very fact that they are contemporary with Gregory of Tours or earlier than that annalist, they will carry more weight in refuting the celebrated passage that constitutes our opponents' principal argument. Let no one expect to find much that is unexpected in our quotations, or much novelty in our arguments. While adding something of our own, we wish above all to group in methodical order and within a narrow frame the best of what has been said on this matter by the numerous works indicated above, which it becomes needless to name again here. We must, however, mention Maceda particularly, because very few people have been able to consult the important work of this Spanish Jesuit.[31] Only one copy is known in France, kept in the rich library of the abbey of Solesmes. The Most Reverend Abbot of that monastery, Dom Guéranger, was kind enough to entrust it to us: we cannot thank him enough for this exceptional favour, one of the most precious marks of the friendship with which he is pleased to honour us.

II. GENERAL PROOFS OF THE UNIVERSAL SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL DURING THE FIRST TWO CENTURIES

We are told[1] that "the tradition invoked, instead of beginning in the time of the Apostles and unfolding without interruption, suddenly arises at a given period and is later broken off, so that it lacks a starting point and lacks continuity." We hope to be able to prove exactly the contrary. If there is one fact beyond all dispute, it is that the constant and universal tradition of the Middle Ages attributes to the disciples of the Apostles the foundation of a great number of our churches, and that this tradition was interrupted only in the seventeenth century by the school of Launoy, against which a good number of scholars have always protested. This belief is attacked only because it is thought to have no roots in the first centuries of the Church, and is accused of having been born in barbarous ages when historical frauds would have had every

chance of success. How often has it been repeated that this was an invention of the legends of the Middle Ages, which could not be considered as having real historical value? It is known what we think of the authority of legends,[2] and we need not return to that point. But theirs will not be the only testimony we invoke: we shall call to our aid the historians, the Fathers of the Church, the controversialists, the philosophers, the poets, the orators and the theologians; and, to remain on the ground chosen by our opponents, we shall not go outside the first six centuries of the Church.

Before coming to the direct proofs of the evangelization of Gaul in the time of the Apostles, we wish to show in this chapter how rapid and universal was the spread of the Gospel during the first two centuries, and we shall do so with the help of texts furnished exclusively by the first four centuries of the Christian era. If the whole universe, that is, the world known to the Romans, was evangelized in the time of the Apostles and their immediate successors, it will have to be concluded that Gaul enjoyed this benefit; and if anyone wishes to make an exception for her, he will have to give the reasons for it, which no one has yet attempted and no one ever will.

When the Saviour had taught His Apostles the word of life, He said to them: “Go into the whole world and preach the Gospel to every creature.”[3] The Apostles, of whose journeys we are far from knowing all the details exactly, obeyed the command of the divine Master. St. Mark tells us, in fact, that they preached everywhere;[4] St. Paul wrote to the Romans[5] and to the Colossians[6] that the faith was proclaimed in the whole world and to the farthest bounds of the earth. No doubt these words are not to be taken literally, and above all not in the strict sense of our present geographical knowledge; but they apply at least to that vast Roman Empire which was regarded as the real universe, and St. Paul would have exposed himself to an easy contradiction if Gaul had remained a stranger to the Christian beliefs that St. Matthew had carried to Ethiopia, St. Simon to Persia, St. Bartholomew to Armenia, and that St. Thomas had spread as far as the Parthians and the Indians.

This rapid and universal radiation of the light of the Gospel is attested by every century: let us listen only to the statements of the first four.

First century. — Seneca tells us “that a religion born under Tiberius had already won all parts of the Empire under Nero.” Hermas, or at least the book of the *Shepherd* attributed to him,[7] acknowledges, like St. Ignatius,[8] that all the nations of the earth know the law of Jesus Christ.

Second century. — The writers of this period are more numerous, and the testimonies accordingly multiply. About the year 140 St. Justin challenged the Jews to name to him “a single race of mortals, Greeks or barbarians, by whatever name they may be called, whether among the Scythian peoples who live in wandering wagons, or the nomad tribes that have no fixed dwelling, or the pastoral peoples who live in tents, among whom prayers and thanksgivings are not offered in the name of Jesus crucified.”[9] And let us note well that the author, wishing to prove to the unbelieving Jews the fulfilment of the prophecy of Malachi,[10] would not have exposed himself to seeing his thesis ruined by opponents who certainly knew the religious state of Gaul at that time.

The *Apostolic Constitutions*,[11] Serapion, bishop of Antioch,[12] the heretic Bardesanes,[13] St. Irenaeus,[14] Clement of Alexandria[15] and others are unanimous in showing us the torch of the faith carried to all the peoples then known.

Third century. — Origen delights in enumerating the conquests the faith has won among all nations over Judaism and the worship of false gods.[16] St. Cyprian compares it to a tree whose branches cover the whole earth.[17] Tertullian[18] and Arnobius[19] speak in similar terms.

Fourth century. — St. Basil[20] and Eusebius of Caesarea[21] compare the spread of the Gospel to the swiftness of a flash of lightning or a ray of the sun. Lactantius,[22] St. Hilary of Poitiers[23] and St. Ambrose[24] show us all

the provinces of the Roman Empire evangelized by the Apostles and disciples of Jesus Christ. St. Jerome,[25] commenting on the twenty-fourth chapter of St. Matthew, does not believe that any nation was ignorant of the name of Christ; and St. John Chrysostom,[26] studying the same text, asks how extraordinary the journeys of the Apostles must have been, since St. Paul by himself sowed the divine word from Jerusalem to Spain.

It follows from all these testimonies that the propagation of the Gospel was not slow but, on the contrary, extremely rapid, as St. Hilary of Poitiers tells us;[27] and that the Apostles and their immediate disciples evangelized all nations, that is, at the very least, the provinces of the Roman Empire and the countries frequented by the masters of the world. How can one admit for a single moment that the missionaries of the new faith deprived Gaul of their preaching—that country so Roman, so accessible by its many roads, so bound up with the interests of the capital, and identifying itself so closely with it in its beliefs, manners, monuments and institutions? What! The Apostles and their disciples would have penetrated into the most barbarous regions of Africa and Asia, braving the difficulties of the roads and the distance, and they would have deliberately shut their eyes to a justly celebrated country where civilization flourished and which was so easy to reach by sea or by land! The immediate successors of St. Peter would have forgotten the commands of the divine Master, or at least their missionary zeal would have vanished before the barriers of the Alps and the Rhine! But has anyone furnished the shadow of an argument to explain how Gaul came to be the object of so singular a disdain, the victim of so strange an exception? Has anyone tried to tell us why she should not be counted among those nations, those provinces of the Empire, whose evangelization is affirmed to us by testimonies so numerous, so unimpeachable, so close to the events, so diverse in origin, set down by authors who wrote some against the Jews, others against the Gentiles, and all equally concerned to deny a fact that would have been false or exaggerated? Since no one gives us the solution of this problem, we have the right, even before producing more precise and more specific texts, to conclude that Gaul, like the other Roman provinces, was evangelized during the first two centuries.

III. INDIRECT PROOFS OF THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY INTO GAUL BEFORE THE THIRD CENTURY

In this chapter we wish to group the principal proofs of the evangelization of Spain and of England before the third century, the period to which our opponents assign the preaching of the faith in Gaul. If it is established that Iberia and Britain received missionaries in the first two centuries, it will have to be admitted that these followed, some of them, the Aurelian Way, which led from Rome to Cadiz along the sea coasts of southern Gaul; the others, the military road which, starting from Rome, ended at Gesoriacum (Boulogne), where one took ship for the British Isles. Now all the historical monuments show that the invariable practice of the first preachers was to sow the divine word wherever they passed: therefore they could not have crossed a great part of Gaul without evangelizing it, and it would be quite illogical to suppose that the zeal of the Apostles and their disciples was directed only to the extreme points while the intermediate regions were entirely neglected.

The Spanish tradition does not rest only on those legends whose authority our opponents decline. It appears from the letter St. Cyprian addressed to the clergy of Spain concerning Basilides and Martial[1] that the peninsula already had at that time established bishoprics, cemeteries reserved for Christians and synodal meetings—in a word, everything that betokens a very ancient religious organization. As early as the second century Tertullian affirmed that all the regions of Spain were subject to Jesus Christ.[2] Didymus of Alexandria,[3] St. Jerome,[4] Theodoret[5] and St. Isidore of Seville[6] all tell us that they were evangelized by the Apostles.

In the ruins of Marcussia (province of Burgos) an inscription was discovered congratulating Nero on having purged the province of robbers and of those who were preaching to mankind a new superstition—which must be understood of Christianity, which Tacitus[7] and Suetonius[8] designate by the same name:

NERONI CL(AUDIO) CAES(ARI) AUG(USTO) PONT(IFICI) MAX(IMO) OB PROVINC(IAM) LATRONIB(US) ET HIS QUI NOVAM GENERI HUM(ANO) SUPERSTITIONEM INCULCAB(ANT) PURGATAM.[9]

(To Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus, Pontifex Maximus, for having purged the province of robbers and of those who were inculcating a new superstition on mankind.)

We know well that some scholars have considered this inscription spurious; but its authenticity has been defended by other scholars, and especially by Ernst Walch, professor at the University of Jena, who wrote two dissertations on this precious monument.[10]

Spain honours with a special cult a certain number of saints who evangelized her in the first century;[11] so as not to linger over too long details, we shall speak only of the journey of St. Paul. The Apostle of the Gentiles writes from Corinth to the Romans: "When I begin to take my journey into Spain, I hope that as I pass I shall see you, and be brought on my way thither by you, if first, in part, I shall have enjoyed you."[12] M. Tailliar says on this subject (p. 7): "As for St. Paul, he seems to have intended to go to Spain. But nothing indicates that he carried out this plan. His preaching extended from Jerusalem to Illyricum, but went no further." If the sacred Books do not speak to us of the carrying out of the Apostle's clearly stated plan, it is attested by so many writers of the first centuries that it cannot be doubted. Our opponents' tactic is often to deny, from set purpose, the authenticity of texts that embarrass them; but they will certainly not push rashness so far as to reject wholesale the testimonies of St. Clement,[13] St. Athanasius,[14] St. Cyril of Jerusalem,[15] St. Epiphanius,[16] St. John Chrysostom,[17] Theodoret,[18] St. Jerome[19] and St. Gregory the Great,[20] among others.

Thus the information of the principal Fathers of the Church is in harmony with our legends as well as with the local traditions that record the presence of St. Paul at Arles and at Narbonne; and it will have to be explained to us how the Apostle should have been struck dumb while crossing southern Gaul, and how he should have disdained to leave some of his companions there.[21]

We shall make the same observation about the missionaries who crossed Gaul diagonally on their way to England. Let us set aside, if you will, the identification of Claudia Rufina, daughter of a British king, with the Christian wife of the senator Pudens, and the legends concerning St. Joseph of Arimathea, the Apostle St. Simon, St. Polycarp, Aristobulus and others, and let us continue to call to our aid only the Fathers of the Church and the historians of the first centuries.

Pomponia Graecina, wife of the proconsul Aulus Plautius—the first who, under the Emperor Claudius, made lasting conquests in England —"was accused," says Tacitus, "of a foreign superstition," that is, the Christian religion.[22]

The Venerable Bede tells us that about the middle of the second century Lucius, king of the Britons, wrote to Pope Eleutherius to ask for missionaries; that it was thus England was converted to the faith; and that she enjoyed its benefits in all tranquillity until the reign of Diocletian.[23] Let us not be surprised, then, that Tertullian[24] and St. Gildas[25] speak to us of this early conversion of Britain, which, according to the testimonies of Theodoret, St. Hilary,[26] Origen[27] and Eusebius of Caesarea,[28] had been begun earlier by the disciples of the Apostles.

If from the general texts gathered in the preceding chapter we could conclude that Gaul must have been evangelized from the first century, we are now much more entitled to affirm our opinion; and we may say that, in the face of England and Spain visited during the first two centuries by apostolic labourers, the neglect of Gaul would be an inadmissible fact, and that our opponents' system bears the stamp of the most complete improbability.

IV. DIRECT PROOFS OF THE EVANGELIZATION OF GAUL IN THE FIRST CENTURY

We shall group the direct proofs of the evangelization of Gaul in the first century under three principal heads: (1) texts taken from the first six centuries; (2) traditions of the Churches of France; (3) liturgical authority. We shall reserve some arguments of another kind for answering the objections of the partisans of St. Gregory of Tours.

§ I. Texts taken from the first six centuries

M. Tailliar invokes against the evangelization of Gaul in the first century not only the testimony of Gregory of Tours but "the silence of the writers of the fourth and fifth centuries." It is true that some celebrated authors of that period, such as St. Prosper of Aquitaine, St. Sidonius Apollinaris and St. Paulinus of Nola, said nothing on the subject that concerns us. But is it not a violation of one of the most undisputed rules of historical criticism to invoke the isolated assertion of a writer who often contradicted himself, and to set the silence of a few others, who were under no obligation to deal with this question, against very numerous and very varied testimonies, some dating from the same period and others nearer to the events they relate? It is these attestations that we shall now produce, keeping within the limits of the first six centuries. They will show, quite as well as those concerning England and Spain, that when the writers we quoted in our second chapter proclaimed the apostolic spread of the Gospel throughout the whole extent of the Roman Empire, they did not let themselves be carried away, as they are accused of doing, into oratorical exaggeration, but based their general statements on precise and positive facts.

First century. — St. Paul, in his Second Epistle to Timothy, begs him to come and join him as soon as possible, because his disciples were then scattered in all directions. "Demas," he says, "is gone to Thessalonica, Crescens into Galatia, Titus into Dalmatia."[1] By *Galatia* [Greek *Galatía*] are we to understand Galatia, the province of Asia Minor, or Gaul? It is certain that both countries were designated by the same name. Diodorus of Sicily took care to tell us that we owe our origin to Galatus, son of Hercules. In the third century Philostratus, in his *Lives of the Sophists*, is astonished that Favorinus, a native of Arles in western Galatia, spoke Greek so well. Strabo and Ammianus Marcellinus tell us that the Greeks called the Gauls Galatae.[2] Doubt might therefore be allowed as to the true geographical meaning of St. Paul's passage, had not the ancient commentators enlightened us on the point. St. Epiphanius[3] and Theodoret[4] remarked that it means Gaul here and not Galatia.[5] Eusebius of Caesarea,[6] Sophronius[7] and the *Alexandrian Chronicle* likewise tell us that Crescens, the disciple of St. Paul, lived in Gaul. Thus the tradition of the Church of Vienne is in perfect harmony with the Greek historians, and these certainly will not be suspected, as our legend-writers unjustly have been, of having wished out of local interest to magnify the antiquity of a particular Church. Without wishing to give this first proof an absolute value, we would point out that its strength comes above all from the agreement of the texts we have invoked with the tradition of Vienne.[8]

Second century. — The heretic Bardesanes, who flourished under Marcus Aurelius, praises the purity of marriage among the Christians, whatever country they live in, Parthia, Bactria or Gaul.[9]

About the year 170 St. Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, to show the uniformity of the faith, tells us that "the Churches founded in Germany do not believe or hand down anything different, nor those among the Iberians, nor those among the Celts, nor those in the East."[10]

If it is objected that only the province of Lyons is meant here, because Caesar in his *Commentaries* gives the name of Celtica to it alone, we reply that the Greeks gave that name to the whole of Gaul; and further, that St. Irenaeus would have been guilty of a serious inaccuracy in speaking in the plural of the Churches among the Celts [*hae quae in Celtis*] if there had then been in Gaul only the Church of Lyons, of which he was bishop, and those of Valence and Besançon, which he had governed by two of his disciples: for, from the point of view he was taking, that would have been one and the same testimony. About the year 188 St. Irenaeus presided at Lyons over two councils: one that condemned the heresies of Valentinus and Marcion, the other that proscribed the practice of the Quartodecimans. This latter assembly numbered

thirteen bishops. Eusebius of Caesarea mentions the synodal letter addressed to Pope Victor on the council over which St. Irenaeus had presided.[11] M. Tailliar understands Eusebius's text differently from everyone else, and adds: "Appeal is made, it is true, to a synodal letter in which thirteen bishops are made to appear, supposed to have met at that time; but this piece, evidently forged, is later than the reorganization of the provinces carried out by Constantine. It contains, in fact, the list of the thirteen cities included in the province of Vienne and mentioned in the *Notitia Galliarum*. It is an apocryphal act that deserves no confidence." Something more than such an allegation would be needed to make us reject the existence of a council admitted by Baluze, Baronius, Binius, Bosquet, Cossart, Hardouin, Labbe, Longueval, Sirmond, Henri de Valois and others. Tillemont himself, whose system this council upsets, cannot help acknowledging its authenticity and lets slip with regret this admission: "Which gives reason to believe that there were bishops established in several places."[12]

Third century. — St. Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, addressed in 254 to Pope St. Stephen an urgent letter to induce him to have Marcian, bishop of Arles, deposed, since he was spreading the errors of Novatian. In it he says that Faustinus, bishop of Lyons, had written to him twice on the subject. "Marcian," he adds, "has long been boasting of his adherence to Novatian's sect and of his break with our communion. … It is already too much that in the years just past so many of our brethren have died without receiving the peace of the Church."[13]

It is impossible to reconcile this text with the opinion that has our Churches, and especially that of Arles, founded in 250. Let us suppose for a moment, with M. Tailliar, that the bishop of that city, St. Trophimus, could have been deposed in 252 and then replaced by Marcian. Since Cyprian's denunciation of his errors took place in 254, how is this short space of two years to be reconciled with the time required for the two communications of Faustinus, bishop of Lyons; with the defections of the faithful, which took place "in these past years" [*annis istis superioribus*]; and with the schism of Marcian, which was of long standing, which "he has long been boasting of and proclaiming" [*jampridem jactat et praedicat*]? So M. Tailliar begins by saying that "this letter is apocryphal." That is certainly a convenient argument for getting rid of embarrassing texts, and this easy procedure is too much abused against us. Baluze and the other editors of St. Cyprian have proved that this letter is authentic and was written before the year 254.

We need therefore no longer concern ourselves with all the hypotheses M. Tailliar piles up, saying "that this letter may have been reworked in the interest of the metropolis of Arles"; that by changing *Adrumetis* to *Arelatis* an African bishop could have been turned into a bishop of Arles; and finally that, "granting that the letter in question is by St. Cyprian, it could at a pinch have been written in 257." There is a much older work whose authenticity no one has yet tried to deny: Tertullian's treatise *Against the Jews*, written about the year 200. In it we read that the various nations of the Gauls, and regions of Britain that had remained inaccessible to the Romans, were subject to the empire of Christ.[14] Our opponents reply that by these various provinces of the Gauls one may understand only the Cisalpine province and the province of Lyons. Let them explain to us, then, how the missionaries of the first century could step over Gallia Belgica to get to England.

Fourth century. — St. Epiphanius tells us that St. Luke exercised the ministry of the holy word in various countries and above all in Gaul,[15] which agrees with the traditions of the Church of Rennes.[16] Several of our opponents, among them Tillemont and Fleury, have accepted this preaching of St. Luke in our country.

St. Jerome, writing to a Spanish lady named Theodora, expresses himself in these terms: "St. Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, a man of apostolic times and a disciple of Papias, the hearer of John the Evangelist, relates that a certain Mark, sprung from the stock of Basilides the Gnostic, came first to Gaul and infected with his doctrine the regions watered by the Rhône and the Garonne; then, passing over the Pyrenees, he made his way into Spain."[17] It matters little to our question, as M. Arbellot has pointed out,[18] whether this citation is not wholly accurate, and whether St. Jerome did or did not confuse Mark the Egyptian with Mark the Gnostic. It remains established that this Father of the Latin Church believed that there were Christian

Churches, from the second century, in the regions through which the Garonne flows.

Fifth century. — A letter addressed to St. James, long attributed to St. Clement, speaks of missionaries sent in the first century to Gaul and Spain.[19] We grant, with modern criticism, that this document is apocryphal; but since it was produced at the council of Vaison (442), which believed it authentic, we have the right to mention it among the testimonies of the fifth century.

To this period too must be assigned the Acts of St. Denis,[20] in which we read "that having received from St. Clement, successor of the Apostle Peter, the command to distribute the seed of the divine word to the Gentiles, he came as far as Paris." The Acts of St. Genevieve,[21] of the same period, state the same fact. The Acts of St. Paul of Narbonne attribute his mission to St. Peter.

Paulus Orosius, who composed his *History* at the beginning of the fifth century, tells us that Marcus Aurelius had the Christians persecuted in Asia and in Gaul, and that this persecution was the fourth these countries had undergone since that of Nero.[22]

In 450 seventeen bishops of the province of Arles, assembled in council, addressed a synodal letter to Pope St. Leo setting out the rights of their Church. "It is a matter of public knowledge in all the provinces of the Gauls," they say, "and not unknown to the august and holy Roman Church, that the city of Arles was the first on Gallic soil to have the honour of receiving within its walls the priest St. Trophimus, sent by the blessed Apostle Peter."[23] It has been said on this occasion, as on several others, that "St. Peter" must be understood here as the Holy See: that is to attribute an absurdity to the Fathers of the council, whose aim was to base the privileges of the Church of Arles on the antiquity of its foundation. They establish it by recalling that St. Trophimus was a disciple of St. Peter; they would have proved nothing by saying he was sent by the Holy See.

"What remains certain," says M. Tailliar (p. 72), "is that in 449 the Church of Arles alleged in a petition that its founder was an envoy of St. Peter. But the averments of a litigant do not carry the authority of a judgment: that effect results only from the Pope's decision. That is an elementary principle of law." May we for our part be allowed to invoke an elementary principle of morals: that one must not accuse without proof? Here are seventeen bishops who state purely and simply that all the Gauls, as well as Rome, acknowledge that the Church of Arles was founded by a disciple of St. Peter, and the answer is that they lied. But that would have been at once a culpable impudence and a signal blunder: for the Church of Vienne, a party to the dispute, would have had an easy task in exposing a gross invention. Note, moreover, that the case turned solely on the primacy of the Church of Arles and not on its antiquity. That was a fact beyond dispute, and it had been recognized by Pope Zosimus in 417: "On no pretext," he said, "may the ancient privilege of the metropolitan city of Arles be infringed. To it, in the first place, the great pontiff Trophimus was sent from this see; and from his spring the whole of Gaul received the streams of the faith."[24]

A ninth-century manuscript preserved in the library of the Minerva contains, among other short works, an anonymous treatise against the Arians which the best Italian critics assign to the fifth or sixth century. The author speaks thus in a passage meant to prove that the Churches of East and West invariably keep the same doctrines that were preached by the Apostles and their immediate disciples: "In the Gauls too, the city of Arles had as its founder St. Trophimus, a disciple of the Apostles; Narbonne, St. Paul; Toulouse, St. Saturninus; Vaison, St. Daphnus. Through these four disciples of the Apostles the Churches were so established throughout all Gaul that through the course of so many years Christ has never allowed them to be occupied by adversaries."[25]

M. Tailliar tries to invalidate the authority of this text by observing (p. 73) that St. Daphnus signed the Acts of the council of Arles held in 314, and that consequently he lived not in the time of the twelve Apostles but only in the fourth century. Is it then so rare to see two persons bearing the same name three centuries apart, and do we not find in a great many of our episcopal lists these repetitions of names, chosen out of pious

veneration?

Sixth century. — St. Isidore of Seville tells us that the Apostle St. Philip preached the Gospel to the Gauls.[26]

Venantius Fortunatus, in his hymn on St. Denis, recalls that this pontiff was sent by St. Clement.[27] In the hymn he composed in honour of St. Martial he exclaims: "You whom Rome and Gaul honour, now after Peter, as his inferior and younger than he, now with Peter, as his equal in the prerogative of the apostolate; the tribe of Benjamin saw you born of illustrious blood; the city of Limoges now keeps your sacred body."[28] It will be agreed that this praise would have no meaning if St. Martial, bishop of Limoges, had not been a companion of St. Peter and one of the seventy-two disciples of Our Lord.

Fortunatus's verses seem to be modelled on the legend of St. Martial composed under the name of Aurelian. M. Arbellot acknowledges, like all the critics, that this document is full of apocryphal details; but he does not admit that the principal fact, Martial's mission in the time of St. Peter, can be an invention of the author contrary to public belief and to the traditions of the Limousin. Besides, the same assertion is found in other unpublished Acts, going back to the sixth century, which M. Arbellot discovered in the Imperial Library.[29]

Gregory of Tours quotes a letter addressed to St. Radegund by seven bishops, in which we read that "from the birth of the Catholic religion the faith began to be breathed in Gaul."[30] Elsewhere he tells us that "St. Eutropius, martyred at Saintes, was sent into Gaul by Pope Clement, who consecrated him bishop,"[31] and that St. Ursinus was ordained by the disciples of the Apostles and sent into Gaul, where he founded the Church of Bourges.[32]

A Syriac manuscript of the sixth or seventh century, brought from the monastery of Scete to London in 1839 and since edited by Cardinal Mai,[33] contains the following passage: "Rome and all Italy, Spain, Britain and Gaul, with the other neighbouring countries, saw the priestly hand of the Apostles extended over them, under the direction of Simon Cephas, who, on leaving Antioch, went to teach and direct the Church he founded at Rome and among the neighbouring peoples."

The Abbé Faillon found the following passage in a manuscript of the Imperial Library (no. 5537), which dates from the eleventh century but whose text he assigns to the sixth: "Under Claudius the Apostle St. Peter sent into Gaul, to preach the faith of the Trinity to the Gentiles, certain disciples to whom he assigned particular cities: these were Trophimus, Paul, Martial, Austremonius, Gatian, Saturninus and Valerius, and several others whom the blessed Apostle had designated as their companions."[34]

Our opponents reject some of the texts we have just quoted as apocryphal, but almost always for the sole reason that they contradict their preconceived opinions. Even if we were obliged to give up some of these testimonies, there would still remain a more than sufficient number to prove that the first centuries of our era believed that Gaul was evangelized by the disciples of St. Peter and St. Clement.

§ II. Traditions of the Churches of France

The Reverend Father Picardat, in a manuscript dissertation that he was kind enough to communicate to us, has collected all the passages of medieval writers attesting the preaching of the faith in Gaul in the first century. Space does not allow us to go into these long enumerations; besides, our opponents grant that the authors of the Middle Ages, with very few exceptions,[35] favour the system we are defending. Some divergences may be noted on this or that saint, but there is uniformity of belief on the general question. We shall therefore not reproduce here the testimonies of Paul the Deacon, Paschasius Radbertus, Rabanus Maurus, Hincmar, St. Ado, Usuard, Flodoard, Abbo, Ivo of Chartres, Anselm of Laon, Peter the Venerable, Orderic Vitalis, Innocent III, Albert the Great, Vincent of Beauvais, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventure and others, nor the statements of the martyrologies and legendaries. We shall confine ourselves to noting that until the eighteenth century some forty Churches of France gloried in having been evangelized by disciples of Our Lord or of the Apostles.[36]

M. Tailliar would like to ruin the authority of tradition by saying (p. 54) that "when it lacks its three conditions of antiquity, perpetuity and universality, it is insufficient; one may even say it does not exist." Let us not demand of historical tradition the characteristics the Church requires of dogmatic tradition. Certain local traditions are perfectly incontestable and cannot, by the very reason of their limited interest, become universal. We grant that with regard to this or that saint it would not always be possible, for lack of documents, to prove that the tradition placing him in the first century is ancient and perpetual. But as for the general tradition of the evangelization of Gaul in apostolic times, we can affirm that it has antiquity in its favour (let our texts be read again); perpetuity (it was interrupted only in the seventeenth century); and universality (all our provinces have shown themselves unanimous). It must not be forgotten that tradition is one of the elements of historical science: it ought to be discussed when it disagrees with other information, but it cannot simply be met with an unjust plea of inadmissibility. If one acts thus towards popular traditions, one only risks sometimes rejecting a certain fund of truth mixed with fables; but to apply the same rigour to traditions found in every part of France and the Catholic world, in every century of the Church; whose origin is lost in the night of time; which agree with one another despite the distance between places; which are in harmony with the general teaching of history; and which are recorded in the most venerable monuments of the liturgy—that is to wish to overturn the laws of criticism and to suppress one of the sources of truth.

§ III. Liturgical authority

All the liturgies that succeeded one another down to the seventeenth century are unanimous in their belief in the evangelization of Gaul in apostolic times. We know well that this is not an irrefragable authority in matters of history; but it will be granted that these traditions, on which the contemptuous epithet of *popular* is inflicted, are raised by the ancient liturgies to a very official rank, and that they can answer their detractors that possession is title.

While the reformers of the French breviaries, often suspect of Jansenism, let themselves be won over by Launoy's innovations, the Roman Breviary remained faithful to the old traditions. When the universal liturgy was introduced into France, each diocese submitted its Proper of the Saints to the approval of the Holy See, and the Congregation of Rites, after mature examination, sanctioned many legends that carry the origin of our Churches back to the first century,[37] even where the Roman Martyrology had given contrary indications.

These decisions certainly have no doctrinal authority, but their high value from the point of view of historical criticism cannot be contested.

Concerning the celebrated decree on St. Martial issued by Pius IX on 18 May 1854, M. Tailliar (p. 49) "blesses the high wisdom of the Sovereign Pontiff Pius IX and the penetrating intelligence of Cardinal Antonelli, whose solicitude and circumspection in these delicate matters cannot be praised too highly," and he adds in a note: "This decree relating to St. Martial confines itself to declaring, what seems to us perfectly just, that the praise and cult of this saint have been established from time immemorial: *constare ab immemoriali de elogio et cultu de quo agitur* [that the praise and cult in question are established from time immemorial]. But it does not decide, as the petition of the Bishop of Limoges set out, that St. Martial was the envoy of St. Peter and one of the seventy-two disciples of Christ." M. Tailliar will easily recognize that he is entirely mistaken if he goes through the official document concerning this cause.[38] When Mgr de Buissas, bishop of Limoges, submitted the Proper of the Saints of his diocese to the approval of the Holy See, he kept for St. Martial the title and cult of Apostle that tradition had always given him. The secretary of the Congregation of Rites proposed to replace the cult of an apostle by that of a confessor bishop, on the undisputed principle that only those who were among Our Lord's disciples may, by privilege, be given the cult paid to the Apostles. This historico-liturgical cause was argued before the cardinals of the Congregation of Rites, who on 8 April 1854 recognized the right of the Church of Limoges to honour its first bishop with the cult and title of Apostle and to insert in its liturgy that he had been one of the seventy-two disciples of

Christ. It is this decree that the Holy Father approved, confirming the antiquity of the special cult of Apostle which had been called in question—*cultu de quo agitur*. So M. Tailliar must allow us to enter "the high wisdom of the Sovereign Pontiff Pius IX and the penetrating intelligence of Cardinal Antonelli" to the credit of our opinion and not of his.

V. REFUTATION OF THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIONS AGAINST THE EVANGELIZATION OF GAUL IN THE FIRST CENTURY

When solid arguments establish a fact, it cannot be called in doubt by a few objections for which no solution can be found. If it were otherwise, how many events could be excluded from the domain of certainty on the pretext that this chronicler did not mention them, that another seems to have borne contrary witness, that some contradict one another in certain details, that others leave part of the question in shadow! Relying on this principle of criticism, we might say that we believe we have proved the evangelization of Gaul in the first century peremptorily enough for this historical system not to be breached even by objections we could not resolve. But all those that have been piled up are far from irrefutable, and may even furnish us with new arguments. We shall group them in methodical order, to keep our discussion clear, and shall examine in turn the objections drawn (1) from St. Sulpicius Severus and St. Gregory of Tours; (2) from certain historical data; (3) from philology; (4) from archaeology; (5) from historical probability.

§ I. Objections drawn from St. Sulpicius Severus and St. Gregory of Tours

Sulpicius Severus, speaking of the fifth persecution, which took place in 177 under Marcus Aurelius, tells us that "it was then that martyrdoms were seen for the first time within Gaul, the religion of God having been received rather late beyond the Alps."[1]

Our opponents, who have only two texts in their arsenal, this one and that of Gregory of Tours, cling to them all the more and make up for quantity by the quality of the testimonies. From the one just quoted they conclude: (1) that there were no martyrs in Gaul before those whom the persecution of Marcus Aurelius sacrificed at Lyons; (2) that Christianity reached us only a short time before the reign of the Antonines.

Sulpicius Severus, in a short abridgement of history in which he sums up in twenty lines a hundred and sixty-five years of the annals of the Church, had to concern himself only with general facts, and may have neglected to speak of the rare isolated martyrs of the first two centuries, just as later he omitted to mention the destruction of the Theban Legion. Nothing prevents us from believing that by the word *martyria* he meant collective massacres and not isolated executions, although we must honestly acknowledge that it is in the latter sense that the same word is sometimes used by this author.[2] But we prefer to say that in this chapter the annalist is content to summarize Eusebius, who, writing in the East, had no knowledge of the earliest martyrs of Gaul and had before his eyes only documents relating to the celebrated massacres of Lyons. Sulpicius Severus was no doubt wrong not to correct on this point the author he was abridging, but he may have seen in it only a secondary detail in the rapid general survey he was making of the general persecutions.

But, it will be said, does not the historian give us his own thought when he adds that the faith was introduced into Gaul only late? Here the text we quoted is misread. It says that the Christian religion was *received* [*suscepta*], not *preached*, very late in Gaul, which is quite different. We are not contradicting the bishop of Bourges [*sic*; see note (A)] when we say that Christianity, brought into Gaul in the first century, won only partial successes there; that the persecutions so checked its growth that the missionaries of the third and following centuries found paganism in vigour almost everywhere; and that their efforts might perhaps have failed again but for the conversion of Constantine. The legends of St. Martin, St. Amand, St. Valery and St. Bertin, St. Honoratus and many others prove that pagan beliefs still had deep roots from the fourth to the seventh century.[3] It was enough that there should have been a certain number of Christians in Gaul in the first two centuries for the many writers quoted in the preceding chapter to speak of the preaching of the

Gospel in our country; but Sulpicius Severus, taking a different point of view and considering the mass that remained pagan until the fourth century, rightly said that the faith triumphed late in Gaul.

M. Paulin Paris, in his new edition of the *Histoire littéraire de la France* (vol. 1, p. 441), proposes another interpretation, believing the passage has been obscured by a misplaced comma. “I will go even further than MM. Darras, Arbellot, de Bausset and Roquefort,” he says, “and propose to refer Sulpicius’s *serius* [later] to persecutions that struck rather late upon a Gaul already converted to Christianity. That, I think, is how Dom Rivet himself would have understood it, had he not listened, in discussing facts of this order, to a regrettable passion. A strange thing! The learned Benedictine will have it that Domitian’s edict of 94 against the philosophers at once drove philosophical studies back into Gaul, and he does not admit that the many persecutions against the Christians during the first two centuries drove into Gaul the Christians expelled from Rome and the preaching of the Gospel.”

In support of this interpretation we would point out that among the evangelizers of Gaul whom we place in the first century, very few suffered martyrdom; almost all are honoured with the cult of confessor bishops.

If our opponents will not accept these explanations, they will still be obliged to admit that Sulpicius Severus and Gregory of Tours express an opinion contrary to that of a host of writers contemporary with them or earlier, and that we are therefore entitled to disregard it. And let it be remembered that among the testimonies we have quoted few are taken from legends, because we did not wish to expose ourselves to a plea of inadmissibility based on the errors such documents may contain. Our concessions should not, however, be abused by exalting the infallibility of Sulpicius Severus: for we could recall that his assertions are far from incontestable, as when he claims that Nero, the embodiment of Antichrist, was still alive in the fifth century [*sic*]; when he tells us that Titus, out of hatred of Jews and Christians, had the temple of Jerusalem set on fire; when he relates that Trajan forbade the persecution of the Christians, which is formally contrary to the tenor of his letter to Pliny. So Mamachi passed this severe judgement: “I put little faith in Sulpicius Severus, who often errs and shows little skill in history.”[4]

Gregory of Tours, who can be reproached with as many errors[5] without his sincerity being called in question, furnished the school of Launoy with its principal argument. “In the time of Decius,” he tells us,[6] “seven bishops were sent to preach the faith in Gaul, as the history of the passion of the holy martyr Saturninus relates.” It says: “Under the consulship of Decius and Gratus, as is remembered by faithful tradition, the city of Toulouse received its first bishop, St. Saturninus.” These, then, are the bishops who were sent: “Gatian to Tours; Trophimus to Arles; Paul to Narbonne; Saturninus to Toulouse; Denis to Paris; Austremonius to the Arverni; Martial to Limoges.”

The Abbé Faillon (*Monuments inédits*, vol. 2, p. 370) has explained Gregory of Tours’s mistake perfectly. We possess the Acts of St. Saturninus, which say that he came to Toulouse under the consulship of Decius (an error we shall explain later), but make no mention of his companions. On the other hand we know the Acts of St. Ursinus, which list the seven bishops, among whom they place St. Denis, attributing their mission to St. Peter. Gregory of Tours, knowing very well that St. Denis had not been sent by the Prince of the Apostles, recognized a chronological error there; in trying to correct it he fell into a much graver error, and applied to the seven bishops the dating to the reign of Decius that he had found in the Acts of St. Saturninus. When our opponents reproach us with “clinging to legends that our most orthodox scholars have rejected!”, they would do well to remember that Gregory of Tours based his opinion only on a legend—and, what is worse, on a legend whose slight value we shall demonstrate.

The bishop of Tours, moreover, often contradicted himself. In his *History of the Franks* he inserted the letter addressed by seven bishops to St. Radegund, in which it is said that “from the birth of the Catholic religion the air of the faith began to be breathed in Gaul”; and we have seen above that he places the apostolate of St. Eutropius, St. Ursinus and St. Saturninus in the first century.

What are we to conclude from these contradictions? That St. Gregory of Tours, at a time when the means of communication for inquiring into local traditions were lacking, may have remained in doubt as to the true date of the evangelization of Gaul; without pronouncing on the point, he will sometimes have expressed the traditions that reached him and sometimes accepted the contrary opinion set down in a faulty legend he had before him.[7] This would explain his cautious formulas of citation[8] and the vagueness of some of his information.[9] Or again, as Tillemont thought, one might infer that in the sixth century there were two contradictory traditions about the period of the introduction of Christianity. But we would add that there can be no parity of value between two traditions, one of which found an echo only in Gregory of Tours and perhaps in Sulpicius Severus, while the other was accepted by so great a number of contemporary or earlier writers.

We do not wish to prolong the discussion of a text that has been so often elucidated.[10] We shall merely recall that it is improbable that seven bishops were sent from Rome into Gaul in 250, when the persecution of Decius was raging most fiercely and the terrified Roman clergy left the Apostolic See vacant for sixteen months; that the authority of Gregory of Tours is so unreliable that his warmest partisans, such as Tillemont, Longueval and Denis de Sainte-Marthe, have been obliged to abandon it on various points, notably by placing St. Trophimus in the first century; that the text set against us is contradicted not only by a host of local traditions but by all the historians we have quoted; and finally that until the seventeenth century the isolated opinion of St. Gregory of Tours, although known, remained without influence and without echo.

§ II. Objections drawn from certain historical data

M. Tailliar (p. 123), to explain how Gaul came to be evangelized only under the pontificate of St. Fabian (236–250), divides the early papacy into three phases: the Jewish phase, comprising the first five popes; the Greek phase (109–192); and the Latin phase. The first is supposed to have taken no interest in Gaul at all; the second to have founded the Gallo-Greek sees along the Rhône; to the third would be due the erection of the first Gallo-Latin Churches in the south, east and north of France. Even if this classification were not completely arbitrary,[11] we could still say that it proves absolutely nothing. The successors of the Apostles, whatever their nationality, inherited their rights and duties none the less, and could not forget that it was to them, as to the Apostolic College, that the divine Saviour had given this command: “Teach all nations” [*Docete omnes gentes*].

Our learned colleague lays great stress on another argument that seems to him decisive. “The social state in which these saints live,” he tells us (p. 197), “the Roman administration organized in their time, the judicial institutions then in force, the laws applied to them, are of the third and not of the first century.” On what is so positive an assertion based? On some details of legends written between the fifth and tenth centuries. Must not their authors, little versed in the knowledge of antiquity and hardly caring about local colour, often have confused times and places, given localities the names they bore in their own day, and modernized the manners and institutions they had to speak of? We will go further than M. Tailliar and say that certain historical details in these legends have a thoroughly Merovingian look. It will certainly not be concluded that the saints whose lives they relate lived only in the sixth or seventh century, but that their biographers often acted like those sixteenth-century painters who gave the Apostles the bearing and costumes of the courts of Francis I or Charles V.

It is precisely the state of Gaul in the first century that shows us how improbable is the neglect the Christian missionaries are supposed to have shown it. It was from 58 to 52 before Christ that Caesar subjected our country to Roman power; it was Augustus who had the four roads opened which, starting from Lyons, divided the conquered territory into four parts. Merchants, as Strabo tells us, had hastened to establish trading relations between Rome and the westernmost part of Celtica; many Italian families had come to settle in our provinces to farm the lands they were given or bought cheaply. And we are to admit that among all these

traders and settlers there were none of those Christians who were already filling the capital of the sovereign people —or that, if there were, they did not try to spread their doctrine or to attract missionaries, whose zeal, it seems, was to be spent only on Africa and Asia! And this state of things is supposed to have lasted two and a half centuries! And Gaul, that province which lived by the life of Rome, would still have been ignorant of the great event stirring Roman society, at the very time when Tertullian was saying to the magistrates of the Empire: "We fill everything of yours: your cities, your islands, your forts, your colonies, your towns, your assemblies, your camps, your tribes, your decuries, the palace, the senate, the forum; we leave you only your temples!"

If from Gallo-Roman times our opponents turn their eyes to the Middle Ages, they find another kind of argument there. Unable to deny the legends' assertions of the apostolic origin of numerous Churches of Gaul, they explain these assertions by supposed rivalries between episcopal sees and monasteries. All the historical monuments we invoke are, according to M. Tailliar, merely "pleadings in favour of this or that Church, which judge in their own cause." This generalization is quite unjustified: in the Middle Ages we see only three great disputes on the matter in question, concerning St. Trophimus, St. Martial and St. Denis, and they in no way justify M. Tailliar's conclusions. If the Church of Vienne disputed the supremacy of Arles, it never denied that St. Trophimus was a disciple of the Apostles. As regards St. Martial, the discussion turned not on the date of his mission but on his title of apostle. For St. Denis, it is not the period of his apostolate that is questioned, but his identity with the Areopagite.[12]

If the traditions in favour of the first century were the fruit of local vanity, how is it that they were not energetically contradicted by rival Churches? How is it that important sees such as Lyons, Bordeaux and Cambrai did not covet the glory of a remote antiquity claimed by far lesser Churches such as Apt, Séez and Béziers? How could these traditions have been adopted by other dioceses and upheld by foreign scholars, such as those of Italy, who had no parish-pump interest to defend? "A singular contrast," exclaimed the *Journal de Trévoux* in 1725,[13] "which agrees ill with the mutual jealousy of nations about whatever distinguishes them! It is foreigners who persist in carrying back the mission of our first bishops to apostolic times, while we disdainfully renounce the antiquity of that origin to give ourselves a much more recent one!" Will it be urged that Churches, like cities, have always tended to make their cradle older, and that the claims of episcopal sees are explained by those of certain cities that once claimed as founder some adventurer prince exiled from Rome or some hero escaped from Ilium? We reply that these romantic imaginings date neither from Merovingian times nor from the Middle Ages. It was only in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries that people tried to connect the history of Gaul with that of ancient Troy, and sometimes even with Noah and his children. It was the Dominican Annius of Viterbo who first, in 1498, gave the series of supposed primitive kings of Gaul, which he attributed to Berosus. Other writers soon embroidered adventurous fictions on this theme, and detailed biographies were invented of the twenty-four sovereigns who were supposed to have succeeded one another in Gaul from the Flood to the Trojan War. It is clear that no comparison can be drawn between the fancies of the sixteenth century and religious traditions whose origin goes back to the birth of Christianity.

§ III. Objections drawn from philology

It has been asked in what language the missionaries of the first century would have preached. In Celtic? They did not know it. In Latin? Their hearers would not have understood. "If this preaching resounds at the end of the third century," says M. Dufour, "the difficulties must be much less great; the Celtic people is entirely Romanized."[14] We believe the difficulties remained much the same. In the first century as in the third, Latin was spoken in the towns peopled by Roman settlers; in the third century as in the first, most of the countryside still kept its original tongue. At both periods, then, the Roman missionaries were faced with two very different languages, and we know that they preached in small villages as well as in large cities. Had they received, like the Apostles, the gift of tongues? Did they learn the language of the country, as those of our

missionaries do today who evangelize China or Tartary? We do not know, and the answer to this question would throw no light on the period at which the faith entered our country.

There is one question that our opponents would like to turn from its real meaning so as to deprive us of a support: that of the expressions *disciple of the Apostles*, *disciple of St. Peter*. "Is it not taking too literally," says M. Dufour (p. 14), "a figurative expression that has even entered our language? Whom would one persuade that to call a physician today a disciple of Hippocrates means that he was trained in the art of healing by the Greek sage?" If it were an honorific phrase, our missionaries would have been called disciples of Jesus Christ and not disciples of the Apostles, since they taught the Saviour's religion; if it were a figurative expression, why do we not see it applied to the missionaries of the fourth and fifth centuries, who would have had the same right to it? One need only be somewhat familiar with the language of the Fathers and the martyrologies to see that this title must always be taken in its literal sense, which is moreover perfectly fixed by the numerous texts saying that St. Peter or St. Clement sent such and such of his disciples into Gaul.

§ IV. Objections drawn from archaeology

The legends relating the lives of our first apostles sometimes speak of the building of churches; from this it is concluded that they can have lived only in the third century, because no churches were built before that time. "Until the reign of Constantine," says M. de Caumont,[15] "there was no church properly so called in Gaul; the mysteries were celebrated in the houses of new converts, in crypts or in secluded places." If the first churches were built only in the fourth century, our legend-writers were mistaken on this point; but their erroneous assertions cannot become an argument in favour of the third century, since that century would have been without religious buildings just as much as the first.

We must say, however, that we do not share M. de Caumont's view of this prolonged absence of churches. Explicit texts show us that the first care of the Apostles and their disciples was to build sanctuaries in the places they evangelized.[16] Lactantius tells us that Diocletian ordered the churches erected in Gaul to be demolished.[17] On this subject Ciampini[18] may be consulted; he cites a great number of Christian churches, modest wooden buildings, erected in Gaul during the first three centuries.

Another archaeological objection against the first century was put forward by M. de Caumont at the Scientific Congress held at Amiens in June 1867:[19] the absence of Christian inscriptions going back to that period. An argument that proves too much loses all its value. M. Le Blant, in his learned preface to the *Inscriptions chrétiennes de la Gaule*, has established that only four dated Christian inscriptions found in Gaul are earlier than the fifth century, and that the oldest is of the year 334. One would therefore have to conclude that Christianity reached us only in the fourth century. M. Le Blant, who is nevertheless a supporter of evangelization in the third century, has very fairly acknowledged that the absence of Christian inscriptions proves absolutely nothing: "When it is a question of the first centuries," he tells us,[20] "to look in the marbles of a country for monuments contemporary with the age in which Christianity appeared there is most often to court disappointment. Out of absolute necessity as well as from a taste for mystery, the faithful long concealed their beliefs. One sees this at Rome, where of 1,400 dated inscriptions only thirty-one are earlier than Constantine." M. Huillard-Bréholles[21] for his part makes this remark: "The extreme rarity of any mention of martyrdom on monuments is explained by the official character of the persecutions and by the vigilance of the Roman authorities, who would not have tolerated this kind of public protest." We willingly subscribe to this explanation; but if it holds for the third century, all the more must it be admitted for earlier times; and consequently the absence of Christian indications on our old funerary marbles can in no way weaken our thesis.

Since we are speaking of inscriptions, this is the place to recall those discovered at Arensberg [*sic*] in 1842, in the duchy of Hesse, from which the learned Bollandist the Reverend Father Van Hecke drew a new

argument in the dissertation preceding the Acts of St. Florentinus.[22] They are two terracottas. The first, in the form of a fish, the symbol of the first Christians, bears these words:

LEG. XXII PRI (legio XXII primigenia, fidelis: the Twenty-second Legion, Primigenia, Loyal)

The other, in the form of a cross, bears the same inscription with the addition SEMPER ON.

Now this Twenty-second Legion, which was recruited in Italy, was on the banks of the Rhine in the time of Caracalla and Septimius Severus (214–235 [*sic*]). One sees from the shape of the objects discovered that it had Christians in its ranks, just like that Thundering Legion which under Antoninus was encamped on the banks of the Danube and to which God gave the victory, Tertullian tells us, because of the prayers of those among them who were Christians. From these facts we draw the conclusion that the Roman legions stationed in Gaul during the first two centuries must likewise have included a certain number of Christian soldiers; that in the fervour of their proselytism they must have made known the beliefs that animated them; and that we are thereby carried well back before that date of the year 250 at which, it is claimed, the popes and missionaries at last noticed that there existed in the world a country called Gaul!

§ V. Objections drawn from historical probability

It is not probable, it has been said, that St. Peter and St. Clement sent missionaries to towns as unimportant as Lutetia, Limoges, Lodève, Saintes and Périgueux then were, and forgot other far more considerable cities in which, as everyone agrees, episcopal sees were established only in the third or fourth century. Without attempting here a comparison of the relative importance of the cities of Gaul, a study for which the information would often be lacking, we shall say that it is in no way shown that St. Peter and St. Clement specially assigned this or that town to the disciples they sent into Gaul. We believe that almost all of them were regionary bishops; after many apostolic journeys they stopped where their personal inspiration, or rather the influence of grace, settled them. A certain number of them have been considered founders of episcopal sees solely because their apostolic journeys were cut short by martyrdom. So the relative importance of the cities is a consideration that must remain entirely foreign to our debate.

But, it will be urged, is it not strange that Gallia Belgica should have been evangelized in the first century, while far more Roman provinces, Lyons and Vienne,[23] received the light of the faith only about the year 160? This last assertion is a wholly gratuitous hypothesis: however often it is repeated that St. Pothinus was the founder of the Church of Lyons, it will never be proved. The letter the Churches of Vienne and Lyons addressed to those of Asia says only that “the ministry of the episcopate of Lyons had been entrusted to St. Pothinus,”[24] which in no way shows that he had no predecessors in that city, and still less that there were no Christians there before him; for large gatherings of the faithful must have formed in many places where no bishop resided, and what happened in America in the sixteenth century explains what must have taken place in our country.

Our opponents understand that this introduction of Christianity at Lyons in the middle of the second century may make the century’s delay they require for the other regions of Gaul seem strange. So, to establish a radical difference between these two periods, they make Lyons and the sees depending on it a Gallo-Greek Church. They recall that St. Pothinus was born in Asia; but by what document will they prove that he came to us directly from the East and was not sent by the Holy See? We say the same of St. Irenaeus, who was consecrated in the West. “It is manifest,” said Pope St. Innocent, “that no one founded Churches throughout Italy and the Gauls except those whom the venerable Peter or his successors appointed bishops.”[25] The Church of Lyons is essentially Latin in origin and constitution, and we see no more reason to call it Gallo-Greek than there would be to say that the Church of Amiens is Gallo-Spanish because it was founded by St. Firmin of Pamplona.

Another supposed improbability constantly urged against us is the gaps that appear between the first and the third century in most of our episcopal lists. This, again, is one of those negative proofs whose value must fade before the positive arguments we have produced. For it to keep any appearance of force, it would moreover have to be established: first, that all the Churches we proclaim to have been founded in the first century lack a complete list; second, that such gaps are not found in the Italian Churches, which by our opponents' own admission date from apostolic times; third, that similar gaps do not appear in the catalogues of the Middle Ages; fourth, that we are powerless to explain these interruptions of the sees. Now we shall show the very contrary.

First: the Church of Trier counts twenty-five bishops ranked among the saints from its foundation to the year 314, which amply suffices to exclude any interregnum. The episcopal lists are complete, or nearly so, from the first to the third century at Metz, Reims, Chartres, Narbonne and elsewhere. We must conclude that the brevity of the other lists must be explained by some other system than our opponents', since a single proven exception overthrows their hypothesis.

Second: what can these interruptions prove against the apostolic origin of the Churches of Gaul, when we find similar ones in sees of Italy and the East whose existence from the first century our opponents cannot deny? The Abbé Richard has noted[26] that Corinth offers us only six names of bishops for the first three centuries; Ephesus, three names for the first two; Philippi, eight names down to the twelfth century; Athens, fifteen names down to the twelfth; Aquileia, five names down to the peace of Constantine; the Marsi, three names down to the sixth century; Ravenna, thirteen names down to the fifteenth century [*sic*]; Spoleto, nine names down to 350; Lucca, three names down to Constantine. On the contrary, Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem and others present from thirty-five to forty bishops for the era of persecution, which devoured Christians so quickly. Scholars have explained these undeniable differences in three ways: by the little care taken in drawing up the first catalogues; by the destruction of the original records in which these lists might have appeared; and by the persecutions which in certain places really interrupted the episcopal successions. Let us be told how these explanations, recognized as valid for the East and Italy, are no longer admissible when it is a question of Gaul and Spain.

Third: without leaving France, do we not see long gaps in the episcopal catalogues of the Middle Ages, notably at Toulouse, Bordeaux, Marseilles, Toulon, Aire and elsewhere? In other cities interruptions are noticed in the ninth century; they are explained by the Norman invasions. Must not the persecutions of the first centuries have had the same effect on the regular succession of the sees?

Fourth: the brevity of the episcopal lists may be explained, according to the place, in two ways. It is not in times of persecution that people think of creating archives. Everything shows us that it was about the eighth century that the names of the bishops were entered in the diptychs. Is it surprising that, in the absence of documents, inevitable omissions were made? The founder's name was well remembered, being moreover almost always entered in the liturgy of the saints; but it was not so with all those of his successors whose memory had not been perpetuated by a popular cult. Suppose for a moment that these diptychs were quite complete in the eighth century: how many survived the Norman invasions? They had to be restored from memory in the tenth century, with the help of the legends of the saints, the acts of councils and the rare chronicles that had escaped destruction. How could one require of our successions of bishops a completeness that one would take good care not to demand in the civil or military sphere? "What would our opponents say," M. Salmon very well exclaims,[27] "if, having asked them for the list of the Roman governors of the provinces of Gaul from Caesar to Constantine, and having been unable, for good reason, to obtain it, we came and gravely maintained to them that Gaul had no governors during that space of time?"

The explanation we have just given may apply to a certain number of dioceses; in many others the gaps in the episcopal lists simply bear witness to a long vacancy of the sees. The attachment of the countryside to the druidic cult, and the intolerance of the Roman magistrates, to whom the official patronage of polytheism

belonged, checked the spread of the new religion in many places.[28] Here the first sparks of the faith were completely smothered; there, the worship of the true God was maintained in a few groups, but without organization, or perhaps with an organization quite different from that of our day. Father Perrone, drawing on a passage of St. Jerome,[29] thinks that many Churches, after the death of their founder, were long governed by a council of elders, and that later the drawbacks of this oligarchic system led to the election of one of the priests to govern the whole Christian community. This is a mode of administration that has been in force in various regions of America and Oceania before the Papacy multiplied the sees and defined the dioceses.[30] However that may be, it must be acknowledged that it was the accession of Constantine that opened a new era for Christianity in all the provinces of the Empire, by allowing the hierarchy to strengthen and develop itself. It was then that in many cities, evangelized two centuries earlier by a regionary bishop, a true episcopal organization was established, which had been attempted afresh, but often without success, in the middle of the third century. By a just sentiment of piety and gratitude, the one who in the time of the Apostles had come to bring there the witness of his word or of his blood had to be considered the first bishop of each diocese.

Here, then, are three different solutions, each of which is applicable to any diocese whose episcopal list is incomplete, and none of which excludes the others, since we admit that in certain dioceses there was an interruption of the see and in others there was none. What then becomes of the supposed improbability our opponents allege against us?

End of the fourteenth volume.

SUPPLEMENT: ST. FRANCIS DE SALES, BISHOP AND PRINCE OF GENEVA[31]

“The writings of St. Francis de Sales,” we read in the Roman Breviary, “filled with heavenly doctrine, are a bright light in the Church, showing a sure and easy way to arrive at Christian perfection.” “I find everything in them,” said St. Jane Frances de Chantal. Pope Alexander VII, writing to his nephew to recommend that he read them, expresses himself thus: “‘If virtue,’ said one of the ancients, ‘could be shown in her own colours, she would powerfully attract all hearts and compel them to love her.’ That, in my opinion, is what Francis de Sales has achieved, so sweetly and so vividly does he portray her, so well does he set before our eyes her beauty, her majesty, her splendour and her graces.” Fénelon, an excellent judge in literary matters, does not hesitate to set the artless style of St. Francis de Sales, with the lovable simplicity it shows, above all the graces of profane wit. To say everything in a word, the French Academy in the seventeenth century proposed the works of St. Francis de Sales as a model.

It would take too long to list all the editions that have been made of these masterpieces; the most remarkable are said to be those of 1631, 1637, 1641, 1652, 1663 and 1672. Among modern ones, that of Blaise (Paris, 1833–1835) is regarded as the most esteemed in our day, and Vivès has just produced one that seems to us accurate and complete (Paris, 1862, 12 vols.).

In it the Works of St. Francis de Sales are divided into five classes. The first comprises the ascetical and devotional works: the *Introduction to the Devout Life*; the *Treatise on the Love of God*; various short spiritual works; the *Spiritual Conferences*; the *Sermons*; short works relating to the Saint’s public life, to the administration of his diocese and to the direction of various religious communities; *Controversies* with the Lutherans and Calvinists, and pieces relating to the conversion of heretics; *Spiritual Letters*. The last volume contains a vocabulary of St. Francis de Sales’s words and expressions no longer in use today.

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[1] *Dissertatio in qua Dionysii Parisiensis et Dionysii Areopagitae discrimen ostenditur* (Dissertation showing the distinction between Denis of Paris and Denis the Areopagite). — *Responsionis ad dissertationem de duobus Dionysiis discussio* (Examination of the reply to the dissertation on the two Denises). — *De commentitio Lazari et Maximini, Magdalenae et Marthae in Provinciam appulsu* (On the

fictitious landing of Lazarus and Maximinus, Magdalen and Martha in Provence). — *Dissertatio qua locus historiae Gregorii Turonensis vindicatur a multis erroribus* (Dissertation vindicating a passage of Gregory of Tours's History from many errors). — *Dissertatio qua Sulpicii Severi locus de prima martyrum epocha vindicatur* (Dissertation vindicating Sulpicius Severus's passage on the first period of the martyrs). — *De primi Cenomanorum praesulis epocha* (On the date of the first bishop of Le Mans).

[2] *Réfutation des trois dissertations de M. Jean de Launoy contre les missions apostoliques dans les Gaules au Ier siècle*, 1653.

[3] *De tempore praedicatae primum in Gallias fidei* (On the time when the faith was first preached in Gaul), 1658.

[4] *Défense de l'ancienne tradition des Églises de France sur la mission des premiers prédicateurs évangéliques*, 1678.

[5] *De apostolica Ecclesiae Gallicanae origine* (On the apostolic origin of the Gallican Church), 1752.

[6] *De celeri propagatione Evangelii in universo mundo* (On the rapid spread of the Gospel throughout the world), 1798.

[7] Bossuet says again in his *Discourse on the Unity of the Church*: "Following Rome, and through her, the whole West has come to Jesus Christ, and we came among the first; … it was you, Lord, who moved St. Peter and his successors to send us, from the earliest times, the bishops who founded our Churches." M. Tailliar (*Origines du Christianisme*) congratulates himself "on following the opinion of so many eminent writers who place the introduction of Christianity into Gaul in the third century." Chateaubriand writes thus in his *Études historiques* (part 1, from Julius Caesar to Decius): "Peter sent missionaries to Sicily, Italy, Gaul and the coasts of Africa. St. Paul arrived at Ephesus when Claudius died, and he himself catechized in Provence and the Spains."

[8] *Monuments inédits sur l'apostolat de sainte Marie-Madeleine en Provence et sur les autres apôtres de cette contrée, saint Lazare, sainte Marthe, saint Maximin, etc.*, 2 vols. in-4°.

[9] *Dissertation sur l'apostolat de saint Martial et sur l'antiquité des Églises de France. — Documents inédits sur l'apostolat de saint Martial et sur l'antiquité des Églises de France.*

[10] *Saint Denys l'Aréopagite: étude sur les origines chrétiennes des Gaules.*

[11] *Recherches sur l'époque de la prédication de l'Évangile dans les Gaules et en Picardie.*

[12] *Coup d'œil sur l'époque de la prédication de l'Évangile dans la Gaule-Belgique et la Grande-Bretagne.*

[13] *Origines chrétiennes de la Gaule et date de saint Firmin, contre Tillemont, MM. Dufour, Tailliar, Salmon, Obanos, etc.*

[14] *Recherches sur la prédication de l'Évangile dans les Gaules au Ier siècle.*

[15] Ch. Salmon, *Histoire de saint Firmin, martyr.* — Robitaille, *Vie de saint Paul Serge, fondateur de l'Église de Narbonne*, etc.

[16] *Vie de saint Saturnin, disciple de saint Pierre.*

[17] *Vie de saint Ursin, apôtre du Berri.*

[18] *Apostolat de saint Front au Ier siècle.*

[19] *Étude historique et critique sur la mission, les actes et le culte de saint Bénigne, apôtre de la Bourgogne.*

[20] *Histoire de saint Front, apôtre et premier évêque de Périgueux.*

[21] *Recherches sur la date de l'apostolat de saint Rieul.*

[22] *Dissertation sur l'apostolat de saint Gatien.*

[23] *Saint Pothin et ses compagnons.*

[24] Dom Piolin, *Histoire de l'Église du Mans.* — Abbé Barrère, *Histoire du diocèse d'Agen.* — Abbé Charbonnel, *Origine de l'Église de Mende.* — Father Gaydou, *Études critiques sur l'origine de l'Église de Mende.* — Ravenez, *Recherches sur les origines des Églises de Reims, de Soissons et de Châlons.* — Coudert de Lavillate, *Le Christianisme dans l'Aquitaine.* — Brilloin, *Notice sur l'introduction du Christianisme en Saintonge.* — Abbé Do, *Origines chrétiennes du pays Bessin.* — Abbé Tapin, *Les Traditions du diocèse de Bayeux; La Science et la Tradition.* — De Bernoville, *Mélanges concernant l'évêché de Saint-Papoul.* — Abbé Cirot de la Ville, *Origines chrétiennes de Bordeaux.* — Jehan de Saint-Clavien, *Saint Gatien et les origines de l'Église de Tours*; and *Le Christianisme dans les Gaules.* — Chaussier, *Origine apostolique de l'Église de Metz.* — Abbé Frugère, *Apostolicité de l'Église du Velay.* — Abbé Guillaume, *Histoire du diocèse de Toul.* Etc.

[25] De Chergé, *Vies des Saints du Poitou.* — Abbé Auber, *Vies des Saints de l'Église de Poitiers.* — Abbé Nadal, *Histoire hagiologique du diocèse de Valence.* — Abbé Destombes, *Vies des Saints des diocèses de Cambrai et d'Arras.* — Abbé Sabatier, *Vies des Saints du diocèse de Beauvais.* — Abbé Van Drival, *Hagiologie diocésaine* (Arras). Etc.

[26] The new Bollandists, and especially the *Acta S. Florentii* at 16 October. — Ch. Barthélemy, *Annales hagiologiques de France.* — Mgr Paul Guérin, *Vies des Saints.* Etc.

[27] Abbé Rohrbacher, *Histoire universelle de l'Église catholique.* — Abbé Blanc, *Cours d'histoire universelle.* — Abbé Darras, *Histoire générale de l'Église.* — Baron Henrion, *Histoire générale de l'Église* (latest edition). — Abbé Jager, *Histoire de l'Église catholique en France.* — Abbé Freppel, *Saint Irénée et l'éloquence chrétienne pendant les deux premiers siècles.* — Mgr Regnault, *Histoire des premiers siècles de l'Église.* — Bonnetty, various articles in the *Annales de philosophie.* Etc.

[28] Abbé Pascal, *Gabalum christianum*; and *Défense de l'ancienne tradition de l'Église de Mende sur saint Sévérien.* — Abbé Salvan, *Histoire de saint Saturnin, ou Recherches historiques et critiques sur l'apostolat et le martyre de ce Saint.* — Du Méril, *Recherches historiques sur l'établissement de la religion chrétienne dans le diocèse de Bayeux.* — J. Lair, *Origines de l'évêché de Bayeux.* — De Belloguet, *Origines dijonnaises.* — Huillard-Bréholles, "Les Origines du Christianisme en Gaule", article in the *Revue contemporaine*, 15 September 1866. — W. d'Ozouville, *Origines chrétiennes de la Gaule.* — J. Desnoyers, *Topographie ecclésiastique de la France*

pendant le moyen âge. — Tailliar, *Essai sur les origines et les développements du Christianisme dans les Gaules.* — Anonymous, *Défense de saint Grégoire de Tours, par un membre de la Société archéologique de Touraine*. — Abbé Bourassé, *Les Origines de l'Église de Tours.* — Abbé Bernard, *Les Origines de l'Église de Paris.*

[29] Letter quoted by M. Arbellot in his *Documents inédits sur saint Martial.*

[30] "The doctrine of the establishment of the faith in Gaul in apostolic times tends more and more to be the dominant opinion among the French clergy," says M. Desnoyers, member of the Imperial Committee of Historical Works, in the *Revue des Sociétés savantes*, February 1866 number.

[31] *De celeri propagatione Evangelii in universo mundo libri tres* (Three books on the rapid spread of the Gospel throughout the world), by Michael Joseph Maceda, priest; Bologna, 1798, from the press of St. Thomas Aquinas, with permission of superiors, in-4°.

[32] *Essai sur les Origines du Christianisme*, etc., p. 60, by M. Tailliar, honorary president at the court of Douai.

[33] See our introduction to the *Hagiographie du diocèse d'Amiens*, vol. 1, p. xxxvii.

[34] Mark 16:15 [*Euntes in mundum universum, praedicate Evangelium omni creaturae*].

[35] "But they going forth preached everywhere" [*Illi autem profecti praedicaverunt ubique*], Mark 16:20.

[36] "Your faith is spoken of in the whole world," Rom. 1:8. — "Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the whole world" [*In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum*], Rom. 10:18.

[37] "[The Gospel] which is come unto you, as also it is in the whole world, and bringeth forth fruit and groweth, even as it doth in you," Col. 1:6.

[38] "All the nations that are under heaven heard and believed, and were called by the one name of the Son of God." *Shepherd*, book 3, Similitude 9.

[39] "One baptism and one Church, which the holy Apostles founded by their sweat and labours from one end of the earth to the other, in the blood of Christ." (Ignatius, *Epistle to the Philadelphians*, ch. 4.)

[40] "For there is no race at all, whether of Greeks or of barbarians or by whatever name they are called, whether of the Hamaxobii who live in wagons, or of the Nomads who have no houses, or of the Scenitae who pasture flocks and live in tents—there is no such race, I say, among whom prayers and thanksgivings are not made to the Father and Creator of all through the name of the crucified Jesus." (*Dialogue with Trypho*; Greek Patrology, vol. 6, col. 748.)

[41] "From the rising of the sun even to the going down, my name is great among the Gentiles … and you have profaned it." Mal. 1:11–12.

[42] "The fragrance of the knowledge of the Gospel has become sweet among all nations."

[43] "The whole brotherhood in Christ that is spread throughout the whole world…" *Letter to Caricus* (in Eusebius, book 5, ch. 19).

[44] "What shall we say of the sect of the Christians, who are found in every part of the world, indeed in every city?" (*Dialogue on Fate, to the Emperor Antoninus*.)

[45] "[The Church] holds one and the same faith throughout the whole world, as we have said before." (*Against Heresies*, [book 1,] ch. 10.)

[46] "The word of our Master did not remain in Judaea alone, as philosophy did in Greece, but was spread through the whole world, persuading Greeks and barbarians alike, nation by nation, village by village and whole cities." (*Stromata*, book 6.)

[47] "And indeed in the whole world, in all Greece and in all the other nations, there are innumerable and countless people who, having left their ancestral laws and those they thought gods, have given themselves to the observance of the law of Moses and to the discipleship and worship of Christ." (*De Principiis*, book 4, ch. 1.)

[48] "The Church of the Lord, bathed in light, sends forth her rays through the whole world … she spreads her branches over all the earth in the abundance of her fruitfulness." (*On the Unity of the Church*; PB "De auctoritate Ecclesiae".)

[49] "We are but of yesterday, and we have filled everything of yours: cities, islands, forts, towns, market-places, the very camps, tribes, decuries, the palace, the senate, the forum. We have left you only the temples." (*Apology*, ch. 37.) — Elsewhere Tertullian, listing the countries subject to Christ, says: "and the various nations of the Gauls" [*et Galliarum diversae nationes*] (*Against the Jews*, ch. 7). This certainly means the four great provinces of Narbonensis, Lugdunensis, Belgica and Aquitania.

[50] "In a short time the whole world has been filled with this Christian religion." (*Against the Nations*, book 2.)

[51] "The teaching of the Gospel, swifter than any lightning, has reached the farthest bounds of the habitable earth." (*Commentary on Isaiah*, ch. 7.)

[52] "With scarcely any delay, like the radiance of the sun, the saving word of God lit up the whole world with its splendour." (*History*, book 2, ch. 3.) — Eusebius tells us elsewhere (book 3, ch. 37), speaking of the Apostles: "Having merely laid the foundations of the faith in certain foreign places and appointed other pastors … they themselves went on to other countries and nations with the grace and power of God."

[53] "Christ ordained His disciples and instructed them to preach His doctrine and teaching …; and thence the disciples … were scattered over all the earth to preach the Gospel, as their Master the Lord had commanded them, and for twenty-five years, until the beginning of Nero's reign, they laid the foundations of Churches through all provinces and cities." (*On the Deaths of the Persecutors*, ch. 2.)

[54] "The Apostles built very many tabernacles [Churches], and in all parts of the world that can be reached, even in the islands of the Ocean [Great Britain], prepared very many dwellings for God." (*Tract on Psalm 14*, no. 3.)

[55] The treatise *De Excidio Hierosolymitano* (book 2), attributed first to St. Hegesippus, then to St. Ambrose, but generally placed in the fourth century, says: “From the time the congregation of the Christians began, it has penetrated into every race of men, and no nation of the Roman world has remained that was left without experience of its worship.”

[56] “I do not think any nation has remained that does not know the name of Christ.”

[57] *On Matthew*, ch. 24.

[58] “The preaching of the kingdom of God was no slow undertaking, but ran into all the earth with tireless swiftness.” (*On Psalm 147*.)

[59] Baluze established the authenticity of this writing, which Launoy had denied.

[60] “All the bounds of the Spains … subject to Christ” [*Hispaniarum omnes termini … Christo subditi*] (Tertullian, *Against the Jews*, ch. 7).

[61] “[The Apostles] went to different provinces, one to the Indians, another to the Spains, another to Illyricum, another to Greece.” (*On Isaiah*, ch. 34.)

[62] “[The Apostles,] who preached the Gospel from Jerusalem to Illyricum and the Spains, taking captive in a short time even the power of the city of Rome.” (*On Isaiah*, ch. 42.)

[63] *Exposition of the Second Epistle to Timothy.*

[64] *On the Life and Death of the Saints* [*De ortu et obitu Patrum*].

[65] “A deadly superstition” [*exitiabilis superstitio*] (*Annals* 15, 44).

[66] “A new and mischievous superstition” [*superstitio nova et malefica*] (*Nero*, ch. 16).

[67] This inscription is reproduced in Gruter, p. 238; Baronius, at the year 69, no. 46; Maceda, p. 101; the Bollandists, 17 October, p. 23, etc.

[68] *Marmor Hispaniae effossum* (The marble dug up in Spain). — *Persecutionis christianorum Neronianae in Hispania ex antiquis monumentis probandae uberior explanatio* (A fuller account of the Neronian persecution of the Christians in Spain, to be proved from ancient monuments).

[69] St. Marcellus and St. Rufus, founders of the Churches of Toledo and Tortosa; St. Saturninus, bishop of Toulouse, etc. We read in the Roman Martyrology on 15 May: “In Spain, Sts. Torquatus, Ctesiphon, Secundus, Indaletius, Caecilius, Hesychius and Euphrasius, who were ordained bishops at Rome by the holy Apostles and sent to the Spains to preach the word of God; and when they had evangelized various cities and brought countless multitudes under the faith of Christ, they rested in various places of that province.”

[70] Rom. 15:24. Further on (v. 28) he adds: “I will come by you into Spain” [*Per vos proficiscar in Hispaniam*].

[71] *Epistle to the Corinthians.*

[72] “The holy man [Paul] was eager to preach [the Gospel] as far as Illyricum, and not to grow slack nor fail to go to Rome and to set out for Spain.” (*Letter to Dracontius.*)

[73] “He was poured out over the face of the whole Church, to preach the Gospel from Jerusalem to Illyricum, and to build not on another’s foundation, where it had already been preached, but to press on as far as the Spains, and from the Red Sea, nay from ocean to ocean.” (*On Amos*, ch. 5.)

[74] *Heresies* 27.

[75] “You may see him [Paul] running from Jerusalem to the Spains: for when he had spent two years in chains at Rome, he was at length released and then set out for Spain.” (*Homily 76 on Matthew.*) See also the *Preface to the Epistle to the Hebrews.*

[76] *On Psalm 116.*

[77] *On Isaiah*, ch. 11.

[78] “Behold Paul, making now for Judaea, now for Corinth, now for Ephesus, now for Rome, now for Spain … what else did he show himself to be but an eagle?” (*On Job*, book 31.) See also book 29 of the *Moralia*, ch. 23.

[79] On St. Paul’s journey to Spain, see an article by M. Latou in the *Revue des Sciences ecclésiastiques*, vol. 4, p. 47, and a study by M. Bonnetty in the *Annales de philosophie chrétienne*, 5th series, vol. 5, p. 275.

[80] This is the unanimous opinion of all who have studied Pomponia Graecina, among others Justus Lipsius, Ernesti, Baronius, Tillemont, the Abbé Greppo, M. de Champagny, M. de Rossi, Dom Guéranger, etc.

[81] “In the year of the Lord’s Incarnation 156, Marcus Antoninus Verus took the empire with his brother Aurelius Commodus. In their time, when Eleutherius, a holy man, presided over the Roman Church as Pontiff, Lucius, king of the Britons, sent him letters begging that by his command he might be made a Christian; and he soon obtained the effect of his pious request. And the Britons kept the faith they had received inviolate and entire, in quiet peace, until the time of the emperor Diocletian.” (Bede, *Ecclesiastical History*, book 1, ch. 4.) There are in this text some confusions of names and dates, which however do no harm to our thesis. Marcus Aurelius took Lucius Commodus Verus as his colleague only in 161. Marcus Aurelius was the father and not the son of Commodus.

[82] “Places of the Britons inaccessible to the Romans, but subject to Christ” (*Against the Jews*, ch. 7; PB cites *To Scapula*).

[83] “Meanwhile, to the island stiff with icy cold … that true Sun, showing His brilliant light to the whole world, Christ, first granted His rays, that is, His precepts, at the latter end, as we know, of the time of Tiberius Caesar. These, though received lukewarmly by the inhabitants, remained with some entire and with others less so, until the persecution of Diocletian.” (*On the Ruin of Britain.*)

[84] The text quoted above in section II (Hilary on Psalm 14, the islands of the Ocean).

[85] *Homily 6 on Luke* and *Homily 4 on Ezekiel.*

[86] "Others crossed the Ocean to the islands called Britannic." (*Demonstration of the Gospel*, book 3, ch. 5.)

[87] "Demas … is gone to Thessalonica, Crescens into Galatia, Titus into Dalmatia." 2 Tim. 4:9–10.

[88] Plutarch, in his *Life of Caesar*, always calls Gaul *Galatia*.

[89] *Against Heresies* [*Panarion*], 51, 11.

[90] *On the Second Epistle to Timothy*, ch. 4.

[91] If other commentators thought Galatia was meant, it is because that province is named several times in the Acts and the Epistles.

[92] *Ecclesiastical History*, book 3, ch. 4 [Greek: *epi tas Gallias*, "to the Gauls"].

[93] *On Ecclesiastical Writers.*

[94] The Roman Martyrology reconciles very well the opinion that has St. Crescens die in Galatia with the one that interprets St. Paul's text as we have done: "In Galatia, St. Crescens, disciple of the blessed Apostle Paul, who, passing through the Gauls, converted many to the faith of Christ by the word of preaching; then, returning to the people for whom he had been specially appointed bishop, and having strengthened the Galatians themselves in the work of the Lord to the end of his life, he at last completed his martyrdom under Trajan." 27 June.

[95] "What shall we say of the sect of the Christians, who are found in every part of the world, indeed in every city? … Christians among the Parthians do not take many wives … nor do those of Bactria and Gaul corrupt their marriages." Quoted by Baronius at the year 175 and by Father Van Hecke, vol. 8 of October, p. 26.

[96] *Against Heresies*, book 1, ch. 10; Greek Patrology, vol. 7, col. 552.

[97] "There is also a letter of the Churches (or parishes, that is, dioceses) of Gaul over which Irenaeus presided." Eusebius, 5, 23. — The commentator Henri de Valois adds in a note: "This letter was therefore synodal, being in the name of the Churches, from the person of the brethren, that is, of the bishops of Gaul." — Eusebius had said in a preceding chapter: "Irenaeus, in the letter he wrote in the name of the brethren over whom he presided in Gaul…" (cf. 5, 24).

[98] *Histoire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles*, vol. 4, p. 441.

[99] Latin Patrology, vol. 3, col. 990.

[100] "And the various nations of the Gauls, and places of the Britons inaccessible to the Romans but subject to Christ." (*Against the Jews*, ch. 7.)

[101] "He ministered first in Dalmatia, Gaul, Italy and Macedonia, but above all in Gaul" [*sed in Gallia prae caeteris*]. (*Against Heresies*, 51, 11.)

[102] Dom Lobineau, *Histoire de Bretagne*, book 1, no. 8.

[103] Latin Patrology, vol. 22, col. 689.

[104] *Dissertation*, etc., p. 242.

[105] "We have sent some to the Gauls and the Spains" [*Aliquos ad Gallias Hispaniasque misimus*].

[106] Bollandists, 9 October.

[107] Surius, 3 January.

[108] "When he [Lucius Verus] was dead, Marcus Antoninus [Marcus Aurelius] ruled the state alone; but in the days of the Parthian war, by his command, severe persecutions of the Christians arose in Asia and Gaul, the fourth since Nero, and many of the saints were crowned with martyrdom." (*History*, book 7, ch. 15; p. 603 of the Cologne edition of 1532.) Paul the Deacon, in the eighth century, reproduces nearly the same words.

[109] "Sent by the most blessed Apostle Peter" [*Missum a beatissimo Petro apostolo*]. St. Leo, Letter 65; Latin Patrology, vol. 54, col. 880.

[110] Sirmond, *Concilia antiqua Galliae*, vol. 1, p. 42.

[111] Mamachi, *Origines christianae*, book 2, ch. 22. — Maceda, p. 14.

[112] "Philip preaches Christ to the Gauls." *On the Birth and Death of the Fathers*, ch. 73.

[113] Latin Patrology, vol. 88, col. 98: "When Clement was bishop of Rome, he was sent from the City as a minister of the heavenly Word, that Gaul might bear fruit" [*Clemente Romae praesule / Ab Urbe missus adfuit / Verbi superni numinis / Ut fructus esset Galliae*].

[114] Ibid., col. 115. On the authenticity of this piece, see Arbellot, *Dissertation sur l'apostolat de saint Martial*, p. 72.

[115] "Then blessed Peter called to him Martial, a bishop worthy of the Lord and true, who had been chosen to be sent to preach to the Gentiles, and said to him: … 'There is a city in the regions of the Gauls, given over to profane error, named Limoges.'" *Documents inédits sur l'apostolat de saint Martial.*

[116] *History of the Franks*, book 9, ch. 39.

[117] *Glory of the Martyrs*, book 1, ch. 56.

[118] *Glory of the Confessors*, ch. 80.

[119] Mai, *Scriptorum veterum nova collectio*, vol. 10, p. 7. — Greek Patrology, vol. 16, col. 627.

[120] Faillon, *Monuments inédits*, vol. 2, p. 374.

[121] The monk Letaldus, a tenth-century writer, in his *Life of St. Julian of Le Mans*, reproduces the historical opinion of St. Gregory of Tours, but acknowledging that it is opposed to tradition. M. Tailliar invokes some passages of the martyrologies of Bede and Rabanus Maurus; but it is known how much they have been interpolated. The martyrologies of St. Ado and Usuard, which are regarded as authentic by the most competent critics, record the apostolic origins of the Churches of Arles, Vienne, Périgueux, Saintes, Trier, Narbonne and others.

[122] Arles (St. Trophimus), Aix (St. Maximinus), Apt (St. Auspicius), Bayeux (St. Exuperius), Beauvais (St. Lucian), Béziers (St. Aphrodisius), Bourges (St. Ursinus), Châlons-sur-Marne (St. Memmius), Chartres (St. Aventinus), Clermont-Ferrand (St. Austremonius), Évreux (St. Taurinus), Le Mans (St. Julian), the Limagne (St. Nectarius), Limoges (St. Martial), Lodève (St. Florus), Marseilles (St. Lazarus), Meaux (St. Sanctinus), Metz (St. Clement), Nantes (St. Clarus), Narbonne (St. Paul Sergius), Orange (St. Eutropius), Paris (St. Denis), Périgueux (St. Front), Reims and Soissons (St. Sixtus and St. Sinicius), Rouen (St. Nicasius), Saintes (St. Eutropius), Séez (St. Latuinus), Senlis (St. Regulus), Sens (St. Savinian), Toul (St. Mansuetus), Toulouse (St. Saturninus), Tours (St. Gatian), Trier (St. Valerius), the Velay (St. George), Verdun (St. Sanctinus), Vienne (St. Crescens), etc.

[123] Propers of the dioceses of Limoges, Aix, Sens, Chartres, Auch, Beauvais, Le Puy, Bayeux, Autun, Tulle, etc.

[124] *Lemovicen. Confirmationis elogii et cultus ut apostoli quo S. Martialis primus Lemovicensium episcopus hactenus gavisus est ab immemorabili tempore et ex constitutionibus apostolicis* (Limoges: confirmation of the praise and cult as an apostle that St. Martial, first bishop of Limoges, has hitherto enjoyed from time immemorial and by apostolic constitutions). Limoges, 1855.

[125] "Then, under Aurelius, son of Antoninus, the fifth persecution was set in motion. And then for the first time martyrdoms were seen within Gaul, the religion of God having been received rather late beyond the Alps" [*serius trans Alpes Dei religione suscepta*]. *Sacred History*, book 2, ch. 32; Latin Patrology, vol. 20, col. 147.

[126] Book 2, ch. 47.

[127] Even at Rome idolatry was not destroyed at the end of the fourth century, witness the attempt of part of the senate under Theodosius to restore the pagan cult officially. Polytheism still had a certain vitality at that time, as is shown by the anonymous poem composed in 394, which M. Morel published in the *Revue archéologique* (June and July 1868).

[128] "I would not believe Sulpicius, who often errs and is not very skilled in history" [*Sulpitio non crediderim, erranti saepe et minus perito historiarum*]. *Origines et antiquitates christianae*, vol. 2, p. 270.

[129] It is precisely in the chapter invoked against us that undisputed chronological errors are found concerning St. Sixtus, St. Lawrence, St. Hippolytus, Valentinus, Novatian, etc. Jehan de Saint-Clavien and the Abbé Rolland have shown very well that Gregory of Tours knew the history of his own predecessors only very imperfectly. On the historical value of this annalist see, in the *Annales de philosophie*, February 1862, an article by M. Lecoy de la Marche; M. Kries, *De Vita et scriptis Gregorii*; and an article by M. Ch. Salmon in the *Revue de l'art chrétien*, September and November 1869.

[130] "In his time seven men ordained bishops were sent to preach in Gaul, as the history of the passion of the holy martyr Saturninus relates. For it says: 'Under the consulship of Decius and Gratus, as is retained by faithful remembrance, the city of Toulouse first began to have St. Saturninus as its first and highest bishop.' These therefore were sent: to Tours, Bishop Gatian; to Arles, Bishop Trophimus; to Narbonne, Bishop Paul; to Toulouse, Bishop Saturninus; to Paris, Bishop Denis; to the Arverni, Bishop Austremonius; to Limoges, Martial was appointed bishop." (*History of the Franks*, book 1, ch. 30 [PB 28].)

[131] Maury, *Report to the Institute on the competition of 1862.*

[132] "As is said" [*ut fertur*] — "as report has it" [*fama ferente*].

[133] Thus for St. Austremonius he is content to tell us that he was sent by the bishops of Rome (*Glory of the Confessors*, ch. 30).

[134] See especially the works already cited of Maceda, Ouvrard, Faillon, Arbellot, Salmon, Darras, Cordière, Freppel, etc.

[135] In M. Tailliar's supposed Jewish phase of five popes we find St. Linus, an Italian by origin, born at Volterra, and St. Clement I, born at Rome. St. Cletus, omitted from this list, was born at Rome. So of six popes, there are three Latins. We could add that St. Evaristus was born in Greece of a Jewish father from the city of Bethlehem, whereas M. Tailliar has him born at Bethlehem (p. 116). Of the eight popes of the supposed Greek phase we see only three of Greek origin. St. Alexander I and St. Sixtus I were born at Rome; St. Pius I in Italy; St. Anicetus in Syria; St. Soter at Fondi in Campania. The Latin phase would have been inaugurated by St. Victor, who was born in Africa and whose pontificate M. Tailliar begins in the year 192, while the best critics date his reign from the year 185.

[136] See the excellent work of the Abbé Darras, *Saint Denys l'Aréopagite, premier évêque de Paris*; it contains an unanswerable refutation of the opinion that accuses Hilduin (ninth century) of having invented the identity of St. Denis, bishop of Paris, with St. Denis the Areopagite. The author has added new arguments to those already produced in favour of the first century by Mabillon, Pagi, Noël Alexandre, Roncaglia, Chifflet, Halloix and others.

[137] January number, p. 98.

[138] *L'Apostolat de saint Firmin*, p. 9.

[139] *Histoire de l'architecture religieuse*, ch. 3.

[140] See Bona, *De rebus liturgicis*, book 1, ch. 19. — Abbé Do, *Origines chrétiennes du pays Bessin*, p. 156.

[141] *On the Deaths of the Persecutors*, ch. 15.

[142] *Vetera monimenta*, vol. 1, ch. 18.

[143] We were surprised to read in M. de Caumont's *Bulletin monumental* that the Scientific Congress of Amiens had pronounced in favour of the third century. At a session of the Archaeology Section, after a reading by M. Tailliar, MM. de Caumont and the Abbé Cochet agreed with him; the Abbé Duval replied. The other members took no part in the discussion. Only ten members were then present. Such an intimate conversation can certainly not be called a decision of the Congress.

[144] Preface to the *Inscriptions chrétiennes de la Gaule*, p. lvi.

[145] *Revue contemporaine*, 15 September 1866.

[146] *Acta Sanctorum*, 10 October.

[147] We must recall that the Church of Vienne carries its origin much further back, since it regards as its first apostle St. Crescens, the disciple of St. Paul.

[148] "Who administered the episcopate of the Church of Lyons" [*qui episcopatum Lugdunensis Ecclesiae administrabat*]. Ruinart, *Acta sincera*, p. 63.

[149] *Manifestum est in omnem Italiam, Gallias … nullum instituisse ecclesias, nisi eos quos venerabilis Petrus aut eius successores constituerunt sacerdotes.* Letter 25 (to Decentius of Gubbio).

[150] *Origines chrétiennes de la Gaule*, p. 62.

[151] *Recherches*, etc., p. 202.

[152] This is not a mere hypothesis; we are only generalizing what Gregory of Tours says of the see he occupied: "If anyone asks why, after the passing of Bishop Gatian, there was only one bishop until St. Martin, let him know that because of the opposition of the pagans the city of Tours was long without priestly blessing."

[153] "The presbyter is the same as the bishop, and … the Churches were governed by the common counsel of the presbyters; but afterwards it was decreed throughout the world that one chosen from among the presbyters should be set over the rest, to whom the care of the whole Church should belong and the seeds of schism be removed." (*On Titus*, 1:5.)

[154] See on this subject an excellent chapter of the *Origines chrétiennes de la Gaule*, p. 51.

[155] This notice is devoted exclusively to the Saint's writings; we have given his life at 28 December, page 506 of this volume.